

Composite Classes

Background

Class sizes in Scottish primary schools are set by government regulation as follows:-

P1 -25 P2 - 30 P3 -30 P4-7 – 33

Schools aim to deliver a high quality education, whilst making efficient use of resources. Schools must put in place a class organization that supports these two objectives, and this may include forming composite classes, which have existed in Scottish schools since schools were established.

What is a composite class?

Composite classes are where children from two or more stages are grouped together and can be found in schools of all sizes. In small schools multi-stage composites are common. Composite classes have a class size maximum of 25. Where possible schools will try to have a minimum of 3 pupils at a stage within a composite class.

How are children identified for a composite class?

The head teacher will consider the organization of composite classes, according to individual needs to ensure the best teaching and learning experience for every pupil. In forming such classes the Head teacher will take account of:

- academic ability
- personal and social development

- chronological age
- gender mix

The criteria as set out are not ranked in order.

When will I be informed if my child is to be in a composite class?

The head teacher will inform you as to the class your child will be in as soon as he/she has finalized the class organization for the school. Normally this would be in mid June, however, circumstances may arise where the head teacher will have to adjust the class organization to accommodate an unexpected intake of pupils.

Will my child have a different learning experience through being taught in a composite class?

No. Traditionally teachers have grouped pupils of similar ability for learning and teaching purposes within straight classes. Teachers have always been expected to organize learning in a way which meets the needs of the individual who have a range of ability levels within any one class.

My child is at P2 stage and is being placed in a P2/P1 composite. How does a teacher settle in the new intake and ensure continuity in my child's education?

The head teacher will ensure that support is provided to the class teacher to help settle in the new intake. Each individual child's learning progresses from what he/she has already learned and the child will follow the experiences and outcomes at the appropriate level from Curriculum for Excellence.

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

A child placed in any class will not necessarily progress through school with the same group of pupils, as the class organization may change. This can result from pupil numbers changing at particular stages, or from the different maximum class sizes that can be formed at different stages.

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 has established at previous stages within the school?

Yes. Your child will continue to meet and interact with previous classmates at social times and during the school day or during class times through teaching arrangements such as setting. There may also be opportunities for children to work together on projects and events.

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

No. The management of class organization in schools is the responsibility of the head teacher. Head teachers consult regularly with parents regarding their children's progress. Where there are specific concerns about a child's learning or progress, schools have systems for consulting or communicating with individual parents on a more frequent basis.