



Composite Class Policy

Policy Date: June 2022

RATIONALE

The purpose of this policy is to provide a consistent and transparent process for the establishment of composite classes in Milltown Primary School.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- A composite class is one where children from two or more year groups are taught together
- Many schools in Northern Ireland have composite classes as enrolment numbers often mean it is not possible to have straight classes for individual year groups
- Composite classes are formed to make efficient use of teaching staff
- The number of teachers in a school is based upon the total school roll, not on the numbers in any single year group
- It is the responsibility of the principal, overseen by the Board of Governors to decide on the optimum class structure based on the number of pupils on the school roll
- All of our teachers are trained to work with mixed ability classes whether in a single year group or a composite class. In all primary classes there is a wide range of abilities and all children will learn in different ways, responding to a variety of methods and resources.
- There is evidence to show that pupils in composite classes gain socially.
- There is no evidence to show that the performance of pupils in composite classes is below that of pupils in single age classes.

PRINCIPLES AND PROCEDURES

The principles behind the policy are:

- Delivering the best educational experience for pupils is paramount
- Whatever the composition of a class, it is the responsibility of the class teacher to encourage and support every child in reaching their full potential.
- The teachers and principal will establish a composite class using assessment data and the professional judgements of the staff who know the child. However, in exceptional circumstances, the principal will have the flexibility to exercise discretion where she is satisfied that this is in the best interest of the children concerned.
- Transparency is essential and the principal will share the rationale for decisions she makes with parents.

DECISIONS WILL BE MADE FOLLOWING THE PRIORITY ORDER SET OUT BELOW:

1. We will establish classes based on the pupils' social and academic ability to thrive in the learning environment.
2. We will aim to optimise the pupil/teacher ratio where possible therefore enabling teachers to maximise the time spent with children.

3. The placement of twins, triplets etc. in a composite class will be discussed with the parent first whose views will be taken into account.
4. Parents will be informed of the composite class structure and their child's/children's placement in the summer term.
5. In exceptional circumstances changes to classes may have to take place. If this is the case parents will be informed as soon as possible.

HANDLING OF PARENTAL CONCERNS

While there is no formal right to appeal against a decision on a child's placement in a composite class, we will always provide parents with the reasons for the school's rationale as to how pupils were allocated to a class. If a parent feels the school has not adhered to this policy, they should raise their concern with the principal in the first instance. If they are still not satisfied they should then contact the Chair of the Board of Governors.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POLICY

This policy will be implemented in Milltown Primary School with effect from 20th June 2022

POLICY MONITORING AND REVIEW

The policy will be reviewed annually in consultation with the Board of Governors.