



# Scoil Oilibhéir Naofa

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## Policy on Splitting Classes

### Introduction

This policy was the product of increasing enrolment and demand for school places at Scoil Oilibhéir Naofa and the need to maintain the pupil teacher ratio as recommended by the Department of Education and Skills.

### Rationale

In the interest of providing the best education for all pupils, it may from time to time be necessary to divide and combine class groups into multi grade classes, to accommodate a better pupil-teacher ratio.

### Aims and Objectives of this Policy

- To provide a framework for the splitting of classes.
- To outline the criteria on which children are selected to be placed in multi grade or straight classes.
- To outline the criteria for placing children in particular multi grade-class groups.
- To set out the supports which may be used to ensure the best learning outcomes for all children in multi grade classes.
- To limit the enrolment of new children into split classes, subject to Section 29 of the Education Act.

### Framework for the splitting of classes

At the time of planning the classes for the coming year, the Principal will look at the overall numbers in each year group and the number of teachers available to teach them. She will decide how best to organise classes with a view to providing the best educational opportunities for all children.

### Criteria on which Children are selected to be placed in mixed or straight classes

In consultation with the class teacher, and if necessary with previous teachers of the classes involved, lists of possible groups are drawn up. Children who have special learning needs, at either end of the learning spectrum are generally deemed to be better left in a straight class, all other things being equal.

### Criteria for placing children in particular class groups

When dividing a class into groups, to be placed in separate classes, there are certain criteria to be taken into consideration:

- It is considered best to form mixed-ability groups.
- Distribution of boys/girls in classes.
- The dynamics of the class must be considered. Emotional, behavioural and social factors which could upset the dynamic of the new class are taken into consideration when forming new groupings.
- Classes may also be split in an open and transparent manner such as alphabetically or by age.
- The process of forming new friendships is a life skill which is important to develop. A positive and supportive attitude from parents is a key element in achieving a successful outcome in the new groups.
- We will endeavour to accommodate friends, however it may not be possible to satisfy all requests for groups of friends to be kept together. This decision will lie ultimately with the Principal, who must consider the needs of every child in the class.
- It would not necessarily be the intention that once a new class is formed it would remain together going forward.

### **The supports which could be made available to children and teachers in multi grade classes**

- The Principal, the Class Teacher and Learning Support team will consult on how best to organise the learning support for the multi grade class.
- In some cases, the Learning Support Teacher may work in the classroom with the Class Teacher, in a team-teaching arrangement.
- It is possible that the Learning Support Teacher may work in the classroom supporting one child or a small group of children, with the Class Teacher doing the main teaching of the lesson.
- Another arrangement for Learning Support which may suit the class is for either the Class Teacher or the Learning Support Teacher to withdraw small groups of children.
- Occasionally, it may suit the classes better, if the teaching of Mathematics is taken separately by the Class Teacher for one class and the Learning Support Teacher for the other class.

All of these arrangements must be considered on a class by class basis, from year to year.

### **Enrolment of new children into multi grade classes**

The rationale behind this policy is for the formation of classes within the recommended pupil-teacher ratio. The enrolment of new children into these classes is to be avoided as much as possible. In this case, due regard must be given to the school's enrolment policy, and the terms of Section 29 of the Education Act.

### **The allocation of teachers to mixed classes**

It is the duty of the Principal as per Circular 16/73 to assign teaching duties.

### **Review**

This policy will be reviewed in line with the enrolment policy and staffing schedule annually.

Presented to the Board of Management at their meeting on March 19<sup>th</sup> 2015.

**Ratification and Communication**

Ratified by the Board of Management on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2015



Signed:

To be reviewed as necessary and/or in 2018/19