



Class and Classroom Allocation Policy

Background:

St. Sylvester's is an Infant school comprising five Junior Infant classes, five Senior Infant classes and five First classes. In line with circular 0019/19 'Staffing Arrangements in Primary Schools' the school has an allocation of seven Special Education Team teachers, including a SET Teacher shared with three other schools, Pope John Pauls, Bayside Junior & Senior N.S's.

Mission Statement:

"Tús maith – leath na h-oibre" – A good start is half the work

Our mission in St. Sylvester's Infant School is to provide an environment and experience that nurtures all of our pupils spiritually, physically, mentally, morally and socially. We 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.

Aims and Objectives:

The policy also facilitates the allocation of rooms 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, curricula and teaching styles
- To maximise the learning opportunities of the children through prudent class allocation which utilises the optimum, the range of individual teaching skills within the staff.

Allocation of Junior Infants to classes:

Parents are asked to record a range of background information on their child's application form when enrolling including; Pre-school, Creche, Montessori, Siblings, Health Issues, Previous Assessments, Special Needs and English Language Support requirements.

Careful consideration and time is taken with placing children in classes. The background information is used to try to place each child with at least one child they may be familiar with from their Creche / Preschool or Montessori.

Large groups of children who attend Crèches /Preschools and Montessori are divided in order to encourage children to mix and make new friends. Class placement is a matter entirely for the school staff alone as it would be unmanageable to allow parents to choose which class they wanted their child to attend.

In St. Sylvester's I.S., twins and cousins are always enrolled in different classes in order to enhance their own identities, form individual groups of friends and to prevent comparisons in school life.

Classroom Allocation:

Specific classrooms are allocated to the same class levels each year.

Rooms 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 are allocated to the junior infant classes, due to proximity to the junior yard.

Rooms 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 are allocated to the senior infant classes, and Rooms 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15 to the first classes.

Rooms 13, 14 and 15 are located upstairs, and first classes are allocated these rooms due to their increased capability to manage the stairs.

Mobility difficulties and possible safety issues of specific pupils are taken into account by the Principal when allocating classrooms.

How classes are allocated:

The allocation of teaching duties within the school is strictly a matter for the Principal (as per Appendix A) who 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)

The school has fifteen mainstream classrooms. A Classroom Allocation spreadsheet was generated in 2006 by the Principal to keep a record of classroom allocation so that teachers alternate in a fair and equal manner between classrooms.

Each year, careful consideration is taken regarding the needs of the school in any given academic year. Many factors are deliberated, e.g. NQT (Newly Qualified Teachers), career breaks, special leave of absence, maternity/parental leave, children with special needs, children/relatives of staff and class size. We endeavour to allocate mainstream class and SET positions in a fair manner. In so far as it is possible, it is important that all staff members have the opportunity to teach in all areas in order to offer teachers a chance to enhance their professional development in all aspects of education.

Teachers who have children in the school are not allocated to the same class or year group as their own child/ren.

In order to help the Principal allocate classes, all members of staff meet with the Principal in the final term to discuss items such as:

- The current academic year
- Working with:
 - challenging children
 - children with SEN
 - Teachers/ SET's & SNA's
- Any other areas within the school that staff would like to see themselves working in the future e.g. SET
- Continued Professional Development
- Discuss any preferences you may have for or against teaching certain classes (e.g. own children/relatives)

- Interest in joining committees
- Possible new and suitable initiatives for the school
- Share any lessons you would be willing to model or would like to see taught by a colleague

If too many teachers ask to be considered to work in a particular level of mainstream or as part of the SET Team, the Principal will take a number of factors into consideration including but in no particular order:

- The experience of teachers in each level
- Range of classes already taught / not taught
- The importance of ensuring the continuity and shared knowledge of the curriculum is maintained which may require a teacher to remain in a level for two or more years
- Choice of previous year being taken into consideration
- Newly Appointed Teacher
- Requirement for Droichead/Scrúdú Cáilíochta
- Maternity Leave/Parental Leave/Job sharing
- Motivation and Personalities of teachers
- Personal circumstances of teachers shared in confidence with the Principal

Requests will be recorded and taken into consideration for following years. Requests cannot always be accommodated.

Some teachers may stay with their current class for a second/third year and may have larger classes than colleagues. This normally *'evens itself out'* over a number of years, so that an equitable workload is achieved.

Mainstream Allocation:

Taking into consideration the Education Act (1998) and Circular 16/73 (*see Appendix A*) every year the Principal usually allocates mainstream classes (Junior, Senior, First) by rotation i.e. if a teacher has Junior Infants one year, they usually have Senior Infants the following year and so on. Mainstream teachers are usually allocated to a different class and classroom each year. However, to ensure consistency is maintained to successfully deliver the curriculum the Principal may decide to leave a teacher/teachers in the same year group. Junior Infant classes are not usually allocated to an NQT who has Droichead induction to complete or to teachers who have given the Principal confidential notice of pending maternity/parental leave.

SET Allocation:

In order to maintain the smooth running of the school and to minimise disruptions to class, mainstream classes are usually allocated to one member of the Special Education Team who supports the children with all aspects of literacy, numeracy and EAL. (English as an Additional Language).

The Board of Management of St. Sylvester's I.S. would like to offer all teachers at some stage of their career the opportunity to work as part of the Special Education Team. (SET) These posts are rotational. Coaching is embedded in the culture of the SET Team where the most experienced SET teachers share their knowledge with the newer teachers who join the Team. Teachers who therefore express an interest to join the SET Team, should be prepared to join the team for a minimum period of three to six years.

When mitigating circumstances arise, Special Education Teachers may request to return to the mainstream at the end of any academic year. The request will always be considered but not always granted. The Principal will take note of when it cannot be immediately accommodated in order to endeavour to accommodate the following year. Special Education Teachers may apply to complete the Special Education Diploma with Board of Management approval having worked on the SET for one year.

This approval is always dependent from year to year on staffing levels/career break/ maternity and parental leave etc.

Splitting/Amalgamating Classes:

On occasion, it is necessary to split/amalgamate classes according to enrolment figures or unforeseen circumstances which may arise. The Principal in consultation with class teachers, the SET, parents (*who are asked to nominate one or two children who they would like their child to be with*) and external educational support agencies, (*if required*) strives to ensure the best interest of the children are met.

Job-sharing:

The Board of Management sanctioned teachers could apply for job-sharing positions under restricted and structured circumstances in 2017 in accordance with the Job-Sharing policy.

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.

Ratification and Communication:

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on the 16th February 2022. The policy will be available to parents, if requested. This policy will be reviewed in 2026.

The Board of Management reserves the right to add to or amend this policy from time to time as deemed necessary.

Signed:



Mr. M. McKenna,
Chairperson,
Board of Management.

Appendix A

- The allocation of teaching duties within the school is a matter for the principal. **The Education Act (1998) Section 22 (2) (d) (i) states that** ... *subject to the terms of any applicable collective agreement and their contract of employment teachers shall carry out those duties that are assigned to them by or at the discretion of the Principal.*

- **Circular 16/73:**

13. ...*he/she should arrange a fair distribution of teaching duties among the staff, taking into account the needs of the pupils and the abilities, experience, personality and preference of each teacher. He/she should utilise the services of staff with special qualifications or aptitudes in an organising or advisory capacity* (CPSMA Management Board Members' Handbook, 2007)

- **Education Act (1998) Section 23: The Principal shall..** (*CPSMA Management Board Members' Handbook, 2007*)

(c) be 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

- **Leadership+ April 2007** *Class Allocation: A guide to good practice p.10-11, and Principal's right to allocate classes p.12-13*