



Feabhra/Márta 2020

Reconstitution of Classes Policy

Introduction

The Board of Management of Belgrove Senior Girl's School supports the reconstitution of classes within the school.

We the Management and Staff of Belgrove Senior Girls' School believe it is of benefit to the girls to be exposed to different class groupings and to be afforded the opportunity to make new friends while in the secure and nurturing environment of our school.

This policy is the product of whole staff collaboration in tandem with the Parents' Association and the Board of Management.

Reconstitution of classes will normally apply at the end of second class, which is the end of the Junior Curriculum in the primary school.

In accordance with The Department of Education and Skills, the organisation of pupils and of classes is deemed to be the remit of the principal.

Circular 16/1973; The Principal Teacher and Organization

12. In consultation with the staff he should decide on the organisation of the pupils for teaching purposes

Reconstitution Rationale for Parents

1. In Belgrove Senior Girl's School our aim is to educate our girls in a holistic manner, giving them the resilience, the confidence and the self-esteem to deal with the pressures of modern society they will face as they mature. The children will learn to recognise their own character strengths, how to behave as a good friend and how to form positive relationships. The Senior Cycle of Primary Education begins in third class and we would like to give your daughter the opportunity not only to enhance her academic abilities but also to broaden her social circle.

2. The majority of our girls are very happy in school, they always have a friend to play with and they rarely feel left out or alone. But this is not always the case. We have found that as the girls move up through the school, cliques can develop, at times a sense of isolation can deepen and some girls are never afforded the opportunity to explore new friendships. This sense of stagnation can affect the happiness of our girls which in turn can impact on their learning. If a child is being left out or isolated by a group for a reason that is not apparent to them, this is far more upsetting to them, than when the opportunity to make new friends is presented to them as it will be when the classes are reconstituted. David Coleman, (Clinical Psychologist), wrote on June 7th 2016 *"It is easier for children to be pragmatic, and to move on, when they don't feel any sense of rejection by their friend choosing not to be a friend. Even the loss of a friend, like when a friend's family moves away, is easier to bear when the reason for the separation is more transparent, and due to the decisions or actions of others. Your*

daughter may still feel the loss of their friend ... but, they are often quicker to recover, including branching out to make new friends when they know that their friend didn't make an active choice to leave them”.

3. Reconstitution will help to further develop their social skills and to continue to expand their friendship groups. The classes will continue to have lots of interaction together in yard, during sports and as they work co-operatively on many aspects of school life.

Role of Parents

Your positive and supportive attitude is a key element in achieving a successful outcome of the new group. Your first concern will be for your daughter's happiness. Please see Appendix A.

While no one factor will determine in which class a pupil is placed, the following criteria may apply.

Criteria governing class placement include

- The prescribed pupil teacher ratio
- The Primary School Curriculum
- Learning styles/ behavioural patterns of pupils
- Allocation of access to SNA
- Previous experiences of the pupil parents/ guardians
- Friendship groups/social patterns
- Results in standardised tests
- Previous composition of classes

Considerations for Reconstituting Classes

- It is considered best practice to form mixed-ability groups. The girls will not be streamed.
- The Department of Education and Skills pupil teacher ratio of 26:1 for mainstream, non DEIS schools will be upheld where possible.
- The dynamics of the class must be considered. Emotional, behavioural and social factors which may influence the dynamic of the new class will be taken into consideration when forming new groupings.
- The needs of children with SNA access will be central to any allocation.

School Method for Reconstituting Classes

- Reconstitution will provide the girls with the opportunity of meeting and getting to know all the girls in their own year group throughout their school life. This is very important for the social development of each child and links into the SPHE program. It helps the girls to get used to change within a safe environment, and with support.
- The girls will be asked to choose a group of 5 friends they would wish to be in class with and the team (consisting of class teacher, SEN teacher, SNA (where applicable) and the Principal) will endeavour to place them with at least one friend.

1. Currently, in second class during the second or third term, the teachers mix the class groupings for Yard Games. The girls are also mixed for some teaching regarding SESE. This team teaching continues through the school where the children get the opportunity to work with different teachers and with girls from other classes for certain subjects. This cooperative learning strategy is an innovative and exciting way for the children to mix.
2. **Early in the second term of second class**, the SPHE program has a focus on 'Friendship.' Teachers teach a series of lessons on the importance of friends and what friendship means. At the end of this scheme of work every girl fills in a personal 'Friendship Worksheet' where they write in the names of their "Best Friends and Other Friends".
3. **At the start of the third term** teachers, as professionals, come together to identify the optimum grouping for the benefit of the children. A meeting takes place between all staff members associated with the class; class teacher, SEN teachers, SNA('s) (where applicable), and the Principal. The classes are divided into various co-operative learning groups, ensuring that at least one of the children in each girl's friendship form is included in the group
4. **During the third-term**, the children will work co-operatively in these groups. Participation in yard games and SESE subjects will give the girls a chance to get to know each other and get used to working together.
5. The school principal in conjunction with the class teachers may make some changes to these groups initially if there is valid reason, but the method listed above will be maintained.
6. It will seldom be possible to satisfy all demands for groups of friends to be kept together. This decision will lie ultimately with the Principal, who must consider the needs of every child in the school. It is not always possible to keep all friends together but the teachers of each class to be reconstituted are consulted and much work goes into the preparatory stage of the arrangement prior to the summer holidays. Sometimes pupils move to or from the school without informing the school in advance. This is outside the control of the principal.
7. The school principal in conjunction with the class teachers, using their professional experience and judgment, will reconstitute the classes.
8. Class lists will be finalised at the end of this process. Children, parents / guardians and teachers will know their new classes by the end of the school year. This process is carried out with great care and professionalism, with the interests of every girl carefully considered.
9. The children will be given a list of their new class along with their book list in June. Final class listings may also be governed by the entry of new pupil(s) to the school or the relocation of pupil(s) from the school.

10. The parents of each new class will be given an opportunity to meet each other in school before school breaks up for the summer holidays. The Principal, in conjunction with the Parents' Association, will organise an informal get together for the children and parents in the school.
11. If there is a concern regarding the new class set up, the parent/guardian will be asked to give the child a six-week settling in period from the September of third class. If following this time, the child still is not settled, the team will review the situation.
12. Ultimately the aim of every class teacher is to provide a full program of work for the children to best meet their individual needs.
13. The system will be evaluated annually by the school in May (this will include pupil and parent questionnaire feedback at the end of the year) and changed slightly if this is deemed necessary. The original method may change somewhat as fine tuning takes place. It will be outlined in the school Information Booklet, the Application to the Board of Management for Enrolment Registration Form and the Enrolment Registration Form that the school may reconstitute the classes from second class onwards so that every parent/guardian is fully aware of the system when they enrol their daughter in the school.

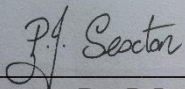
Ratification and Communication

This policy will be in operation in the school year 2020/2021, having been ratified by the Board of Management.

Every teacher will be provided with a copy of this policy for their files.

Date of next policy review: June 2021 or sooner if deemed necessary.

Signed on Behalf of the Board of Management:



Chairman: Dr. P.J. Sexton

Dáta: Bealtaine/May 2020

Appendix A

Guidelines

What if she is separated from her friends?

Please bear in mind that there are a number of classes to be reconstituted. Your daughter will be with some girls from her original class. We will endeavour to place your daughter with at least one friend from a list of 5 friends.

But she might not be with her best friend?

Perhaps not, but while she is engaged in learning in the class she will be mixing with new friends and she can play with whomever she chooses in yard and after school. Parents will continue to organise play-dates with original friends and some new friends too.

Will the school be grouping the classes according to ability?

No we will not. All classes will remain mixed ability groups.

How will I know who my daughter's new classmates and their parents will be?

You will be given a list of the girls in your daughter's class in June. The parents of each new class will be given an opportunity to meet each other in school before school breaks up for the summer holidays. The Principal, in conjunction with the Parents' Association, will organise an informal get together for the children and parents in the school.