



Scoil Mhuire, Maigh Cuilinn Co. na Gaillimhe

Policy Governing Reconstitution of Infant Classes

Rationale

The initial constitution of Junior Infant Classes is an inexact science that can sometimes result in an imbalance between the two Junior Infant Classes of a particular year, in terms of academic ability, language development, special educational needs and behaviour. Reconstitution of classes has gained wide acceptance from Boards of Management, children, parents and teachers in many schools.

Reconstituting classes benefits all children from a social, developmental, behavioural and academic point of view. In reconstituting classes where there is an imbalance due to the degree of language needs and/or number of children with minor behavioural problems, the school will examine how the situation might be improved to the benefit of all children.

It is desirable that, in the early years of Primary School, children should have the opportunity to be classmates with as many of the children as possible from their own year. This is important for the social development of each child. Reconstituting classes affords children the opportunity to get used to change within a safe environment, and with the support of friends. It also allows the children to gain a broader experience of other children with different personalities and backgrounds. 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.

Aims and Objectives of this policy

- To provide a framework for the reconstitution of Junior and Senior Infant Classes;
- To outline the considerations which apply when placing children in Infant Classes.

Implementation

Infant teachers, in conjunction with the Principal, are responsible for putting this policy into practice.

Procedure for reconstituting classes

In the final term of each year, a meeting takes place between Teachers of Infant Classes, the Learning Support Staff, Special Needs Assistants who have been involved with the classes in question and the Principal.

The class teachers divide their classes into various Cooperative Learning Groups of approximately 6 children. Each Cooperative Learning Group should have the following elements:

- A good balance of abilities according to test results and teacher observation;
- As good a gender balance as can be achieved; and
- A good balance of children with behavioural/emotional problems, special needs etc.

The children work cooperatively in these Cooperative Learning Groups during the last term. The teacher can make some changes to these groups initially, if there is good reason, but the three elements listed above must be maintained.

In mid-May, the teachers come together for 'Class Formation' meetings. The new classes are formed based on teachers' observations of the Cooperative Learning Groups. The teachers consider which Learning Groups will work best with each other, to decide how the Learning Groups should be combined into classes.

At this stage, the classes will not have been allocated to any individual teacher, so it will be in the best interest of all to achieve a balanced mix.

This process is carried out with great care and professionalism, and the interests of every child carefully considered.

Class lists are finalised at the end of this process and are sent to parents/guardian in early June.

Considerations on placing children in particular classes

- It is considered best to form mixed-ability classes.
- Consideration is given to the emotional, behavioural, physical and social factors that will influence class dynamics.
- The learning needs of every child are considered.
- The Principal, in consultation with the current class teacher, will try to ensure that some of that child's friends are also placed in the same class where possible. It will seldom be possible to satisfy all demands 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.

In the final term of Senior Infants, the teachers of both Senior Infant Classes, the Learning Support Staff, Special Needs Assistants who have been involved with the classes in question and the Principal will meet and consider whether there is a need to reconstitute the classes. If reconstitution is deemed necessary, the procedure as outlined, above will be followed. If it is decided that reconstitution of the Senior Infant Classes is not merited, both classes will proceed to First Class unchanged.

Notwithstanding the necessity of split classes at certain class levels, every effort will be made to maintain the constitution of classes from First Class onwards.

Implementation/Ratification and Review

The Board of Management will monitor the implementation of all aspects of this policy and review it regularly.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 15th June 2016.

Signed:

Joe Howley

**Chairperson,
Board of Management**

Terry Kavanagh

Principal