



St. Joseph's NS, Bree

Policy on Splitting Classes

Introduction

This policy was the product of whole-staff collaboration in tandem with the staff, parents and board of management of St. Joseph's NS, Bree.

Rationale

It can be advantageous, and necessary, to divide a large class into two smaller classes. This would then allow for a lower pupil/teacher ratio, and hopefully impact positively on education provision.

A class can be split when the number of children in the school reaches a threshold for the appointment of another teacher. This additional teacher (or another staff member) can then be used to teach the other half of the class.

Example:

Class A has 35 children. The total school numbers exceed the threshold for appointment and the school is allowed to appoint an additional teacher. After consultation, Class A is chosen by the principal and ISM team, and the class is split into two classes of 18 and 17 children. One teacher is allocated to teach the class with 17 children, and another teacher is allocated to teach the class of 18.

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 mixed or straight classes



Framework for the splitting of classes

At the time of planning for the coming school year, the principal will look at the overall numbers in each year group and the number of teachers available to teach them. He, in consultation with the in-school management (ISM) team, will decide on how best to organise classes.

Criteria for deciding which class to split

Towards the end of the current school year, the principal, in consultation with the ISM team, team will discuss the teaching and class arrangements for the upcoming year. If there is a ninth teacher, they will decide on which class to split. The criteria for choosing which class to split will be:

- Number of children in the class.
- Special educational needs within the class.
- SNA allocation (if any)
- The principle of early intervention (prioritising younger children)
- Number of years that the class has presented with a large class size

The principal and the ISM team will also decide on how many children will be in each class. Allowance will be made for children with special needs, individual class numbers, room size, and other relevant factors that may increase or decrease the total for each class.

The two classes will be organised and taught in an identical fashion using the same books. The two teachers will collaborate to ensure a uniform approach.

Criteria for deciding which children will be allocated to which class

Classes will be split on a 'one-boy, one-girl' basis, in alphabetical order, until the appropriate number has been reached.

***Example:** There are 34 children in a class – 20 boys and 14 girls. Dividing the class by two gives a result of 10 boys and 7 girls in each class. The first 10 boys and 7 girls, selected by alphabetical order, will be placed in Class A. The next 10 boys and 7 girls will be placed in Class B.*



The principal, and the ISM team, will need to take the children with special educational needs into consideration, and may need to adjust the configuration so as to meet their needs insofar as is practicable, as deemed by the principal. Parents of twin children will have the option of deciding whether to keep the twins in the same class.

Once the class groupings have been decided upon, it will not be possible to change or alter them.

St. Joseph's NS will adhere to this decision strictly, and without exception, as any changes would undermine the whole policy.

Notes on the Process

- Being able to split a large class into two smaller classes with a lower pupil/teacher ratio is a very positive development.
- The principal and ISM team must consider the needs of all the children, the needs of the school, and organisational matters.
- The class chosen for splitting will be reviewed each year in May/June.

The allocation of teachers to mixed classes

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

Ratification

This policy was ratified on Tuesday 21st February 2023:

Fr. Michael Byrne (Chairperson of Board of Management)

Review

Date of next review: June 2028

St. Joseph's N.S. Bree

Principal: Mr. Mark Kelly
Deputy Principal: Mrs. Anne O'Dowd



Chairperson: Fr. Michael Byrne