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Headteacher Simon Sharron

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Dear Parents/Carers,

I have received a number of letters expressing concern about the decision to suppress a second German seconded post from 1st September 2013 and the possibility that we might have to combine DP4 and DP5 in the next school year. The rules of the European Schools state clearly that consecutive primary classes of less than 26 pupils must be combined by way of vertical grouping. For the rules on minimum class sizes, please refer to section 1 in the document "Revision of the Decisions of the Board of Governors concerning the organisation of studies and courses in the European Schools" available at http://www.eursc.eu/fichiers/contenu_fichiers2/1660/2011-01-D-33-en-7.pdf

In September 2012 the number of pupils in the same two classes, currently DP3 and DP4, was below 26. At this point we were able to argue for an exception or *dérogation* from the rule in the hope that the numbers would rise. However, at the January 2013 Administrative Board, with the number of pupils in the two classes still below 26, we were unable to sustain this *dérogation*.

In addition, we have a duty of care to our staff to give them an acceptable notice period if we cannot retain their services and they have to be transferred to another school and relocate to another country. For seconded staff the notice period is not less than 6 months.

We are no less disappointed than you with this development, although we are still hopeful that with future enrolments the total number of children in next school year's DP4 and DP5 will exceed the magic figure of 25 so that we can maintain them as two separate classes.

If we do have to combine the classes we are confident that the pupils will still progress as they should do for their age and ability. This was the case when we had to group three levels of the primary Italian and Dutch Sections before they were phased out. Many researchers suggest that pupil attainment does not suffer in composite or vertically-grouped classes but that vertical grouping may even have a positive effect on pupil attainment. Vertically-grouped classes operate successfully in our system and in many primary schools throughout the European Union.

The level of pupil attainment in any class is enhanced by close co-operation between teachers and parents. I hope that we can count on your co-operation should this re-organisation of classes go ahead next school year.

Yours sincerely,

Simon Sharron
Head Teacher