

# St Peter's R.C. Primary School

## Twins (and children from multiple births) Policy



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Signed Chair of Governors	<i>Eugene McCarthy</i>
Signed Headteacher	<i>Clare Scott</i>

***We, the family of St Peter's, united in faith by God strive to learn and grow together to be the best we possibly can every day.***

## Early Years Foundation Stage Policy on placing twins [and children from multiple births] into registration classes

At St Peter's, we believe that children thrive when given plenty of praise and when thought of as brilliant in their own right. As such, on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage we believe that, in the long term, twins are best served by beginning school in separate classes. However, this is not a set rule, we will take into consideration each individual's circumstances and work with families to find the best solution for all parties. However, it is our belief that twins should be in separate classes in KS2 as it gets them ready for the future years at secondary school.

Our policy is based on the following principles:

**To avoid comparison.** Twins are constantly compared and contrasted, "She crawled first, but he walked sooner." Most of the time, the comparative statements are tolerated and accepted, but once twins enter school, this may become distressing, especially if one twin consistently outperforms the other. Even if no one vocalises the differences in achievement, children are sensitive to them because when you have a twin you have a benchmark to compare yourself against. It must be very hard to be presented with "a better version of yourself" who is in your class with you (and with you almost every moment of every day). Sometimes twins find that they always compare themselves to each other (not necessarily favourably). It may be that one twin is particularly gifted in, for example, mental maths and the co-twin, although on track and performing to his/her full potential, may assume that they are not good at maths because he/she is not as quick as his/her co-twin at solving a problem. When twins are not in the same class, they are able to develop at their own pace and gain confidence in their own abilities.

**To suppress harmful competition.** Out of comparison grows competition. Twins are constantly in competition for even the most basic resources; from before birth they compete for nutrients and space in the womb. After birth they compete for parental attention, affection, toys, and to be "first" in every conceivable way. Some competition is certainly healthy; it drives ambition, encourages achievement, and spurs enthusiasm. But constant competition can be detrimental to twins in an educational setting, replacing the joy of learning with a pressure to outperform a sibling. Parents of twins recognise that the competitive dynamic between their children exists on every level, from who gets to get on the school bus first to who has more pencils to who has the better best friend. Children who rush through school work simply to finish before their twin, or so that they can go and play with their twin, won't have as much academic success as a child who is not in competition.

**To decrease dependency.** Every relationship between twins is unique. By the very nature of being a twin, they will have spent most of their time together. This can make some twins very co-dependent ("they need each other"). In the longer term twins will NEED to be able to cope individually, rather than simply relying on their twin. In addition, twins can need some time apart. Although they may miss each other at first, it will soon become second nature to them to have some time apart. By each twin going into a different classroom, but having the security of playing together in the shared area and outside area and knowing that their twin is just in the class room next door, they can begin to become more independent.

In some situations, one twin may be established as a leader and the other as the follower. In the case of fraternal opposite-sex twins, females tend to be the more dominant of the two and more critical of their twin brothers; the female "over-mothers" her male co-twin. This is something that needs to be addressed as in some cases a type of stereotyping can occur and the twins end up following roles ("the dominant one" or the "weaker one") and they find it hard to stop being the

leader / the less confident one). By going into separate classrooms, the leader has time to just be themselves without having to lead all the time, and the quieter more passive twin will learn to cope without the more dominant one leading the way all the time, and this will help them to gain confidence when faced with new situations. Both children will have opportunities to do things in their own way and to develop their own tastes and interests.

Some twins are fairly equally matched in terms of personality, have a good sense of themselves as individuals and feel fairly confident in doing their own thing. In this instance, going into separate classes will continue to enhance their individuality.

**To avoid distraction.** Twins have a unique dynamic. Unlike the relationship between fellow classmates, these children are siblings. They share a great deal. Young children cannot be expected to leave their family "baggage" at the door of the classroom when their co-twin/classmate provides a constant reminder of their home situation. Thus, the twins themselves may find each other a distraction in class. And if the teacher has to get involved to settle their disputes or control their shared antics, it's disruptive to the entire class.

**To ensure the success of both twins.** As the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum places a strong emphasis on play, all children within our setting are encouraged to self-initiate their own learning through play opportunities. Although each twin would experience adult led and adult directed activities, it is primarily through play that learning concepts become embedded. A passive twin who follows their more dominant sibling may not be fully engaging in learning, as the activities/experiences selected by the dominant twin may not be at the pace and level needed for the passive twin. They would therefore not be reaching their full potential.

**To foster individuality.** Fostering individuality in twins is certainly an important goal for parents, and one that can be served well by separating the children in school. No matter how alike twins are, they may get on with quite different types of people. If twins are in the same class they may gravitate towards playing with the same children. However, by being in separate classes they will have to work with other children. In later life they will have to form relationships one to one with other people, from colleagues to partners, and this gives them a good grounding for forming friendships and relationships outside of the twin-set. Having twins in separate classrooms allows each child to grow as an individual, without having the twin around for every moment of every day. Each child will have an opportunity to develop their own friendships, accomplish their own goals, pursue their own interests and establish their own identity.

At St Peter's we recognise that whilst this policy ensures that each child's needs are met in their social development, as well as in all other areas of learning. We also need to ensure that each child's emotional development is met. The bond between twins is powerful. The layout of our Early Years Foundation Stage setting ensures that if twins are in separate registration classrooms (after consultation with the family) they will have many opportunities throughout each day to share experiences in the shared area and outside play area.

In the case of triplets, quads or larger family multiples we will work with the parents/carers and pre-school[s] to determine how best to meet the needs of each child.

To conclude, we will liaise with the parents when the children are in Early Years to decide if the twins will be in the same class or different classes. However, our school policy is that all twins will be in separate classes from Year 3, which will also help to prepare them for the inevitable separation at Secondary School. In all situations, the Headteacher reserves the right to make the final decision.