



Highfield South Farnham School

Policy on Mixing Classes

## **Reasons for Mixing Classes**

In Reception year, the classes are created before the children start school. As much as a handover from nurseries are taken into account it is very hard to predict the children's needs and friendships, as these change even with friendships already formed. For this reason, Reception runs as a free flow across both classes (Penguins and Puffins), children have the opportunity to learn with all children in the cohort, both outside during free flow as well as being able to take part in learning opportunities in both classrooms. For this reason during the reception year, we will assess the needs of the children and create classes that the children will stay in through the school. This helps to develop better resilience and develop broader friendships in a safe and comfortable environment.

### ***Benefits for the children:***

- To create opportunities for children to learn and play with a wider variety of peers.
- To enable greater social interaction between children as they move through the school.
- Better resilience in developing friendships in a safe and comfortable environment.
- Being part of a year group team and not just a class.
- Building more relationships and connections with children in their year which will benefit them throughout their whole school journey and in the wider community.
- Enabling new children to settle better into school.
- To promote a greater sense of community in a three-form entry infant school.
- Strengthening the whole school community as families will also have the opportunity to develop relationships with other families within the year group.

### ***Principles:***

- The arrangements for class mixing are based on the professional judgements of class teachers, the EYFS Teaching and Learning Lead and the Head Teacher.
- We will always consider what is in the best interests of individual children and classes as a whole when making decisions.
- We will communicate the criteria for class mixing in an open and transparent way.
- We will always consider the happiness and welfare of the children and will take into consideration existing friendship groups when we create new classes.

## **Mixing Classes**

Each year, the Senior Leadership Team will discuss the needs and make up of the children in each year group and will make a decision on whether the year groups need to be mixed. Our reason for deciding to mix classes throughout school is to improve relationships, so that over a child's journey through school they would be mixed on average three times and be given the opportunity to connect with all of the children in their year group, building strong, positive connections.

### **Deciding new class lists**

We want children to make maximum academic progress and develop well socially and personally and we do not want to put any child in a position where they have a setback. Each year the current class teachers who know the children very well, will work together to draw up the classes for next year. These will be finalised with the Year Group Leader and Head teacher. There will be consistent criteria for teachers to consider in order to harmonise the classes for the maximum benefit of the children:

- Children's views on friendships
- Teachers views on friendships
- Range of educational, social and personal needs
- Age and level of maturity
- Balance of Gender

- Balance of Special Educational Needs
- Balance of English as additional language
- Balance of Ability
- Family relationships such as in year siblings/staff children

### **Including the children in the decision**

The children's opinions are important to us at Highfield South Farnham so we will involve the children themselves in our decision. We will ask them which friends they would like to stay with. It is not our intention to separate good friendships and, of course, the children will still be spending valuable time together out on the playground at break and dinner times. The children's responses will be taken into account when we decided the class lists and every child should have some close friends in their new class. Parents are also most welcome to talk, confidentially, to current class teachers, to let them know their views too, should they wish to do so. All the children mix regularly during busy learning time with the whole year group and so will already know the cohort. The class teachers/year group leader will talk to the children beforehand to explain the process and to reassure the children of any worries they may have.

### **Parents notification**

The possibility of a year group mixing is shared during the induction process to the year in September. Parents will initially be told in the summer term whether the classes that will be mixed. Parents will be informed of the class lists for next academic year in the summer term, before the new classes' transition day, where the children spend time with their new teacher and class mates.