



# *Scoil Mhuire agus Eoin*

## **Policy on the Rearrangement of Classes**

### Introduction

This policy was formulated by the senior management team of Scoil Mhuire agus Eoin, in collaboration with the Board of Management.

In the interests of providing the best possible education for all students, it has been agreed to rearrange any class/classes in Scoil Mhuire agus Eoin where deemed necessary.

### 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 equip all children with the ability to be able 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 being separated from their friends. Experiences of this change/transition during primary school years will, therefore, 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, 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, children who have less understanding can be scaffolded by their peers. 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.

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

### Procedure

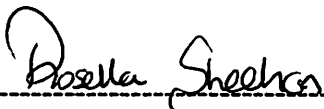
1. If a class has been selected for rearrangement, a letter will be sent to notify parents of this in the month of June.
2. Parent/Student voice will be taken into consideration, and we will strive to have each child with at least one chosen friend.
3. The aforementioned criteria will be used to determine the composition of the new class groupings.
4. The new class groupings will be determined by the teachers of the current classes, previous teachers and the Special Educational Needs Team. The process will be overseen by the Principal.
5. Teachers will facilitate 'ice-breaker' and 'getting to know you' activities in September to support the transition for all pupils.
6. The decision of the school in relation to the composition of the new classes is final.

#### Review

This policy is to be reviewed on a regular basis.

#### Ratification

This policy was ratified by the Chairperson and Principal, on behalf of the Board of Management in June 2024.



---

Chairperson

Board of Management