

*Scoil Mhaoilíosa*  
*Knockavilla, Upton, Co. Cork*



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*Principal:*  
*Orla O'Shea B.Ed, MA in Mgt in Ed., PG Dip Prim Sc.*

*D.P.: Claire Falvey*

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## **School Policy on determining combining classes, class sizes and class allocation.**

### **Rationale**

This policy aims to ensure that the appropriate procedures are in place to enable the school

- To make decisions on class divisions and allocation in an open and transparent manner consistent with the Ethos and the mission Statement of the school
- To make an accurate and appropriate assessment of the capacity of the school to cater for the needs of all pupils in the light of the resources available to it
- To put in place a framework which will ensure fair, and effective relations between students, parents and teachers.

## Procedure:

In the last term of the year the teachers will have a meeting to decide the allocation of classes. It is the policy in Scoil Mhaoilíosa, in accordance with the terms of Circular 20/07 to ensure that the number of pupils in any class is kept as low as possible, taking all relevant contextual factors into account (e.g. classroom accommodation, fluctuating enrolment). In particular, the Principal will try to ensure that there is an equitable distribution of pupils in mainstream classes and that the differential between the largest and smallest classes is kept to a minimum. (see policy considerations below). Where there is a need to split a grade, it is worked out as following:

- 1) The split will be determined by age. The older pupils will go to the classroom with those in the grade above them.
- 2) Gender equity will be taken into account. Where there is an uneven number, the next oldest pupil on roll will be chosen.
- 3) The Principal has the final decision on all issues.

Class allocation is the responsibility of the Principal teacher. The allocation of teaching duties within the school is a matter for the principal. Circular 16/73 states that the principal teacher "should arrange a fair distribution of teaching duties among the staff, taking into account the needs of the pupils and the abilities, experience, personality and preference of each teacher. S/he should utilise the services of staff with special qualifications or aptitudes in an organising or advisory capacity."

During the last term, the Principal engages in a process of consultation and discussion with classroom teachers with a view to organising the most effective allocation of classes for the forthcoming school year.

Forms on which teachers indicate preferences are circulated to assist the process. These forms are retained as a record. While every effort will be made to accommodate preferences, it is understood that this is not always possible. Preferences are based on seniority. However, if a staff member does not get their 1<sup>st</sup> preference one year, then the principal will try to accommodate them in a subsequent year, if possible.

Teachers are encouraged to gain experience in the teaching of all levels in the primary school and to use any expertise they may have in a particular area where relevant.

Various aspects of school life are considered when allocating teachers to classes. These include:

- The specific needs of the particular class/group of pupils.
- Allocation of classes in previous years and continuity.
- The attributes and experience of the teacher who has the class currently and the attributes of the teacher to whom the class will be allocated.
- Distribution of collective expertise/willingness to share expertise with other teachers and groups.
- Specific circumstances such as career break applications, retirements, job-sharing, SNA in classroom etc.

- Every effort will be made to inform the school family of the class allocation plan, in June.

### **Policy Considerations:**

Our school has a policy of early intervention. With this in mind the Infant classes will be kept as single grade classes or consist of smaller numbers whichever the case maybe. This is determined from one year to the next depending on enrolment numbers.

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

The Principal, the Class Teacher and Learning Support team will consult on how best to organise the learning support for the mixed 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.

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

In the case of a combined class, the teacher will ensure that the curriculum relevant to each is covered. This will be achieved through differentiation and thorough planning. The textbooks will be used to supplement teaching however, teachers will focus on the learning outcomes and objectives from Curaclam na Bunscoile and the

New Primary Language Curriculum when devising their long term schemes of work. The school has a focus on enquiry based learning and therefore teachers are becoming less reliant on being wholly dependent on textbooks.

**Ratification:**

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Róisín O' Regan  
Chairperson

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Orla O' Shea  
Principal

Date: \_\_\_\_\_