

**Composite**

**Class**

**Policy**

**Policy Date :\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Review Date:**

**Signed:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**MODEL PRIMARY & NURSERY SCHOOL**

**Composite Class Policy**

**Purpose**

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

Currently the Model Primary & Nursery School has an Admissions number of 260.

This is made up of 10 mainstream classes, 1 nursery class, an Autism Specific Class and a Learning Support Class.

Background information
• A composite class is one where pupils 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 are a wide range of abilities and all pupils will learn in different ways, responding to a variety of methods and resources.

**Composite Class Policy- Principles and Procedures**

The principles behind the policy are:
• delivering the best educational experience for pupils

• Whatever the composition of a class, it is the responsibility of the class teacher to encourage and support every pupil in reaching their full potential

• The teachers and Principal will establish a composite class using assessment data and professional judgements of the staff who know the pupils. However, in exceptional circumstances, the principal will have the flexibility to exercise discretion where s/he is satisfied that this is in the best interest of the pupils concerned

• Transparency is essential, and the principal will share the rationale for decisions s/he makes with parents/guardians if requested

**Decisions will be made following the priority order set out below:**

Classes will be determined by the Senior Leadership Team in consultation with the pupils’ previous teacher**.**

1. We will establish classes based on the pupils’ social and academic ability to thrive in the learning environment.

2. Composite classes will be balanced in terms of Gender, Special Educational Needs, Social & Emotional considerations and Behavioural concerns.

3. We will aim to optimise the pupil/teacher ratio where possible therefore enabling teachers to maximise the time spent with pupils. We ensure that numbers in a composite class are less than a single year group class. We also ensure that there is additional adult support provided in the class if possible.

4. The placement of siblings (including twins, triplets etc) in a composite class will be discussed with the parents/guardians first whose views will be taken into account.

5. Parents/guardians will be informed of the composite class structure and their child’s/children’s placement in the summer term. This information will be sent out with the end of school report.

6. In exceptional circumstances changes to classes may have to take place. If this is the case parents/guardians will be informed as soon as possible.

7. We will endeavour to ensure that a pupil is not placed in a composite class for two consecutive years unless remaining with the same teacher e.g. P6 going into P7.

**Handling of parental/guardian concerns**

While there is no formal right to appeal against a decision on a pupil’s placement in a composite class, we will always provide parents/guardians with the reasons for the school’s rationale as to how pupils were allocated to a class. If a parent/guardian 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.

**Benefits of Composite Classes**

• Gains for low-achieving pupils through factors such as continuity of education and smaller class sizes

• Gains for younger pupils through exposure to more advanced materials, role models to emulate and through social support from older peers

• Gains for older pupils through revising subject content, leadership skills and independent learning skills

• Gains for high-achieving pupils through more challenging, independent learning.

Teachers at The Model Primary & Nursery School work hard to promote all of these benefits within our classrooms and throughout the school.

Our teachers differentiate learning to match pupils’ individual levels of attainment and provide challenges to ensure all pupils can extend their learning.

Each class in our school consists of pupils of different abilities. Staff cater for all the differing needs within each class.

Assessments of pupils’ understanding is continuous through observations, focus groups, self and peer assessment, as well as weekly tests. These allow teachers to track and review progress of all pupils regularly.

Any pupils who require intervention are identified and supported quickly. The speed of our ability to identify and support pupils is enhanced by the small class sizes in our school. Provision to support pupils may take the form of teachers adapting tasks, additional small group directed sessions or individualised support programmes.

**Implementation of the Policy**

This policy will be implemented in The Model Primary & Nursery School with effect from January 2024.

**Policy monitoring and review**

The policy will be reviewed annually, and any changes ratified by the Board of Governors.