

 **St. Senan’s N.S.**

SPLITTING CLASSES POLICY

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**Contents Page No.**

Rationale 3

Framework for the Splitting of Classes 3

Criteria on which children are selected to be placed in mixed

or straight classes 4

The Allocation of Teachers to Mixed Classes 5

Review 5

# **Rationale**

In 2015, following the amalgamation of St. Joseph’s GNS and St. Senan’s BNS, the newly formed school, St. Senan’s NS, operated with eight class teachers, including one Concessionary Post. This Concessionary Post may be withdrawn in September 2017, or at some future date, creating a mainstream teaching staff of seven teachers. As there are eight class groupings it will be necessary to have a mixture of straight and split classes in the interest of providing the fairest educational environment for all students.

This policy was drawn up in January 2017 to

* provide a framework for the splitting of classes
* outline the criteria on which children are selected to be placed in mixed or straight classes

This policy was discussed at a Parents’ Association meeting on 24th of January and was also discussed with the staff at a Croke Park hour.

### **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. The principal will decide, following discussions with the Management team, how best to organise classes with a view to providing the best educational opportunities for all children.

### **Criteria on which children are selected to be placed in mixed or straight classes**

In consultation with the class teacher, and if necessary with previous teachers of the classes involved, lists of possible groups are drawn up. Children will be grouped in order to maximise the learning outcomes for each child. When dividing a class into groups to be placed in separate classes, the following are criteria will be taken into consideration:

* It is considered best to form mixed-ability groups
* Distribution of boys/girls in classes
* The dynamics of the class must be considered. Emotional, behavioural and social factors which could upset the dynamic of the new class should be taken into consideration when forming new groupings
* It will seldom be possible to satisfy all demands for groups of friends to be kept together. While 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.
* Classes may also be split in an open and transparent manner such as alphabetically or by age, provide such a split will be in line with the above criteria.
* Children who have special learning, behavioural or social needs may be exempted from the above process as the principal will determine the appropriate class for them.
* The use of the new Learning Support/Resource arrangements may be used to alleviate some of the pressure regarding splitting classes.
* The final decision, regarding class splits, will lie ultimately with the Principal.

NOTE: Classes that have been split reunite daily to play together on the playground/sports field during breaks so they can maintain existing friendships as well as make new friends in the new group. This increases their circle of friends and their abilities to form new friendships. Splits will not divide a class between the two school sites unless any other arrangement is unworkable.

### **The allocation of teachers to mixed classes**

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

### **Review**

This policy will be reviewed in June 2019 or immediately, if necessary. Responsibility for co-ordinating the review of the policy will be undertaken by the Principal

This policy document was ratified at a meeting of the Board of Management of St. Senan’s National School, which was held on Tuesday 21st February, 2017.