

December 2018
Management Circular No. 80

To Heads of all educational establishments

Guidance and Information on Composite Classes

1. Introduction

Staffing requirements for primary schools are determined on the basis of the number of children against an agreed formula to decide the number of full time equivalent teachers to be appointed to the school. In defining the classification for their schools, headteachers may require to put one or more year groups together to facilitate the creation of classes. Where one or more year groups form a class e.g. a composite class, the total number of children in that class may not exceed 25.

It is for the headteacher to ensure that the classification formed with the complement of teachers provided by the authority should ensure the efficient running of the school. Where additional staffing is provided in accordance with Glasgow City Council's social inclusion policy, this staffing should not be used to form classes but should be available to provide support for learning. In some very small schools, however, it may not be possible to form classes without including the headteacher as a class committed post. While it is permissible for headteachers to be involved as class teachers, this does not assist the smooth running of the school.

2. Criteria for the Formation of Composite Classes

The authority subscribes to the view that a number of professional considerations should be borne in mind when considering the classification of classes. In allocating children to composite classes, headteachers should bear in mind the progress which children have made in their learning. Where possible, a group of children of similar ability, or working at broadly the same pace, should be recognised when allocating children to particular classes.

Headteachers should also be aware of the social needs of individual children where to split them from particular friends would cause difficulties for relationships with other children. Such a decision will be taken for a very small number of individuals and only where headteachers are aware of particular difficulties for children.

3. **Liaison with Parents/Carers**

It is important that parents/carers are informed at an early stage of the requirement for the formation of a composite class. In many small schools parents/carers may have become accustomed to a composite class arrangement as the norm rather than the exception. It is still important, however, that they are informed in good time prior to the start of a session so that any concerns which they may have can be addressed. Appendix 1 is a suggested sample letter which headteachers may wish to adapt to suit their own school situation. Appendix 2 is a leaflet which has been prepared by the authority and which should be issued to any parent/carer who requests further information on the formation of composite classes.

Where a headteacher feels that it would be helpful, a meeting of parents/carers affected by the formation of a composite class should be held.

Where the composite class has to include primary one children, the parents/carers should be informed at the time of registering their child for education, where information is available, of the possibility of the formation of a composite class. Headteachers may find it useful at the time of enrolment to issue a copy of the authority's *'A Guide for Parents on Composite Classes'* along with other relevant documentation such as the school handbook.

4. **Naming of Composite Classes**

Single stage classes are known as primary one, primary two etc. Where a composite class has to be formed it is advised that the older stage is named first e.g. P2/1, P6/5. Parents/Carers often feel that their children are being held back if they are included in a composite class and such a nomenclature may help to dispel this concern.

Headteachers of small schools may have to alter the composition of composite classes on an annual basis. The timing of the Formation of a Composite Class

Headteachers should ensure that their classification for a forthcoming session is made well in advance, in the summer term of the previous session, to allow discussion with parents/carers. This classification should ensure that the likelihood of a composite class being formed throughout the session is reduced. It is important, where any change in classification is required during a school session.

Maureen McKenna
Executive Director of Education



Executive Director of Education
Maureen McKenna

APPENDIX 1

Name of Educational Establishment
Address of Educational Establishment
Continuation Line
Glasgow G0 0AA
Phone 0141 000 0000
Fax 0141 000 0000
Email headteacher@establishment.glasgow.sch.uk
Web www.cestablishment.glasgow.sch.uk

Head of Establishment
Name of Head of Establishment

Name of Addressee
Street Address
Continuation Line
GLASGOW
G0 0AA

Dear

FORMATION OF COMPOSITE CLASSES

Due to changes in the number of children on the school roll it will be necessary to form a composite class at your child's stage. This will be a small class of 25 children or fewer. The smaller number of children will mean that children will benefit from an increase in teacher interaction. Your child may be one of those selected to form the composite class.

The creation of a composite class will not inhibit the progress of learning for those children in this class.

Later in the session I will talk in more detail to parents/carers about the organisation of the class. Thereafter, if you would like to contact me about your child's learning and development, please feel free to do so.

A leaflet explaining the reasons for forming composite classes is attached.

Yours sincerely

Name
Headteacher



When will a composite class be formed?

- Normally such classes will be formed before the start of a new school session so that all involved know what class structures exist for the new school session.
- In certain circumstances, class restructuring may have to take place during the summer break or after the session has started. However, such occurrences will be very exceptional.

Consultation with parents/carers

- Parents/carers will be kept informed of annual class review arrangements.
- If you are concerned about decisions being made, your child's headteacher will be happy to meet with you to answer questions regarding class information and how it might affect your child. You may like to consider asking:-
 - why classes have been formed;
 - about your child's progress;
 - about the sort of work programme your child will follow.

More information

- If you require any more information about class structures in your child's school or about composite classes generally please contact the person named in the box below.

Headteacher

School

School Address

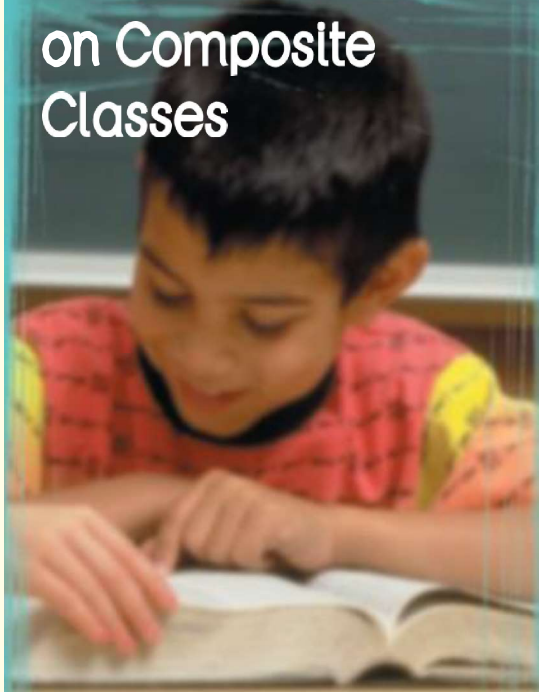
School Phone Number



www.glasgow.gov.uk

Education Services

A Guide for Parents on Composite Classes



Designed by Education Services, Glasgow City Council. 0563019322. (04079). 20.

Your child in a composite class

- Some children are never part of a composite class whilst others, particularly in rural schools, never experience anything else. You should be confident that the professionalism of the staff in your school will ensure that your child will always work within a programme appropriate for his/her age, ability and aptitude. At both school and education authority level, assessment procedures exist to ensure that your child makes good progress within the curriculum.
- Children should proceed through learning experiences tailored to fit their personal level of attainment. This means that children in all classes will follow programmes designed to help them progress at their own level. This applies to all children regardless of whether or not they are in a composite or single year stage class.
- In addition, the school will make every effort to involve children of any one year group in activities which bring the whole year group together. In this way pupils will be able to continue to identify with children of the same age especially at important times such as transfer to secondary school. At the same time, day-to-day activities ensure that the natural identity of each primary class group is maintained.

What is a composite class?

- Primary schools have children at seven broad year stages, Primary 1 to Primary 7. A year stage is defined as a group of children entering primary education at a common date.
- Composite classes are where children of more than one year stage are grouped together to form a class.

Why are composite classes formed?

- Schools are staffed to agreed standards based on the total number of children. However, the numbers of children at each year stage will vary. This means that headteachers are required to take management decisions to organise classes to make best use of available staff, resources and space. Balancing the various factors involves both educational and organisational considerations.

How are composite classes formed?

- According to the teachers' contract the maximum number of children in any composite class is 25.
- The headteacher will structure classes based on advice given by the education authority.
- In Glasgow, composite classes are normally formed on the basis of language and/or mathematics working groups. This means that children working at broadly the same pace and level in language and/or mathematics are grouped together. Such an arrangement is made for the most efficient use of teaching resources and to cause least upset to children.