



Re-arrangement of Classes Policy

Introduction:

This policy was formulated by the staff and in-school management team of St. Christopher's Primary School, in collaboration with the Board of Management, Parents Association and the Student Council.

In the interests of providing the best possible education for all students, it has been agreed to:

1. Rearrange the three Senior Infant Classes into three new First Classes, each year, by mixing the class groupings.

(Please note the 2024/'25 academic year only, which is the introductory year of the policy, the three first classes will also be rearranged into three new second classes by mixing the class groupings.)

2. Rearrange the three Third Classes into three new Fourth Classes, each year, by mixing the class groupings **(Please note this will not apply until the current first classes and senior infant classes reach the end of third class so the rearrangement of classes at the senior end of the school will not commence until the 2026/'27 school year)**

This policy is being introduced for the 2024/25 academic year and will be applied each year, henceforth, for the aforementioned class groupings.

This document:

- Lays out the rationale for this policy.
- Outlines the criteria on which children will be re-arranged.
- Details the procedures followed when classes are being re-arranged.

Rationale:

Re-arranging classes will broaden and extend children's friendships and social skills through providing them with the opportunity to interact with and bond with a greater number of children, whilst still being enabled to maintain their previous friendships during recreational activities.

Re-arranging classes will have the effect of nurturing and building the confidence and self-esteem of the pupil who may feel different/excluded from those around him/her in the current class. Sometimes, children find it difficult to infiltrate the main class group, often feeling that they are 'on the fringes' and cannot escape from this. These children may find that they fit better into another class group, wherein pupils may find like-minded individuals. Staff will be cognisant of this when assigning new classes.

The re-arrangement will endeavour to equip all children with the ability to cope with transition and change. These are invaluable life-skills. It is widely documented that the transition from primary to post-primary school can be a source of much stress for pupils. One of the main reasons for this, as cited by pupils, is the fear of separation from their friends. Experiences of this change/transition during primary school years will, serve a dual purpose in this regard; it will enhance children's confidence about their ability to integrate into a new setting and reduce their anxiety about separating from their class-group.

The re-arrangement will promote and support a fresh start for every child in the class. This may have the added benefit of giving some children the opportunity to 'reinvent' themselves as they are placed in a different peer group. It is often the case that in-class stereotyping can become a self-fulfilling prophecy. A new class allows children to shake off negative labels.

Re-arranging classes will enhance classroom dynamics through catering for an even spread of personality types across the classes. When children begin school in Junior Infants, they are assigned to a class in alphabetical order. At this stage, there is no way of knowing the personalities of the children. This will emerge, naturally, as children spend a period of time in the school.

The re-arrangement should serve to ensure as fair and equitable a gender balance as possible in all classes.

The re-arrangement will also enable the staff to ensure that all classes are mixed ability, which is the optimal learning environment, as espoused by the Department of Education and Skills. The rationale for this is that children in mixed-ability groups can all contribute at their own level of understanding. Mixed ability teaching provides opportunities for the child with more developed understanding to explain their strategies to their peers, thus strengthening and re-enforcing their own thinking and conceptual understanding. Moreover, their peers can scaffold children who have less understanding. In this way, both parties benefit from the teaching and learning experience. Again, there is no way of knowing children's ability levels when placing them in Junior Infants.

The re-arrangement will aid staff in ensuring that there is a balance in all classes, in terms of children with special educational needs (S.E.N.). This will ensure that the class teacher is in a position to devote the requisite time and energies required to meet the specific learning needs of the children, through the provision of a suitably tailored and differentiated curriculum. Truly inclusive education means ensuring that the system adjusts to meet children's needs, rather than merely expecting children to fit into the system. When a disproportionate level of S.E.N. exists in a classroom, inclusion becomes an ideal, not a reality.

Re-arranging classes will provide opportunities for and inspire children to become more aware of, tolerant of, understanding of and accepting of the various and varying learning and social needs of others.

Criteria:

The following criteria will be taken into consideration when classes are being rearranged:

- Gender balance
- Mixed-ability classes
- Distribution of children with S.E.N.
- Class dynamics

Procedure:

1. A letter will be sent to parents during the month of May, explaining the school's policy on the rearrangement of classes. Parents will be invited to submit five names of children in the year group who they think their child would like to be in class with. The school will make every effort to ensure that at least one of these children is included in their child's class grouping.

2. The aforementioned criteria will be used to determine the composition of the new class groupings.

3. The new class groupings will be determined by the teachers of the current classes, previous teachers and the Special Educational Needs Team. The Principal will oversee the process.

4. A list of the new class groupings will be issued to all the relevant parties with the end of school year reports, in June.

5. An Induction Day for each new class will be organised during the month of June. Teachers will facilitate 'ice-breaker' and 'getting to know you' activities on this day to support the transition for all pupils.

6. The decision of the school in relation to the composition of the new classes is final.

Communication:

Initially, this policy will be sent to the parents of all children in St. Christopher's P.S, as it constitutes a change to previous school policy. From 2025 onwards, parents of the cohort of children involved will receive a copy of the policy and it will be published on the school website.

Review:

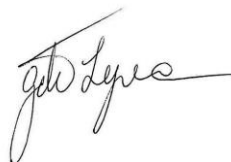
This policy will be reviewed following the first year of implementation.

Ratification:

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management of St. Christopher's Primary School at its meeting on May 23rd 2024



Jennifer Griffin



Íde Tynan

Chairperson

Principal