



Introduction

This policy is the product of a whole-staff collaboration with ratification by the Board of Management.

Rationale

In the interest of providing the best education for all students, it may be necessary to divide and combine class groups into mixed classes, according to annual Teacher/Pupil Allocations circulars from the Dept. of Ed.

Aims and Objectives of this Policy

- To provide a framework for the combining of classes
- To outline the criteria on which children are selected to be placed in mixed or straight class grades
- To outline the criteria for placing children in mixed-class groups
- To set out the supports which may be used to ensure the best learning outcomes for all children in mixed classes

Framework for the splitting of classes

At the time of planning the classes for the upcoming academic year, the Principal will take account of the Allocation of Teachers per Pupil (DES circular 0011/2024) for Caherleaheen NS. This is usually published in February each year and it reflects any changes to the pupil/teacher ratio in the previous October Budget. An appeal will be lodged, if there are grounds. Pending an appeal, decisions on how best to organise classes with a view to providing the

best educational opportunities for all children will be taken. The Principal will explore all options and class combinations in collaboration with the teaching staff. The Principal has overall responsibility for the grouping or the division of any class.

Criteria for placing children in particular class groups

We group the children in such a way so as to maximise the learning outcomes for *each child*. When dividing a class into groups, and then to be placed in separate classes, there are certain criteria to be taken into consideration:

- It is universally considered to be best practice to form mixed-ability groups
- Division according to age
- Division according to alphabetical order
- Consideration of children with specific needs such as behavioural , learning or occupational needs
- Balance of boys and girls.
- The dynamics of the classes must be considered.
- This decision will lie ultimately with the Principal, who must consider the needs of every child in the class and thoroughly explore all groupings with middle-management and teachers.

This means it is not always possible to keep particular social groups of friends together. However, the teachers of any combined class are consulted with throughout the planning stage of the combination arrangement.

Any class group that has been combined with another will learn together in their own classroom before dispersing to their combined classrooms. There will also be an opportunity for station teaching in core subjects, particularly in Junior or Middle Class levels. Combined classes also expand social circles of friends and such arrangements empower them to form new friendships.

It is very important that parents and teachers encourage children to embrace their new friendships while maintaining existing ones. Mixed classes provide new and exciting learning opportunities for children, be they social, educational or personal.

Signed: *Vivian Nolan*
Chairperson.
Board of Management

Date: April 30th 2018