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Policy on Splitting Classes

A. Introduction

This policy was the product of whole-staff collaboration in tandem with the Parents and Board of Management of Raheen National School, June 2015 and reviewed May 2017.

B. Rationale

In the interest of providing the best education for all students, it may from time to time be necessary to divide and combine class groups into mixed classes, which are smaller in size and offer a better pupil-teacher ratio.

C. 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.
- To outline the criteria for placing children in particular mixed-class groups.
- To set out the supports which, may be used to ensure the best learning outcomes for all children in mixed classes.
- To limit the enrolment of new children into split classes, subject to Section 29 of the education Act.

D. 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. He will decide how best to organise classes with a view to providing the best educational opportunities for all children.

E. Why the need to divide a class may arise

The DES allots one teacher to each group of 28 pupils at present. This is known as the *pupil-teacher ratio*. The ideal situation for teacher and pupil would be a single stream class at all class levels with no more than 20 pupils per class. However, the current system does not allow for this and the Principal has overall responsibility for grouping or splitting the classes where numbers would otherwise be too big or too small in one class. The DES' objective is that class size should be as equitable as possible across all class levels. The pupil-teacher ratio is dictated annually by the government budget and schools have no control over this. However, the teacher will ensure that each pupil in each class will be working on the set of skills from the national curriculum for the correct class.

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Principal: John Curran

Deputy Principal: Róisín Quigley

F. Criteria for placing children in particular class groups

In Raheen N.S. the division of classes will be decided by taking the following criteria into account;

- **Ability** (that each split class group would have a mixed range of abilities, according to the results of standardised tests recorded in May each year.

- **Gender Balance** – that there would be an even mix of boys and girls in each group in as far as possible.

Age / Alphabetical order can be used by the relevant teacher (s) to split the class, as long as the criteria of mixed ability and gender balance are given priority, in the first instance .

- In Raheen N.S., an effort will be made, in so far as possible to bring the split class group together for one subject eg. Maths, Reading Groups, Literacy regularly so that the bond of the original class group are maintained. Pupils from the divided class will also be able to meet at break times, when they can maintain friendships and make new friends in their “new group”. This increases their circle of friends and the ability to make new ones.

G. Enrolment of new children into split classes

The rationale behind this policy is for the formation of smaller 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. However it should be borne in mind that the recommended maximum number of pupils in mixed classes is 25.

H. The allocation of teachers to mixed classes

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

I. Review

This policy will be reviewed in (May 2017)

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(Principal)

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