

Procedure Title - Organising Classes in Primary Schools

Management Information	
Lead Officer	Name: Laura Hammersley
	Designation: Devolved Finance & Resources Officer
	Tel: 0131 469 3420
Lead Service Area	Schools & Lifelong Learning, Communities and Families
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Date Agreed	06/06/2020
Agreed by	Andy Gray, Head of Schools & Lifelong Learning
Has Screening for Equality Impact been undertaken for this procedure	Yes/No: Yes <i>(please specify)</i> Date 06/06/2020
Has Implementation and Monitoring been considered for this procedure	Yes/No: Yes <i>(please specify)</i> Date 06/06/2020
If appropriate has Health and Safety section had oversight of this procedure Name of Health and Safety contact	N/A

Definition: Procedure – An agreed method or approach to comply with Policy, Legislation and Departmental Decisions.

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1. PURPOSE

Classes in primary schools can include single stage, composite, team taught and more flexible arrangements. All these arrangements are a normal part of primary school education in both Edinburgh and Scotland. Parents sometimes express concern about different types of classes and children transitioning between different class arrangements.

This procedure document provides a formal framework for Head Teachers to use. It is designed to give practical instructions to Head Teachers and will help ensure that all Head teachers use a range of criteria when selecting pupils for classes and that the range of criteria selected is applied across all the classes in a school.

2. SCOPE

The procedure applies to all primary schools and all year groups P1-7, the procedure covers the following

- Selecting pupils for classes
- Learning and Teaching in different classes
- Operational differences for different type of classes
- Reorganising classes
- Communicating with parents on class organisations

3. DEFINITIONS

Single Stage class - class made up of children from one year group, sometimes referred to as a straight class.

Composite class – a class made up of children from two or more different year groups.

Team Teaching class – where two teachers teach a class that has more than the legal class size maxima. The teachers are both in the class at the same time and are jointly responsible for planning, teaching, assessment and liaising with parents.

Flexible Teacher Arrangement: an arrangement where an additional teacher works in more than one class, for example, a group of 60 pupils split into two classes of 30 both assigned a teacher, a third teacher splits his/her time across both classes equally, enhancing the teacher:pupil ratio. The arrangement is put in place to enhance the teacher:pupil ratio where the classes are already within the legal class size maxima.

Flexible Year group Arrangement – a flexible ‘classroom free’ year group arrangement where pupils move around different learning zones.

Gender – includes children who identify with another gender and children who identify as non-binary.

Parents – refers to parents and carers

4. ACTIONS

Class Formation – Timeline

Date	Action	Notes
November	Head Teacher submits annual class organisation form	
December	Devolved Finance & Resources Officer review all forms and meet with a Senior Education Officer and colleagues in Transactions, Legal, Estates Planning and Communications	P1 intake limits and provisional class organisations are agreed
By end February	Head Teachers set up Parent Council/Forum meeting to discuss provisional class organisation	Head Teachers to stress that the position is changeable and that pupils will be advised of their class before the end of session
February - June	Devolved Finance & Resources Officer & Transactions team monitor pupil numbers.	Any significant changes may result in a change to the class organisation
May – June	P1 Pupil Placement Appeals take place. The Communities & Families Department defends earlier decisions made on P1 intake and class organisations.	If the Appeals Panel overrule the Department's decision this can result in a change to the proposed class organisation (often with composite classes being formed).
August – September	Head Teachers notify the Devolved Finance & Resources Officer of any significant roll changes.	If pupil numbers have dropped significantly the class organisation may need to be changed and staffing changes made.

SELECTING PUPILS FOR CLASSES

Regardless of the type of class, the same selection criteria must be used for all classes in a given school. Head Teachers will use a range of criteria. The selection criteria include:

- Meeting learners needs
- Age (stage appropriate)
- Friendships
- Gender balance
- Exceptional circumstances

Not all the above criteria need to be used but more than one criterion must be used.

The specific criteria chosen will vary across schools, and professional judgment will be used to best meet the needs of learners in individual schools.

There is no appeals process for parents unhappy with decisions.

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LEARNING & TEACHING IN DIFFERENT TYPES OF CLASS

The ways in which learning and teaching are organised in primary schools means that the work is tailored to meet the needs and current achievement levels of individual pupils. All our teachers are trained to work with mixed ability classes whether in a single year group class, a composite class, a team taught class or a flexible arrangement. In all primary classes there will be wide ranges of abilities and all children will learn in different ways, responding to a variety of methods and resources. Our teachers are well able to adapt to the different needs within any class and plan accordingly.

Much of the work undertaken in our Primary Schools is in small groups and teachers plan in such a way to ensure that all pupils progress through Curriculum for Excellence at the appropriate level.

OPERATIONAL DIFFERENCES FOR DIFFERENT TYPES OF CLASS

Although the guidance for selecting pupils is the same for all classes there will still be some organisational/planning differences for different types of classes.

Composite Classes

Composite classes are generally created where there are imbalances in pupil numbers, for example, if one-year group has too many pupils to form a single class and the neighbouring year group is smaller, a composite may be possible.

The maximum class size for a composite class is 25 pupils. This applies to all composite classes.

Composite classes should be planned based on a minimum of 5 pupils from one-year group. Schools with smaller pupil rolls may plan for classes with less than 5 pupils from one-year group e.g. schools where the numbers in a year group could be below 10. If a composite class is planned based on 5 pupils but the number drops below 5, there is no requirement for the Head Teacher to reorganise classes and move an individual child to make up numbers.

When planning composite classes, year groups should not normally be split 3 ways, for example, a P2 year group would not be split into P1/2, P2 and P2/3. A split of P1/2 and P2/3 would be acceptable.

For schools where a year group is made up of two or more classes and a composite is to be formed, it would be normal practice to consider ALL pupils in the year groups affected, for example, if there were two P2 classes and two P3 classes and the new organisation was to have one P2 class, one P2/3 composite class and one P3 class, all the P2 and P3 pupils would be taken into account when selecting pupils for classes. If, however, the split of the composite involved a small number of pupils from one-year group e.g. a 5/20 split, the recommendation would be to select the pupils from one class instead of selecting fewer pupils from different classes.

Team Teaching Classes

Team teaching classes are generally created in schools where pupil numbers cannot be accommodated within the classrooms available.

Team teaching can occur in any year group but it is most common in P1. For example, an intake of 60 may be agreed for a class of 25 pupils and a class of 35 pupils with two teachers. The pupil limit set in P1 is normally set at a multiple of 30 so that the team teacher can be removed from the class the following year. Occasionally the intake limit may be a multiple of 33 which may mean that the team teaching arrangement will be in place for longer (P1-P3, then removed in P4 when the class size limit increases to 33). Intake limits may be set at a different number to specifically cater for large catchment demand.

There is no legal maximum number of pupils that can be taught within a team teaching arrangement. The agreed maximum for a given class will be dependent on the physical size of the classrooms, required teacher:pupil ratio for the particular year group, pupil intake limit agreed and future progression of the class through the school stages. As such, the maximum size for team taught classes will vary across schools.

Probationer teachers must not be part of a team teaching arrangement.

Normally team teaching arrangements are agreed in January but depending on the movement of pupil numbers (particularly in P1) decisions may be made closer to the end of the school year or in rare cases over the summer holiday period.

Occasionally, a team teaching arrangement may be agreed on a short-term basis, particularly if numbers are very close to the legal class size limit and are expected to drop. For example, funding may be agreed until the October break and reviewed.

When a team teaching class is disbanded the minimum number of pupils to consider moving from one class to another would be 5, in line with the practice for composite classes. However, the Head Teacher may choose to move all the children around to create the two classes of 30.

Each pupil must be assigned to a named teacher and it is important that team teaching classes are recorded correctly on SEEMIS. Team teaching arrangements can be recorded on SEEMIS in one of two ways, depending on the classroom layout:

Example

A group of 60 P1 pupils across two classrooms can be recorded as either 3 x 20 with named teachers (if classrooms allow for open plan working) or 1 x 35 with two named teachers and 1 x 25 with a named teacher.

If the latter arrangement is in place it is necessary to select the "2 Teacher" tick box on SEEMIS (via Application>ScotXed>Pupils>ScotXed Pupil Aggregate Data)

The pupils must not be recorded as 2 x 30 with three teachers, this is commonly referred to as a flexible or floating teacher arrangement. This arrangement does not meet class size maxima / pupil:teacher ratio requirements and should only be used to enhance the pupil:teacher ratio e.g. in positive action schools.

Flexible Teacher Arrangements

These are not permitted where team teaching is in place to address the legal class size. These arrangements are only permitted where the team teaching is in place to enhance pupil/teacher ratios, for example, positive action schools may have additional teaching staff in place to assist with teacher:pupil ratio or to address specific needs in a class, as opposed to legal requirements.

Flexible Year Group Arrangement

Pupils do not have a fixed classroom, instead they move around different learning zones and the grouping of pupils may change across the zones. Pupil:Teacher ratio must be adhered to within these arrangements.

REORGANISING CLASSES

Class organisations are reviewed annually, this means that pupils may need to be reorganised on an annual basis. Head Teachers may decide to reorganise children between classes even if the overall class organisation isn't changing.

When reorganising year groups it would be normal practice to consider all the pupils in the year group but there may be some instances where a Head Teacher uses their professional judgement NOT to include a particular class or group of children, some examples include:

Example 1. a composite class is being disbanded and the split of the stages in the composite meant that there was a small number from one year group e.g. 5 pupils. The Head Teacher may decide that all five pupils move together into their new class.

Example 2. In P1 the classes were split P1a 25 pupils P1b 35 pupils with a team teacher, moving into P2 the classes are to change to 2 x 30 pupils. The Head Teacher may decide not to reorganise all the children, but to move five pupils from the team teaching class to the neighbouring class.

Transitioning from the Previous Procedure on Composite Classes

Some schools will have class organisations in place where pupils were selected for composite classes using the Department's previous procedure. Assuming a class reorganisation is not required, the Head Teacher has the option to let the classes roll forward as they are or to reorganise children within the same organisation using this new procedure. In such cases, good practice would be to consult with the Parent Council or wider parent body to reach a consensus on how to proceed. The Department will not insist established classes are reorganised to fit with the new procedure, this may mean a period of transition before all classes organised by age become disbanded.

COMMUNICATING WITH PARENTS

Parents should be informed of changes to a class organisation, or the rationale for reorganising children within the same class organisation, as soon as possible. We ask that Parent Council meetings are arranged for all schools by the end of February, however, a Head Teacher can

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choose to consult wider. It is important that parents are made aware that a proposed class organisation can be subject to change (sometimes as late as October, after the pupil census).

Although the class numbers may be agreed early, Head Teachers are advised to make the decision on the selection of pupils nearer to the end of term. Delaying the decision allows for P1 placing appeal outcomes to be taken into account and the needs of those children to be considered alongside children already on the roll.

There is no appeal process for parents to appeal against their child being selected for a particular class.

Queries regarding pupils being selected for particular classes should be dealt with in school. The Communities and Families Department can provide further advice as required.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES

The Devolved Finance & Resources Officer has responsibility for the maintenance of this procedure

Primary Head Teachers are responsible for following the procedure

6. LINKED DOCUMENTS

The Education (Lower Primary Class Sizes) (Scotland) Regulations 1999

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/1999/1080/contents/made>

The Education (Lower Primary Class Sizes) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2010

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ssi/2010/326/made>

Class Organisation Leaflet

7. RECORD KEEPING

Record Title	Location	Responsible Officer	Minimum Retention Period
Class Organisation Returns	BC 1/2 Waverley Court	Laura Hammersley	5 Years*
September Census Returns	BC 1/2 Waverly Court	Laura Hammersley	5 Years*

*Please note there is no legal minimum retention period.

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