



Lochardil Primary School

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CLASS STRUCTURES 2020/2021 - A GUIDE FOR PARENTS

This year due to the ongoing current situation with Coronavirus COVID-19, we have organised classes based on friendships rather than our usual method of using chronological age. This is an attempt to support HWB and returning to school after such an extended period of sudden school closure. Please be aware this may not be who you, or your child perceives as a best friend, however it is with someone/ others they tend to be friendly with within their current class or year group. We do have a number of contingency plans to be able to implement should they be required i.e. using 'bubbles' if 2m or 1m social distancing is to remain in place when returning to school in August. These bubbles have been formed based on friendships and the classes built around such.

Background information

All Scottish schools are staffed according to Scottish Government guidelines. This provides the appropriate number of teachers required for the total school roll.

National conditions of service for teachers set a normal maximum number of 33 pupils for single year stage classes in primary school. Composite classes, where two or more age groups are taught in the same class, have a maximum capacity of 25 pupils.

Government guidelines to reduce class sizes at P1 to 25 and P2-3 to 30 in single stage classes has also to be taken into account although it should be noted that these capacities are not set in statute and may be exceeded in single age group classes (up to a maximum class size of 33) should circumstances arise following the first day of a new school session.

In determining the staffing complement of a school, the Education Authority has to take into account such national agreements in the context of any proposed housing development within a school's catchment area, the availability of accommodation within each locality and individual establishment and the fact that class sizes revert to 33 at P4.

The realities of local, and indeed national, demographic patterns dictate that composite classes are likely to remain a feature of our school organisation for the foreseeable future.

As a capped school, we only take children that live in our catchment area. For pupils living out with our catchment area, consideration is given if they have siblings currently attending the school.

Some Questions and Answers regarding composite classes.

What is a composite class?

A composite class is a class organisation where children of two or more stages are grouped together. (e.g. P1/2, P4/5/6 etc.).

Do Head Teachers have the authority to form composite classes?

Yes. The Scottish Government Education Directorate acknowledges composite classes as a method of class organisation available to Head Teachers and Scottish Local Authorities, working with teaching trades unions, have

a long-established joint agreement of a maximum composite class size of 25 pupils. The current “Scheme of Salaries and Conditions of Service for Teaching Staff in School Education” outlines the Head Teacher’s responsibility to manage class organisation supported by advice from the education authority. On occasions, it may be acceptable to exceed this figure when an additional teacher is made available to the school. This would result in a team-teaching situation in any composite class where pupil numbers exceed 25.

How is a composite class formed?

The maximum number of pupils in a composite class is set at 25 (although see exception noted above). Class Teachers and the Head Teacher monitor each child’s progress through continuous assessment systems throughout the year. To ensure the best teaching and learning experience of each pupil, the Head Teacher will consider the organisation of composite classes, according to the needs of each child.

What is a Team Teach class?

Under this system, two full-time teachers jointly teach a class of more than 30 pupils in a P1 class. This year we have a Team Teach class at P1 and there are currently 30 pupils placed in this class for 2019/2020. Team teaching is relatively rare, yet not uncommon, and the class sizes involved are typically just a few pupils higher than the number of pupils allowed in a regular class. This means the pupils generally benefit from the improved teacher: pupil ratio.

How are children identified for a composite class?

In forming classes, straight or composite class, the Head Teacher, together with the Leadership Team will discuss and organise prospective class lists then share this information with class teachers.

Together, we have considered pupils:

- Friendship groupings.
- Additional Support Needs.
- Composite history i.e. is he/she currently in a composite, if so we try to allocate them a place within the straight class for the next session.
- Gender (to ensure a reasonable balance in the class where possible)
- Attainment levels & Personal and social development to ensure we can provide support if available.

We listen to pupil voice and we engage in conversation if relevant.

*****FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS*****

Will my child be disadvantaged through being taught in a composite class?

Absolutely not! Traditionally, teachers have grouped pupils of similar ability for learning and teaching purposes within all classes. A large number of children educated within Highland Council schools are taught in composite classes.

My child is at P2 stage and is being placed in a P1/2 composite. How can a teacher settle-in the new intake without disadvantaging my child?

The Head Teacher will ensure that support is provided for P1/2 class teacher to help settle in the new pupils. The class teacher will employ strategies, such as the grouping arrangements already mentioned, to ensure the uninterrupted progress of your child’s education.

How can teachers teach children at different stages in one class?

Teachers are trained to adapt their teaching methods and programmes of study to meet the needs of the pupils in their charge. Every class contains children at different ability levels. Teachers may employ a variety of

arrangements for their teaching, including individual support, grouping of ability levels, settings across class stages and teaching classes as a whole group.

You can be assured whatever class organisation your child encounters, he or she will have their curriculum tailored to ensure their progress at an appropriate pace for their ability.

When will I be informed which class my child is being placed in?

The Head Teacher will inform you about your child's class once numbers are finalised for the new school year. Normally this will be in June during the IRA transition days allocated for our P7 pupils. However, circumstances may arise where the Head Teacher will have to adjust the organisation of classes to accommodate an unexpected intake of pupils or change in staffing. This reorganisation can happen at any time of the year because the school must provide places for pupils within its catchment area if there is an overall capacity within the school.

If my child is placed in a composite class will he/she continue in that class throughout his/her primary school education?

Not necessarily. Classes are reviewed annually in line with roll projections for the coming session and the resultant staffing allocations made by the Local Authority. The Head Teacher will, at the earliest opportunity, strive to inform you which class your child will be placed in.

If my child is placed in a composite class will there be opportunities for my child to continue to work and socialise with the friends he/she established at previous stages of the nursery or the school?

Yes. Your child will continue to meet and interact with year group peers at social times during the school day or during class time through teaching arrangements. Where possible we will provide opportunities for the children to work together on collaborative projects or experiences e.g. coaching sessions from outside providers if this is manageable, and events as a whole year group. We have also adapted our lunchtime rota to allow full year groups to eat and socialise together. The order in which year groups eat rotates on a weekly basis.

Can I refuse to have my child taught in a composite class?

No. The management of class organisation in schools is the responsibility of the Head Teacher. If you have any concerns about composite classes which are not answered through this policy, please get in touch either via email or make an appointment to speak to the Head Teacher to discuss further.

We are working hard to instil resilience in our pupils, where they are confident individuals, and able to apply themselves 100% to achieve success and be happy. We value your support.

Thank you



Mrs A. Kellacher
Headteacher