



Cherrywood Federation

Class Mixing Policy

Article 29: Education must develop every child's personality, talents and abilities to the full. It must encourage the child's respect for human rights, as well as respect for their parents, their own and other cultures, and the environment.

Approved by: Anita Saville and The Cherrywood Federation Governing Body

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Next review due by: January 2027

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Background

At both Hatfeild Primary School and Joseph Hood Primary School, we are committed to ensuring an effective learning environment for all our pupils. The balance of pupil characteristics and needs in each class across a year group can have a significant impact on the progress and well-being of each individual child.

Both schools in our Federation have a continuous enrolment policy; as a result, we take in children throughout the year, placing them in classes where places are available. By the end of an academic year, with children joining and leaving the class, classes can become quite unbalanced in terms of gender, attainment, language, personal & social needs, maturity and friendships.

We have a policy in the Federation of mixing up the classes across a cohort in order to maintain balanced classes throughout. Mixing up of classes will normally take place at three points (at the end of Reception, Year 2 and Year 4) but occasionally may happen at other points if necessary, at the school's discretion.

We may also choose not to mix up classes if we feel that no significant learning benefit would be derived. Outside of class mix up, the school does very occasionally in specific, special circumstances and in consultation and agreement with parents, effect class individual moves where it is believed that the student's learning would be improved-though school makes the final decision on this.

Rationale for mixing up classes

This policy reflects the Equalities Act 2010. The Cherrywood Federation recognises that no direct or indirect discrimination may take place on the basis of any of the protected characteristics.

All children, regardless of first language, disability, race, gender, cultural or socio-economic background, should receive equal access to the full curriculum. We believe that our curriculum should celebrate the individuality of each child, providing opportunities for them to develop their interests.

We want our curriculum to provide our pupils with the knowledge and skills that they need so they can be well prepared for future life.

The Cherrywood Federation recognises that High Quality Teaching means effective learning and this is what we strive for in every class in every lesson. Sustained improvement and understanding is dependent upon high standards and expectations of teaching and learning throughout the school, across all classrooms.

At The Cherrywood Federation we review classes each year and mix classes dependent on the needs of the school and children and to ensure that:

- Class learning environments remain broadly balanced across the year group in response to pupil transfer (mobility); transition between phases and year groups, and changes to individual needs within each class
- Address situations where additional needs (educational or behavioural) are adversely impacting the learning environment of classes
- Children are prepared for secondary school, where they will be taught in different classes throughout the year
- Children develop greater resilience to change and transitions
- There are opportunities for children to learn and play with a wider variety of peers
- There are opportunities for improved social interaction and the development of social skills between different sets of pupils as they move up through the school.
- A greater sense of year group community is promoted.

Principles

Through this policy, we are communicating the criteria and principles we use for class mixing openly:

- Class mixing will, where possible, automatically take place at three points:
 - End of Reception
 - End of Year 2
 - End of Year 4
- The arrangements for class mixing are based on the professional judgements of class teachers and the senior leadership team.
- We will always consider what is in the best interests of individual children and the classes in the cohort when making decisions, and strive to achieve a balance.
- We will always consider the happiness and welfare of the children and will take into consideration existing friendship groups when we create new classes. Over the course of primary school, children will have a range of friendship experiences. We find that with children some friendships can be very fluid, whilst others can stand the test of time. Taking this into account, when we plan new classes, we will consider the children's relationships with their peers at school.
- We will be open and transparent about our criteria for class mixing, although we will maintain confidentiality when discussing our reasons for individual decisions with parents and pupils.

- The children will be asked to name three other children they would like to be in a class with after the mix-up. When teachers allocate children into new classes, they will ensure that each child is in a class with at least one of the children they named.

Entry to Reception Classes

During the summer term, once we are given confirmation of the children who will be attending the Reception classes in September. Where we have two classes, the mixing process for deciding the Reception classes are made on the variety of information we have regarding the following:

- Date of birth
- Gender
- Ability levels
- Range of special educational, social and personal needs
- Nursery settings information/home visits/"Stay and play" sessions at the school
- Information given by parents on application forms and in discussions such as existing friendships and needs

Final decisions about classes are made by Senior Leaders in consultation with the EYFS Leader and Reception Team. Parents will be informed of classes on "stay and play" days in the summer term.

Criteria for Class Mixing in other year groups

Classes will be mixed to achieve a good balance according to the following criteria:

- Gender
- Educational needs-SEND, EHCP, EAL
- Pupil Premium
- Social, emotional and personal needs
- Maturity

The Process and timescale

Spring and Summer terms

- Headteacher and SLT make a decision to mix a class based on the needs of the individual cohort
- SLT, Class Teachers and Teaching Assistants observe the children's friendships at work and play and identify and discuss whether and how a mix up would be beneficial for the cohort.
- Class teachers meet together exercising their professional judgements, seeking advice/guidance from the senior leadership team if necessary, to plan new classes to ensure a good balance of the range of educational,

social and personal needs, gender and maturity are represented in each class with the aim of achieving the most settled learning environments.

- Each new class should be composed of a minimum of at least ten children or one-third of the cohort, whichever is the smaller number, from each previous class.
- Key factors that will be considered when creating the new classes would include:
 - Learning behaviours/attitudes
 - Combinations of children which impact adversely on others' learning and wellbeing
 - Additional educational needs (for example, stage of learning English and language spoken, special education needs, and medical needs)
 - Gender
 - Prior academic achievement

June

- The children will be asked to name three other children they would like to be in a class with after the mix-up. When teachers allocate children into new classes, they will ensure that each child is in a class with at least one of the children they named.
- Where a child names less than three children in this process, we will not be able to ensure that they will be in a new class with any of their nominations.
- Class Teachers will consider the list of friends that children have nominated
- SLT meets with Class Teachers to discuss and finalise groupings

July

- Headteacher and members of the Senior Leadership Team meet and approve classes
- New Classes are shared with parents and children in July when end of year reports are published
- Further changes to the new classes will not be considered until at least after the Autumn half term to give time to see how new classes have settled.

Supporting children with change and transitions

Transitions are important events in a child's life, but if managed well, there is no evidence that they have a lasting impact on mental health, academic progress or social and emotional development. If a child is anxious (whether after a mix-up or not) about starting school, we will work with parents to provide support to ease transition anxieties.

These support approaches may include:

- Visual, social stories
- An adult to meet, greet and accompany to class.
- A modified arrival routine or time.
- A 'welcome' task or responsibility for the child to carry out daily.
- Using transition objects between home and school.
- Emotional Literacy Support from a trained support staff member.

- Involving the NHS Family Well Being service, who provide established and successful support programmes for parents that can be tailored to the child and family's specific needs.

Generally speaking, we find that children adapt best to this kind of transition when parents are able to put the following evidence-based strategies in place:

- Discouraging school avoidance.
- Reassuring that it is normal to feel anxious but your child will be ok and there are people at home and school that understand how they feel
- Communicating a clear message of confidence in your child's ability to manage new and tricky situations.
- Communicating confidence and trust in school.
- Normalising tricky feelings about change and transition.
- Reminders of help and strategies that can make things easier.
- Reminders that tricky/anxious feelings are temporary.
- Balancing preparation for transition with a confident attitude towards uncertainty

Review

The Senior Leadership Team and Headteacher will review the process and criteria for any class mixing arrangements at the beginning of each Spring Term ahead of the following year's class mixing.