



Tel/Fax: 061 – 31 59 27  
Email: [info@smnslimerick.ie](mailto:info@smnslimerick.ie)  
Website: [www.smnslimerick.ie](http://www.smnslimerick.ie)  
Uimh. Rolla: 12834 S

## POLICY ON CLASS DIVISION & MULTI-GRADE CLASSES

### Introduction:

Saint Michael's National school has five mainstream teaching posts and therefore multi-grade classes are part of the school's structure. This policy was updated in consultation with staff, parents, pupils and the Board of Management.

### Background information:

The Department of Education allocates one teacher to each group of 24 pupils at present. This is known as the pupil-teacher ratio. The principal has overall responsibility for grouping or splitting classes where numbers would otherwise be too big or too small in one class. The pupil-teacher ratio is dictated annually by the government budget and schools have no control over this.

### Aims and Objectives of this Policy

- To provide a framework for the splitting of year groups/classes
- To outline the criteria which is taken into consideration when splitting classes.
- To set out the supports which may be used to ensure the best learning outcomes for all children in multi-grade and split classes

### 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 how best to organise classes with a view to providing the best educational opportunities for all children and in line with Circular 0013/2013 and any other relevant circulars and Department of Education requirements.

### Procedures

When class division becomes necessary either because of large individual classes or because of teacher numbers assigned by the Department of Education to the school, the following procedures will apply:

- The process of class division for the following September will commence in June each year.
- Children will be divided according to their date of birth, taking into account mixed ability groups and gender balance

Certain factors may be considered at the discretion of the principal. These include but are not limited to:

- Fluctuating enrolment / class sizes in the upcoming and subsequent school years
- Classroom accommodation
- Other considerations which may arise at the discretion of the Principal
- Consideration will also be given to the placement of siblings who fall within the same multi-grade class grouping.

Parents will be notified about the division of classes before the school term commences. 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.

Classes that have been split reunite daily to play together on the playground 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. As far as possible, certain lessons, activities and trips etc. for the split class are planned throughout the year to allow them to work together as a group.

This decision for splitting the class will lie ultimately with the Principal, who must consider the needs of every child in the class. No parent will receive special consideration outside the school's stated procedure otherwise all parents would be entitled to the same consideration leaving the task of dividing the group impossible.

### **Supports which could be made available to children and teachers in split classes**

The Principal, the class teacher and special education team will consult on how best to organise the support teaching for the mixed class. In some cases, the special education teacher may work in the classroom with the class teacher, in a team-teaching arrangement. It is possible that the special education teacher may work in the classroom supporting a small group of children, with the class teacher doing the main teaching of the lesson. Another arrangement for support teaching which may suit the class is for either the class teacher or the special education teacher to withdraw small groups of children. All of these arrangements must be considered on a class by class basis, from year to year.

The allocation to classes is the duty of the Principal as per Circular 16/73.

Signed: 

Date: 18/1/24

**The Very Rev'd Niall J. W. Sloane**  
**Chairperson BOM**