



St. Ailbe's NS Class and Classroom Allocation Policy

Introductory Statement:

This policy was formulated as a result of a collaborative approach between the Principal and Staff. It evolved over the years and was recently redrafted during an ISM meeting.

Link to School Ethos:

St Ailbe's N.S. 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. Currently St Ailbe's N.S. has 5 mainstream class teachers, 3 SEN teachers, 3 special ASD class teachers, and Administrative Principal.

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

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)

- St Ailbe's N.S. National School has 5 mainstream classes and currently there are no split classes.

- The Special Education Team has the option of returning to mainstream after 4 years, should they indicate such a preference. Alternatively, they may wish to remain in Special Education for a further 4 years. Should a mainstream teacher indicate a desire to join the Special Education Team, this wish may be facilitated if a Special Education Teacher has asked for a move in the opposite direction. If not, collective agreement is sought with options such as deferring a move for a year being put on the table. Courses completed in Special Education will also have a significant bearing on allocation

Class Allocation

Class Clusters

The Principal teacher is responsible for the allocation and if applicable the splitting of classes for each academic year. This will occur after consultation with staff.

The Principal will decide, when applicable the cluster of classes based on the following criteria;

- The pupil numbers in each class
- The DES pupil -teacher ratio
- Classroom suitability / size
- Curriculum Implementation
- Individual learning Needs of a particular pupil/ pupils.
- 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
 - Domestic and social situations
 - Special talents
 - Opportunities for development such as Special Education, shared teaching etc.

Criteria for Splitting Classes

- **Age, maturity and gender balance -equally weighted**
- **Teacher input- taking special needs into account**
- **Fluctuating enrolment**
- **Classroom accommodation**
- **Integration /Reverse Integration from Special Classes.**

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The Principal will allocate classes taking the following factors into account;

- Teacher's own preference
- Experience

- Length of time spent teaching a particular class group – Ideally a teacher will spend a minimum of 2 years and a maximum of 4 years with a particular class before requesting a new placement. The maximum period may be extended in the event of a teacher's continuing professional development requiring his/her placement in SET or at the discretion of the Principal.
- Contribution to overall school policy development in relation to teaching and learning
- Range of classes already taught/ not taught
- Motivation and contribution to learning in the school.
- Special Talents
- Teacher's record of professional development. All staff should make the Principal aware of their own record of professional development and should update this record on an ongoing basis.
- Special circumstances in relation to a particular teacher; requirements for a diploma, requirements for Scrudu Cailiochta, notification of maternity /paternity leave etc
- Opportunities for development such as Special Education, In class Support teaching,
- 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
- 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.
- Class allocation is completed in May of every year. There is no special exemption for teachers in relation to First Communion and Confirmation classes.

Classroom Allocation:

- It is not the policy of the school to move classes from specific rooms unless in exceptional circumstances such as teacher request, physical damage to room or health and safety issues
- The design of the school allows for ease of access to the SET room for all classes. St Ailbe's N.S. has recently completed an ASD unit comprising of 2 ASD special class rooms, Sensory room O.T. room, SET classroom (accommodating the third ASD class), Principal's office, and staff toilets. 5th and 6th class are accommodated in the next largest classroom which is the standard 80m squared classroom. There are 2 48m squared classrooms accommodating the 3rd and 4th, and 1st and 2nd class groupings. There are 3 smaller 30 m squared classrooms accommodating the Junior and Senior Infant class groups, and the SET room.

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 Board if a compromise cannot be reached.

Notifying Parents.

Where feasible, parents will be notified of next year's class/teacher allocation before the end of the academic year. All decisions made in respect of class/teacher allocation may be subject to change at any stage before and during the school year.

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 September 2017 and was reviewed in February 2018. It was reviewed again in September 2022.

References

Education Act 1998 – Sections 22 and 23

Circular 16/73

CPSMA - Board Members handbook p.234