

ALDERMAN RICHARD HALLAM PRIMARY SCHOOL

Class Mixing Policy



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Introduction

This policy is the product of whole staff collaboration in consultation with the Senior Leadership Team, teachers, pupils and the Governing Body of Alderman Richard Hallam Primary School.

Rationale

At key transitional moments, where classes are unevenly mixed or where large mobility has occurred, it may be necessary to mix classes. This is in the interest of providing the best education for all pupils over the year and to ensure they all receive access to quality first teaching and learning.

We always place the emotional wellbeing of our children at the forefront of all decisions and believe that, although some pupils find change a challenge to begin with, it will have a positive impact in the future. The benefit of mixing classes can be to:

- Create opportunities for children to learn and play with a wider variety of peers.
- Enable greater social interactions between children as they move through the school.
- Ensure that each of the classes remains balanced in responses to pupil development.
- Promote a greater sense of community.

Aims and Objectives of this Policy

- To provide a framework for the mixing of classes
- To outline when class mixes will occur
- To outline the criteria on which children are selected to be placed in different classes

- To set out the support arrangements which may be used to ensure the best learning outcomes for all children when classes are decided.

Framework for the mixing of classes

The end of Reception and the end of Year 2 are key transitional moments in a child's educational journey. We believe mixing classes at these key moments will mean that pupils will be best placed within the year group to ensure that all pupils will have equal access to the best teaching and learning. At the time of planning the classes each year, the Senior Leadership Team will also look at the year groups in Key Stage Two (Years 3, 4, and 5) with the staff members who are currently teaching those year groups. The Senior Leadership Team, in consultation with the class teachers, will decide how best to organise classes to provide the best educational opportunities for all children.

Criteria for placing children in particular class groups

Pupils will be mixed across the year group to give an equal spread of gender, ability and any other factors that may contribute to a year group's needing to be mixed. Other factors may include, but are not limited to: Pupil Premium, English as an Additional Language, behavioural needs, safeguarding support etc.

Positive and supportive attitudes from parents and carers are a key element in achieving successful outcomes. All parents and carers will be given an opportunity to discuss the class mixing with their child/children. They will be asked to provide three children from the year group that they would like in their class for the next academic class. Out of these three names, teachers will ensure that each pupil is with at least one of their chosen friends. In very rare circumstances, it may not be possible for a child to be placed with one of their choices; in this situation, a meeting will be arranged between the child's parents or carers and a member of the Senior Leadership Team to discuss potential next steps.

Decision making for all classes will ultimately lie with the Senior Leadership Team, who must consider the needs of every child in the year group.

Our Commitment to Children

At Alderman Richard Hallam Primary School, we believe that every decision we make should prioritise the emotional wellbeing of our children. We firmly believe that following this policy leads to positive outcomes for our pupils knowing that all staff involved approach this with care and thoughtfulness with the aim that all children feel happy and secure moving into a new class.

As part of the mixing process, pupils will be given opportunities to spend time in their new classes. The first week back in the Autumn Term will also provide opportunities for teamwork activities so that children can get to know the other pupils in their class, providing a collaborative environment for them to work and learn in. We believe this supports all our pupils to emerge as compassionate, open-minded citizens ready to contribute positively to

modern Britain. Our commitment to class mixing extends beyond the classroom. We recognise that preparing our pupils for life in modern Britain involves instilling core values that shape responsible citizens.

This policy will ensure that pupils will get:

- **Diverse learning opportunities:** By mixing classes, we create opportunities for children to learn and play with a wider variety of peers. This diversity enriches their educational experience and fosters a sense of inclusivity.
- **Enhanced social interactions:** As children move through the school, mixing classes enables greater social interactions which can lead to improved collaboration and peer learning.
- **Balanced development:** Ensuring that each class remains balanced in response to pupil development is crucial. Mixing classes allows us to create well-rounded groups that enable all children greater opportunities for success.
- **A framework for success:** Our policy outlines when class mixes will occur, the criteria for placing children in different classes, and the support arrangements in place to ensure optimal learning outcomes.
- **Parental involvement:** We value positive and supportive attitudes from parents and carers. They have an opportunity to discuss class mixing with their child and provide input on preferred classmates. Teachers then ensure that each pupil is placed with at least one of their chosen friends.

Ultimately, the Senior Leadership Team carefully considers the needs of every child when making class decisions. Our approach prioritises care and thoughtfulness, ensuring that all children feel happy and secure as they transition into new classes.

Review Process

We are aware that the class mixing process can be a source of anxiety for our children and their parents and carers and will do all we can to mitigate this so far as is possible. The decision to mix classes is never taken lightly and a great deal of time and thought goes into the new class structure. Despite this, there will be times when the new class mix does not work for every child and we are open to feedback on this.

We ask that parents and carers give their child the duration of Autumn 1 to settle into their new classes, raising any concerns with their child's new class teacher to allow them to put support arrangements in place. If a parent or carer is still unhappy with their child's new class by October half-term, a meeting should be arranged with their child's phase leader (a member of the Senior Leadership Team) to discuss next steps.

APPENDIX 1: Template Letter to Parents and Carers

Dear Parents and Carers,

As the school year draws to a close, we are beginning to think about classes for next year. The Senior Leadership Team, Year Group Leaders and Class Teachers have been working together to discuss the movement of children from one year group to the next.

With such large year groups, we can find that as pupils grow, change and as families leave and new families join our school, the balance in some of the classes is not always as even as we try to maintain. This year, after consulting with staff and pupils, we have decided that moving forward classes in Reception and Year 2 will be mixed to create new classes. Children in Key Stage Two (year groups 3, 4 and 5) will be mixed if it is deemed necessary. This year, it is necessary for a number of reasons to mix our current Year 3 cohort moving into Year 4. For your reference, this process will become policy from September and this will outline our reasons, procedures and expectations.

The benefits of mixing classes include:

- Creating opportunities for children to learn and play with a wider variety of peers
- Enabling greater social interaction between children as they move through the school
- Ensuring that each of the classes remains balanced in response to pupil development
- Promoting a greater sense of community

When mixing classes, all staff involved approach this with care and thoughtfulness that ensures all children feel happy and secure moving into a new class. If your child is in Reception, Year 2 or Year 3, your child's current teacher will be sending home a 'friend finder'. This will give you as parents and carers the opportunity to name three friends that your child would be happy with in their class. Out of these three friends, your child will be placed with at least one of them. Please ensure that all three choices are given as we will not be able to ensure they will be placed with friends where only one is listed. There will be a deadline date given on this letter. Please ensure that your form is returned by this date. Any forms not handed in by this date will not be guaranteed by staff members.

Staff members will take into account friendship groups, abilities, personalities and interests when deciding which class to allocate your child to thus ensuring all classes are as equally matched as possible. As you can imagine, this takes an incredibly long time to ensure that we get it right so please bear with us and we will inform you of your child's new class teacher as soon as possible. This will be given before the 'Class Swap Day' on Wednesday 5th July. Due to legal requirements (GDPR), we are not able to tell you which children will be in your child's new class but you are welcome to share this information if you wish.

We understand that for some children transition can be particularly difficult. Teachers will be working with pupils and staff over these next few weeks to ensure a thorough transition for each child is completed and all relevant information is shared. For those children who are mixed, there are several ways we will be supporting them to ensure that the children are excited to move into their new class. Year groups will plan afternoon activities where pupils will be able to spend time in their new classes and may mix for activities (such as P.E.) where team building games can be played.

APPENDIX 2: Friend Finder

Please ensure that this form is handed into your child’s class teacher by **DATE** by 4pm in a sealed envelope for confidentiality. If we do not receive a form by this date, we will not be able to take your preferences into account.

I hope you will understand that the teachers and support staff will continue to do everything in their power to ensure your child has a positive start for the next academic year.

Thank you for your support in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

The Senior Leadership Team

Your Child’s Name _____ Class _____

The names of three children your child would like to be in a class with. We will guarantee that your child will be with a minimum of 1 of these children.

Please let us know of any concerns you have regarding the class mix:

Parent/Carers Name _____

Signed _____ Date _____