



# **KILMORIE**

## **PRIMARY SCHOOL**

## **Re-balancing classes Policy**

Approved: Chair of Governors & Headteacher

Date: Updated June 2023

Next revision: May 2024

## Background

At Kilmore Primary School, we are committed to ensuring an effective learning environment for all pupils. The balance of pupil characteristics and needs in each class, across the three different classes in a year group, can have a profound impact on the progress and happiness of each child.

Our children have a varied experiences prior to starting reception and at times we have little understanding of their accessibility to education, which can cause an imbalance across the year group. We also have a continuous enrolment policy; as a result, we take in children throughout the year, placing them in classes where spaces are available. By the end of an academic year or phase, with the natural movement of children in and out, classes can become quite unbalanced in terms of gender, education, language, personal, social needs, maturity and friendships.

Our policy at Kilmore Primary School is to review the classes at the end of the reception year and the end of year 3, re-balancing classes depending on the needs of the school and children. Whilst the mixing up of classes will automatically take place at 2 points throughout the primary phase, occasionally it may happen at other times when deemed necessary.

## Rationale

- To create opportunities for children to learn and play with a wide variety of peers
- To develop relationships with a wider group of friends
- To further develop children's collaborative skills for learning
- To enable improved social interaction and the development of social skills between different sets of pupils as they move up through the school
- To ensure that classes remain balanced in response to pupil transfer (mobility); transition between phases and year groups and changes to individual needs within each class
- To promote a greater sense of community in a large three-form entry primary school (being part of a year group, not just a class)
- To prepare children for secondary school where they will be taught in different classes throughout the year

## Principles

- Class mixing will automatically take place at two key transition points:
  1. End of Reception
  2. End of Year 3
- The arrangements for mixing the classes are based on the professional judgements of class teachers, the Inclusion Team and the Senior Leadership Team (the final decision lies with the school)
- We will always consider what is in the best interests of the classes and cohort as a whole when making decisions
- We will communicate the criteria for class mixing in an open and transparent way
- We will always consider the happiness and welfare of children and will take into consideration existing friendship groups when we create new classes

- The children will be asked to name three other children they may like to be in a class with after the re-balance. When teachers allocate children into new classes, they will ensure that each child is in a class with at least one of the children they named

## Process

- Class Teachers and Teaching Assistants observe the children's friendships at work and play
- The Assistant Head teacher for the phase will meet alongside the class teachers to plan new classes to ensure a good balance of friendships, range of educational, social and personal needs, gender and maturity are represented in each class
- Class Teachers will consider the list of friends that children have nominated
- The whole Senior Leadership Team (including the Headteacher) will meet with Class Teachers to discuss and finalise groupings
- The Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team meet and approve and allocate classes
- New classes are shared with parents and children in July when the end-of-year-reports are published

## Criteria for Class Mixing

Classes will be mixed to achieve a good balance according to the following criteria:

- Term of birth
- Gender
- Attainment levels
- Range of special educational and learning support needs
- Stage of learning English as an additional language
- Social and personal needs
- Friendships\*

*\*Friendships: Over the course of their Primary years, children will have a range of friendship experiences. We find that with children some friendships can be very fluid, whilst others can stand the test of time. Taking this into account, when we prepare to draw up the class lists, we will consider the children's relationships with their peers both in the classroom and in the playground and the children's list of named friends.*

Once class lists have been published, changes will not be possible as this would make the process unmanageable. The new class lists will be based on the professional judgements of our team, with the best interests of our children at heart.

## Timescales for changes to be made:

- Class Teachers and Teaching Assistants discuss their observations of friendships in the Summer Term
- Observations are considered along with the criteria listed before the May half-term
- Class lists are drawn up by teachers and shared with SLT (directly after May half term)
- Class lists approved by Headteacher (June)
- Class lists communicated to parents and children in June and transition arrangements put in place as part of the end of year arrangements

## Review

The Policy will be reviewed annually and agreed by the Governing Body.

The Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team will review the process and criteria for each year's class mixing arrangements.