



Faughart Community National School

● Faughart, Dundalk, Co Louth, A91 D897

● www.faughartcns.ie

● 042 93 71931

● faughartcns@lmetb.ie

Policy on Class and Classroom Allocation

Introductory Statement:

- This policy was initially formulated as a result of a collaborative approach between the Principal and Staff in 2022-2023 due to increased enrolment, and therefore this policy is considered appropriate at this time of expansion.
- On review of this policy in March 2024, our pupil numbers are increasing, and enrolment is not even in all classes. Therefore we foresee the necessity to add a section on allocation of split classes in this policy, should the need arise in the future.

Link to School Ethos:

Faughart CNS is committed to enabling children grow and develop into confident, mature adults with high self-esteem. We also strive to ensure children maximise their academic and social potential. This policy is geared towards those aims through offering all children exposure to a variety of teaching methodologies and skills.

Rationale:

This policy ensures that teachers get the opportunity to expand their skills through teaching a range of different ages and topics. It also offers the teaching staff and children flexibility within the system and there is provision in the policy for children to have access to teachers with specific skills, in particular subjects.

In the interest of providing the best education for all students, it may from time to time be necessary to divide and combine class groups into mixed classes, which are smaller in size and offer a better pupil-teacher ratio; thus benefitting all pupils.

Aims and Objectives:

The policy also facilitates the allocation of rooms suitable to the needs of the children;

- To facilitate the smooth, efficient running of the school
- To enable the teaching staff to professionally develop themselves through exposure to different age groups and curricula
- To maximise the learning opportunities of the children through prudent class allocation which utilises to the optimum, the range of individual teaching skills within the staff
- To provide a framework for the splitting of classes where necessary
- To outline the criteria for placing children in particular mixed-class groups
- To set out the supports which may be used to ensure the best learning outcomes for all children in mixed classes

Policy Content

Class Allocation:

The allocation of teaching duties within the school is a matter for the Principal. However, it is the policy of the school to reach collective agreement and consensus when distributing teaching duties. The Principal facilitates this process in a fair and equitable way. *"The Principal is responsible for the creation, together with the Board, parents of students and the teachers, of a school environment which is supportive of learning among the students and which promotes the professional development of the teachers".* (Education Act – Section 23)



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- Faughart Community National School have currently 4 mainstream classes. At present, there are no split classes. It is school policy to rotate classes. At the end of the year, all teaching staff completes a form in which they list the 3 classes they would like to be assigned to for the coming year in order of preference.
- The Special Education teachers have the option of returning to teaching mainstream classes. Should a mainstream teacher indicate a desire to join the Special Education Team, this wish may be facilitated. Courses completed in Special Education and experience will also have a significant bearing on allocation.
- The Principal will allocate classes according to the class preference form completed by the teaching staff. The Principal will also take other factors into account when making these decisions such as;
 - Experience
 - Contribution to overall school policy development in relation to teaching and learning
 - Range of classes already taught / not taught
 - Motivation
 - Personality
 - Special talents
 - Opportunities for development such as Special Education, shared teaching etc.
- Some teachers may have larger classes than colleagues. This normally 'evens itself out' over a number of years, so that an equitable workload is achieved. However, if the class size differences are significant and the larger size would impact on the learning opportunities within the room, the principal may consider splitting the class.
- Class allocation relies heavily on compromise and consensus. If this is not possible to reach, the Principal will make an informed decision based on suitability, experience (whether a particular teacher has had the class before), special talents, courses taken and what is in the best interests of the children concerned. An interview is not held.

Framework for the splitting of classes when necessary

- 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. A decision will be made on how best to organise classes with a view to providing the best educational opportunities for all children.
- In consultation with the class teacher, and if necessary with previous teachers of the classes involved, lists of possible groups are drawn up.

Criteria for placing children in particular class groups

We group the children in such a way so as to maximise the learning outcomes for each child. When dividing a class into groups, to be placed in separate classes, there are certain criteria to 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



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- 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
- 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
- It would be the intention that once a new class is formed, every effort would be made to keep that class together going forward
- Classes may also be split in an open and transparent manner such as alphabetically or by age.

This means it is not always possible to keep friends together but the teachers of each class to be split are consulted on the above issues and much work goes into the preparatory stage of the arrangement prior to the summer holidays. Sometimes pupils move to or from the school without informing the school in advance. This is outside the control of the principal.

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.

Explaining to parents why their child is in a split class.

The principal has overall responsibility for grouping or splitting the classes where numbers would otherwise be too big or too small in one class. The DES' objective is that class size should be as equitable as possible across all class levels. The pupil-teacher ratio is dictated annually by the government budget and schools have no control over this. However, the teacher will ensure that each pupil in each class will be working on the set of skills from the national curriculum for the correct class.

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. Another arrangement for Learning Support which may suit the class is for either the Class Teacher or the Learning Support Teacher to withdraw small groups of children.

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

Enrolment of new children into split classes

The rationale behind this policy is for the formation of smaller classes within the recommended pupil-teacher ratio. The enrolment of new children into these classes is to be avoided as much as possible. In this case, due regard must be given to the school's enrolment policy, and the terms of Section 29 of the Education Act.

The allocation of teachers to mixed classes

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



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Notifying Parents

Where feasible, parents will be notified of the next year's teacher allocation before the end of the academic year. All decisions made in respect of teacher allocation may be subject to change at any stage before and during the school year. To date, we have noted increased enrolment during the summer in Faughart CNS, so therefore final decisions may not be made until the enrolment has been finalized.

Classroom Allocation:

- It is not the policy of the school to move classes from specific rooms unless in exceptional circumstances such health and safety issues.
- The design of the school allows for ease of access to the Learning Support/Resource room, ICT/Library room and Assembly hall for all classrooms.
- All classrooms are of equal dimensions, thus eliminating space considerations

Roles & Responsibilities:

All staff, under the guidance of the Principal participate in and contribute to the implementation of an effective and equitable class allocation policy. Grievances are dealt with at a Principal/teacher level and will only transfer to the LMETB HR if a compromise cannot be reached.

Success Criteria:

The school evaluates the success of the policy through;

- a) Participation of all staff in the policy
- b) Smooth hand over of classes
- c) Feedback from all staff
- d) Staff satisfaction
- e) Parental satisfaction

Timetable for Review:

A review will be conducted based on the success criteria outlined, or where consensus and compromise is not achieved.

Ratification and Implementation:

This policy was originally ratified by the Board in June 2022 and is reviewed every two years.



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CLASS PREFERENCE SHEET

Consultation re Class Preference: 2024/2025

Teacher: _____

Present Class: _____

Classes taught previously: _____

Please indicate below your top three teaching zone preferences for next year. The allocation of teaching duties to teachers will be based on the following criteria:

- The collective needs of all the children
- The value of staff rotation as a means of developing whole school approaches to teaching and learning
- The importance of staff rotation in contributing to teachers' professional development
- Fairness shown to the preferences expressed by individual teachers over a period of time
- Balancing the talents and personalities of teachers with the diversity of children in the school.

Please insert '1' opposite your first choice, '2' opposite your second choice and '3' opposite your third choice of Teaching Zone.

Please return this form not later than _____

- ☐ Zone A - Support Teaching, Learning Support, Resource etc
- ☐ Zone B – Junior & Senior Infants
- ☐ Zone C – Rang I & Rang II
- ☐ Zone D – Rang III & Rang IV
- ☐ Zone E – Rang V & Rang VI

Signature: _____

Date: _____