

St Felim's National School

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Charity No: 20109967
Principal: Mrs. Eilís Keegan
Deputy Principal: Mrs. Patrice Clarke

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May 2025

Class Formation Policy

Introduction

This policy was originally developed by the staff of St. Felim's N.S. in collaboration with the Board of Management and parents in January 2016. It is reviewed every three years or earlier if necessary.

Rationale

St. Felim's N.S. is committed to providing high-quality education in an inclusive and well-organised learning environment. Each year, the Department of Education determines the number of mainstream class teachers allocated to our school, based on pupil enrolment figures recorded at the end of September.

Changes in enrolment—whether an increase or decrease—may require the school to review and adjust its class structures to ensure teaching resources are used as effectively as possible.

Aims and Objectives of this Policy

The aim of this policy is to set out the types of class groupings that may be considered in response to changes in pupil enrolment. It outlines the principles that guide decision-making when a new class formation is required, ensuring the fair and effective use of teaching resources.

Implementation

The Principal has overall responsibility for determining how class levels from Junior Infants to Sixth Class are distributed among the available mainstream teaching staff. This decision is informed by current enrolment figures, the school's staffing allocation and the educational needs of the pupils.

The Principal and In-School Management (ISM) Team will consult with the relevant teaching staff to evaluate possible class structures.

The following class groupings may be considered:

- Single-grade classes (*one class level per teacher*)
- Multi-grade classes (*two full class levels combined*)
- Composite classes (*one full class combined with part of another*)
- A combination of the above, depending on school needs

Process and Criteria for class group formation

When forming class groups, particularly in composite classes, the Principal and staff carefully consider a range of factors, including each child's age, gender, learning needs, academic ability, behaviour, social-emotional development, friendships, and previous class placement. The aim is to balance individual pupil needs with whole-school priorities.

We strive to:

- form mixed ability groups
- Maintain a gender balance in each group
- Ensure where possible, that each child has at least one friend in their group
- Consider emotional, behavioural and social factors to support a positive class dynamic conducive to learning.

Class placements are determined through a collaborative process involving teaching staff, who contribute their professional insights and knowledge of each child. This process is guided by careful consideration and professional judgment, with the aim of supporting each child's learning, wellbeing, and social development. Final decisions regarding class placement rest with the Principal, who must balance both individual pupil needs with the operational requirements of the whole school. Once communicated, class placements are final.

Friends & Friendships

While peer relationships are important, it is not always possible to keep established friendship groups together when forming classes. However, every effort is made to ensure that each child has at least one friend in their assigned class. All pupils will have opportunities to maintain existing friendships and build new ones during break times, shared activities, and whole-school events.

Communicating the decision

Class groupings, along with the name of the teacher assigned to each class, will be communicated to parents and guardians in June. Until that time, no staff member may disclose any details about proposed class compositions or teacher allocations.

Parents or guardians with concerns about class placement should contact the Principal directly.

Curriculum Delivery and Booklists

Teaching and learning at St. Felim's N.S. is guided by the Primary School Curriculum and our School Plan, which outlines clear learning objectives for each class level. Teachers plan collaboratively to ensure a consistent and co-ordinated approach across the school.

Our teachers are committed professionals who differentiate instruction to meet the diverse learning needs of their pupils. Textbooks are used as a supportive resource, not as the primary basis for instruction.

Staff Allocation

In line with Circular 16/73, the Principal is responsible for the allocation of teaching duties within the school. Teachers may express preferences regarding class levels; while these are taken into account, they are not guaranteed.

Policy Implementation and Review

This policy will be effective from the date of its ratification. It will be reviewed in Term 2 of the 2027/2028 school year as part of the school's three-year policy review cycle, or earlier if required.

Ratification and Communication

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management of St. Felim's N.S. on 19/5/2025.
The policy will be published on the website and is available to parents and guardians on request.

Signed: Gerry Sheanon
Gerry Sheanon, Chairperson – Board of Management

Date: 19/5/2025

Signed: Eilís Keegan

Date: 19/5/2025

Eilís Keegan- Principal