

THE DUNARD PRIMARY SCHOOL GUIDE TO COMPOSITE CLASSES



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is a Composite Class?

A Composite class is where pupils from two year groups or age stages (for example Primary 3 and Primary 4) are placed together in the same class.

Is my child's learning disadvantaged from being in a Composite Class?

No. At Dunard the needs of your child are carefully considered before being placed into a composite class. Even in a single stage class, there can be an age difference of a year or more. Regardless of age, children's social and emotional maturity can vary very significantly. Even before they come to school, children are generally used to, and

enjoy, mixing with, and playing with children of different ages.

Why are Composite Classes formed?

Staff are allocated to schools based on the total number of children in the school, not the number at each individual year group. This means that where there are significant differences in the numbers at any one or more year group, we may have to re-structure classes by creating classes comprising more than one year group of children.

My child is in a composite class! Is this unusual?

Composite classes are common in schools across Scotland, and routine in rural communities or where a school roll is small.

There is no need to worry if your child is in a composite class. The school and its staff are professionals who want to help your child and you.

How are composite classes formed?

Composite classes are created after a lot of discussion with the headteacher, class teachers and pupil support assistants. This discussion focuses on the needs of your children and the advice given by Glasgow City Council. In Glasgow, composite classes are formed by taking children who work at a similar pace and level in language and/or mathematics. At Dunard this means that we are able to match the right teacher and teaching resources with the right children.

When will a composite class be formed?

Normally 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 exceptional.

How big is a composite class?

The maximum size of a composite class is 25

The maximum size of classes in P1 is 25, P2 and P3 is 30

The maximum size for classes in P4 – P7 is 33

This means that composite classes are usually smaller than non-composite classes. This arrangement often creates a pleasant and intimate learning environment for your child.

My child made good friends in his/her last class. Will he/she be separated from them?

At Dunard we try to keep close friends together when making up composite classes whenever possible. However if they do become separate – don't worry. There are several activities throughout the school year where the whole year group get together. Your child will keep old friends and make new ones. This is a useful skill to have and will help your child in the future as they move from primary to secondary school.

Does this mean that all the children in a composite class work at the same level?

No, not at all! As with every class, children in a composite class continue to be taught in accordance with their individual abilities and needs.

Are the more able of the younger children and the less able of the older children selected for the composite class?

No. Working groups from the two different year groups are selected in a way that ensures the children are very obviously working at different levels.

How are the children actually taught in a composite class?

Primary teachers are trained to plan, deliver and assess learning for several different ability groups within the one class. Whether these differing abilities are within one year group or across more than one year group, the process is the same and well within the skill of a trained primary teacher.

At Dunard the children from both year groups are presented with the same topic, but the work the child completes on that topic depends on the curriculum of their year group (i.e. in a P3/4 class, Primary 3 children will complete Primary 3 work, and Primary 4 children will complete Primary 4 work).

Will my child mix with children from the other year group in their composite class?

Yes. Whether or not children are in a single stage or composite class, they continue to take part in activities organized for their year group. This will be organised in accordance with the nature of the activity. A composite class looks like any other class. Day-to-day activities mean that the natural identity of each primary class group is maintained.

Will the school check that my child is coping in his/her new class?

Class teachers and line managers routinely work together to keep track of all children's progress – academically, socially and emotionally – regardless of whether they are in a new class or not. This is a key part of our work, as we want every child to progress in accordance with his/her ability.

My child was previously in a composite class and is now in a single stage class. Does this reflect my child's academic performance or behaviour during the previous year?

No. Remember that Dunard's aim is to ensure that every child receives an education that is tailored to their particular needs, whether they are in a single stage or composite class. The decision to move your child into or out of a composite class could be for a variety of reasons:

- Each year, schools must review their class structures in accordance with the numbers at each stage. Whether further restructuring is required or not will be dictated by the number of children at each stage, against the maximum class size permitted for each stage.

Whatever the reason, you can be sure that your child's needs have been carefully considered and discussed by the headteacher, classroom teachers and pupil support assistants.

A FINAL NOTE:

Remember, if you have any questions about your child's placement in a composite class or being moved from a composite class to a single stage class, your headteacher or deputy head will be pleased to answer any of your questions. You may consider asking:-

- Why classes have been formed
- About your child's progress
- About the sort of work programme your child will follow

Information source: <http://www.glasgow.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=12353&p=>