



Scoil Mhuire, Maigh Cuilinn Co. na Gaillimhe

Policy governing class splits

Introduction

In an ideal world, it is obviously preferable to avoid class splits and to have an arrangement whereby each Teacher is teaching a group of pupils who are all in the same class and following the same curriculum. However, this is not always possible. Take, for example, a situation where there are 38 pupils who are all due to be assigned to 3rd Class in September. This is too much for one class/one teacher and not enough to justify two separate classes/two teachers. Consequently, a small number of the group has to go into a split class. Unfortunately, this is unavoidable. This is a situation that arises all the time in small schools but, fortunately, it does not arise too often in Scoil Mhuire Moycullen. We aim, insofar as possible, to keep the majority of our pupils in non-split classes but we must be conscious of achieving a balanced, fair and equal divide of the children across all teachers, with no one group being either unacceptably large or small.

Suitable class split arrangements are considered and proposed by the Principal, following consultation with the Teachers, and are ultimately signed off by the Board of Management. The Board of Management reserves the right to determine class sizes and splits having due regard to Departmental guidelines on class size, sanctioned pupil – teacher ratios and the availability of teaching resources and accommodation.

Class Splits – Procedures and Criteria

After it is decided to operate a class split arrangement for a group of pupils, the following criteria determine which pupils are assigned to each split class:

1. **Age:** for upward splits, the oldest children are selected. For downward splits, the youngest children are selected. Strict interpretation of age based on date of birth is to be used in the selections (subject to No. 4 below).
2. **Gender balance must apply** – normally an equal number of boys and girls should be selected for the split. However, if the number to be taken out is 4 or less, it is preferable to select all of the same gender so that pupils who are already known to each other have companions going into the larger group to play with etc. This makes it easier for those children to adjust to their new split class.

The above rule may sometimes be affected by gender balance considerations in the amalgamated class grouping e.g. if there is already an imbalance between boys and girls in the larger group, it may not be advisable to add to that imbalance in the selection of children to join the group. In such circumstances, a slightly greater proportion of one gender may be selected for the split to help achieve better gender balance in the combined group.

3. **Avoidance of repeated splits:** no child should experience a split class for more than 2 consecutive years. Consequently, in circumstances where a child has already been in a split arrangement for 2 consecutive school years, they should not be selected for a further split class but, instead, the next oldest or youngest (as applicable) should be assigned.
4. **Special circumstances:** in exceptional cases, there may be a need to avoid selecting a particular child for a split due to special needs, particular learning difficulties or other extenuating circumstances. Any such exceptions will be rare and must be approved by the Board of Management.

The Board of Management will monitor the implementation of all aspects of this Policy and review it regularly in the light of experience.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management in October 2013 and reviewed in November 2015. Further reviews will be undertaken as required.

Signed:

Joe Howley
Chairperson,
Board of Management

Terry Kavanagh
Principal