

# Ashbourne CNS

## Policy on Multigrade Classes

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### Version Control

Version	Status	Editor	Amendment	Date
0.1	Draft	Jenny Byrne Séamus McCarthy	All Sections	22/02/2023

### Document Ratification

Function	Title	Version	Date
Board of Management	Chairperson	0.1	XX/XX/XXXX

## Ashbourne CNS Policy on Multigrade Classes

### Table of Contents

1. Overview	Pg. 3
1.1 Clarification of Key Terms used in this document	
2. Rationale	Pg. 4
3. Scope	
3.1 Aims and Objectives	Pg. 4
4. Policy	Pg. 5
4.1 Framework for the creation of Multigrade Classes	
4.2 Criteria for placing children in particular class groups	
4.3 Supports for children and teachers	
4.4 Arrangements for schemes of work for Multigrade Classes	
4.5 Approval	
4.6 Accessibility	
5. Roles and Responsibilities	Pg. 8
5.1 Ashbourne CNS Teaching Staff	
5.2 Principal	
5.3 Parents Association	
5.4 Board of Management	
6. Policy Review	Pg. 8
7. Appendices	Pg. 9



## Ashbourne CNS Policy on Multigrade Classes

### 1. Overview

At Ashbourne CNS we are committed to our core values of courage, creativity, collaboration and care. Our school celebrates diversity of belief, language and cultural traditions and we all learn to respect, trust and encourage each other every day. We listen to each other and negotiate our differences. This makes it easy for us accept, respect and include every person for who they are.

‘Learning is the Heart of our Community’ and we are dedicated to the holistic development of every child. Our practice is informed by Glasser’s Caring Habits, Growth Mindset and a Restorative approach. By focusing on inter and intra-personal skills we seek to enhance relationships in our community and with the community. This holistic approach acknowledges that ‘learning takes place in a relationship’ and seeks to help children develop the resilience, self-esteem and relationships needed to overcome the many challenges on the road to adulthood.

We combine socio-cultural building blocks with high-quality approaches to teaching and learning in order to develop each child’s academic, social, moral, emotional, spiritual and creative capabilities. Thus, enabling each child to reach their full potential and play an active part in the local community and wider civic society.

Education is a partnership, and at Ashbourne CNS experienced teaching professionals, students and parents work together with members of the wider community in a welcoming educational environment which is safe, happy, stimulating, inclusive and reflective of the diverse modern society in which we live.

At Ashbourne CNS we seek to provide a safe physical, psychological and social environment that reinforces a sense of belonging to the school community and wider society. We strive to enable every student to realise their full potential regardless of any aspect of their identity, background or ability. We promote a fully inclusive education that recognises the plurality of identities, beliefs and values held by students, parents and staff. We seek to prepare open-minded, culturally sensitive and responsible citizens with a strong sense of social justice.

#### 1.1 Clarification of Key Terms used in this document

LMETB: Louth Meath Education and Training Board

CNS: Community National School



## Ashbourne CNS Policy on Multigrade Classes

ISM: In-School Management

### 2. Rationale

The purpose of this policy is to outline the rationale and process of creating multigrade classes. In the interest of providing the best education for all pupils, it may, from time to time, be necessary to divide and combine class groups into mixed classes, which are smaller in size and offer a better pupil-teacher ratio. Ashbourne Community National School is a rapidly developing school. Our enrolment grows steadily each year. Demand for school places can arise in a variety of grades. As the area of Ashbourne continues to grow, we seek to ensure that children in Ashbourne can be offered a school place in their locality. This is also reliant on the staffing schedule from the Department of Education and Skills. It should also be noted that over 70% of children in Irish primary schools are taught in multigrade classes

### 3. Scope

This policy applies to all individuals within the school community who are responsible for the drafting, updating, approval and distribution of school policies.

#### 3.1 Aims and Objectives

- To provide a framework for the creation of multigrade classes, and in some cases the creation of new classes.
- To outline the criteria for placing children in particular mixed-class groupings.
- To set out the supports which may be used to ensure the best learning outcomes for all children in mixed classes.
- To ensure that classes remain as mixed ability.
- To balance gender and age, in as far as possible.
- To minimise the pupil teacher ratio as far as is possible given the teacher allocation.



## Ashbourne CNS Policy on Multigrade Classes

### 4. Policy

#### 4.1 Framework for the splitting of classes

At the time of planning the classes for the coming year, the Principal will look at the overall numbers in each year group and the number of teachers available to teach them, as per Department of Education and Skills' staffing schedule. He/she will decide how best to organise classes with a view to providing the best educational opportunities for all children and minimising the pupil teacher ratio.

The arrangement of classes will differ from year to year. In some cases, there may be no need to create a multigrade any class in an academic year. A class alteration is put in place for one school year, numbers and staffing arrangements will dictate the arrangement in subsequent years. In short, a class may be created once, more than once during their time in primary school or perhaps not at all. These arrangements are made year to year. They are dependent on student numbers and on the teacher allocation provided by the Department of Education and Skills.

The multigrade class will be together with pupils in the same grade on the same yard for break times. They may also be together for school and classroom initiatives, i.e., Literacy Lift Off.

#### 4.2 Criteria for placing children in particular class groups

When dividing a class into multi grade groups, to be placed in separate classes, there are certain criteria to be taken into consideration:

- Our policy is to form mixed-ability groups.
- The process of forming new friendships is a life skill which is important to develop. A positive and supportive attitude from parents is a key element in achieving a successful outcome in the new groups.
- Classes will be split in an open and transparent manner, giving due consideration to gender balance, in accordance with this policy. An equal, or as close as possible, number of boys and girls will be drawn from the classes to create the new multigrade class.
- Criteria taken into consideration when creating classes will be date of birth, a need to maintain a mixed ability grouping and gender balance.
- Parents of twins and siblings will be given the option of splitting their children or keeping them in the same group. This discussion will take place, collaboratively, between the Principal and parents/guardians of the children.



### Ashbourne CNS Policy on Multigrade Classes

- Siblings who are placed within the various year bands that are to be separated, will not be placed in the same class group.
- Class groupings will be made known to parents as soon as staff have been sanctioned by the Department of Education and Skills and when those positions have been filled.
- If staffing, or space, allows, the multigrade class can come together for certain activities, i.e., assembly, school trips, yard time, etc.
- Special Educational Needs Children and Special Needs Assistants will be allocated to the class groupings at the discretion of the Principal and the Board of Management.
- The decision for creating multigrade classes will ultimately lie with the Principal, in consultation with the Board of Management, who must consider the needs of every child in the school and the staffing allocation.

#### 4.3 Supports for children and teachers

The Principal, the class teacher and the special education team will consult on how best to organise support for the mixed class.

- The special education teacher may work in the classroom with the class teacher, in a team-teaching arrangement.
- The special education teacher may work in the classroom supporting one child or a small group of children, with the class teacher doing the main teaching of the lesson.

These arrangements will be considered on a class by class basis, from year to year

#### 4.4 Arrangements for schemes of work for Multigrade Classes

- The prescribing of books and planning of schemes of work will be differentiated for the core subjects of Numeracy and Literacy thereby each class level will work with materials specific to their class level.
- The class teacher will differentiate the remaining curricular subjects using the various methods of differentiation recommended in the Primary School Curriculum (NCCA: 1999) and Primary Curriculum Framework (NCCA: 2020). Teachers will liaise with other members of staff to ensure the curriculum is covered over the associated two year period.



### Ashbourne CNS Policy on Multigrade Classes

- Due to the nature of varying teaching styles, differing timetables etc., progression through the curriculum and the prescription of homework may differ between the two groupings (multigrade class).

#### 4.5 Approval

Policy is drafted by Principal and Deputy Principal in consultation with staff and Parents Association. It is then approved and reviewed by the Board of Management on a regular basis.

#### 4.6 Accessibility

All policies will be converted to PDF format and stored on the school OneDrive. A version will also be stored in Microsoft Word format for editing, updating and review purposes.

Policies will be published in PDF format on the school website. Confidential policies or policies that are only relevant to school staff will be shared and stored on the school OneDrive as mentioned above.

## Ashbourne CNS Policy on Multigrade Classes

### 5. Roles and Responsibilities

#### 5.1 Ashbourne CNS Staff

Ashbourne CNS staff members involved with the development of school policies will be responsible for ensuring compliance with this policy "Policy on Multigrade Classes".

#### 5.2 Principal

Principal is responsible for the day-to-day management of the school and is accountable to the Board of Management. The school principal will be responsible for the implementation of all school policies and all associated actions involving school policies.

#### 5.3 Parents Association

The Parent's Association is consulted for their feedback on this policy. Their feedback is presented to the Board of Management for discussion prior to ratification.

#### 5.4 Board of Management

The Board is responsible for the ratification of all policies.

### 6. Policy Review

The Review date for the Policy on Multigrade Classes will be set at every two years.

The Principal will be responsible for ensuring that the Policy on Multigrade Classes is within its review date, and she/he will update and review accordingly.

A record will be generated of all school policies and corresponding review dates.



Ashbourne CNS Policy on Multigrade Classes

7. Appendices

Policy Template

[PolicyTemplate 2020.docx](#) (This will be available once we upload documents to Microsoft OneDrive)

Primary School Curriculum, NCCA, 1999,

[https://www.curriculumonline.ie/getmedia/c4a88a62-7818-4bb2-bb18-4c4ad37bc255/PSEC\\_Introduction-to-Primary-Curriculum\\_Eng.pdf](https://www.curriculumonline.ie/getmedia/c4a88a62-7818-4bb2-bb18-4c4ad37bc255/PSEC_Introduction-to-Primary-Curriculum_Eng.pdf)

Primary Curriculum Framework, NCCA, 2020,

<https://ncca.ie/media/4456/ncca-primary-curriculum-framework-2020.pdf>







**BOM & LMETB Ratification/Resolution Process for  
This Policy**

**BOM Ratification**

*Multi-grade Classes Policy.*

<b>Date Ratified by the Board of Management:</b>	<i>11/05/2023</i>
<b>Proposed By:</b>	<i>John Ennis</i>
<b>Seconded By:</b>	<i>Maria Sanchez</i>
<b>Signed:</b>	<i>John J. Ennis</i> (Chairperson, BOM)
<b>Scheduled Date for Review of the Policy:</b>	<i>May 2025</i>

**LMETB Ratification/Resolution of the ETB Board**

<b>Date of Resolution of ETB Board</b>	
<b>Signed</b>	(Chairperson)



