**Class List Formation Policy Template**

SCHOOL NAME has a procedure in place for allocating students into classes each year. The procedure ensures that the professional judgment of the School Leadership Team and Teaching Staff is informed by input from parents and carers and that all available information is applied to the placement process. Although class placements can be a sensitive issue, the interests of all children are paramount to the decisions taken by the school.

**Purpose**

Individual class placements are based on professional judgments about meeting the student’s educational needs, circumstances, and interests.

This policy aims to:

* To provide clarity to the SCHOOL NAME community regarding the process for class
* placement of students.
* Ensure an equitable outcome for all students;
* Provide each student with the opportunity to be part of a class that will allow them the best opportunity to learn;
* Form well-balanced classes of students that take into account the social, emotional and academic characteristics of each student;
* Ensure classes are formed to provide the best possible learning environment for students within budgetary constraints, Department of Education guidelines and within the constraints of the resources available to the school.
* Provide a clear framework to be applied by the School Leadership Team and Teaching Staff when determining class placements for students; and
* Provide parents and carers with information on the procedure and opportunities for their input to the process.

**Rationale**

Class placements are based on professional judgments about meeting a student's educational needs circumstances and interests.

Individual class placements can have significant effects on a student’s attainments and must be based on professional judgements about the student’s educational needs, circumstances and interests. The nature of SCHOOL NAME's student population, together with the Department of Education’s teaching staff formula, often necessitates the inevitability of forming both composite (different year levels working within the one classroom) and non-composite classes.

A clearly defined process for the placement of students into classes will lead to greater efficiency, increased understanding and improved opportunities for learning.

In order to ensure we produce the best classes possible SCHOOL NAME uses specialised software (Class Creator) to facilitate that gathering of student data and class creation. Class Creator ensures the data is consistent across the school, student history is not overlooked/forgotten, classes are balanced and individual student requirements are considered.

**Process**

* The Principal and Leadership Team make decisions about the number and structures of classes for the forthcoming year based on student enrollments and school resources.
* The Principal presents the staff with the anticipated class groupings (i.e. the number of year level classes, split classes).
* Staff members will be asked for expressions of interest as to which year level they wish to teach.
* The allocation of staff to classes is determined after consideration of the following:

- Teacher preferences

- Past experience, professional skills and expertise of teachers

- Professional learning goals of staff

- The creation of effective, balanced teams

- The need for new teachers at the school

- The strategic plan and goals of the school

* Parents are invited, via a notice in the newsletter, to supply relevant information regarding the special needs of their children during the placement process by writing a letter to the Principal. These letters will be dated upon receipt.  Where relevant information is supplied by the due date, this will be considered based on individual and school needs. If issues or information supplied is of an ongoing nature, requests need to be made on an annual basis. There is no guarantee that all parent requests will be met. Requests for particular teachers will not be considered.
* Staff members currently teaching particular cohorts, confer regarding placements for the following year, taking into consideration the criteria listed below:
* Gender balance
* Behaviour
* Academic performance
* Special abilities and needs
* Social and physical maturity
* Special needs such as siblings, custody and family situations
* Needs of children for whom English is a second language
* Information supplied by parents and/or relevant support personnel
* Social networks/dynamics
* Previous class placements
* School Psychologist recommendations
* Previous class placements - Where possible students should not be placed in composite classes in consecutive years.
* Decisions are made with a view to establishing balanced and equitable class groups that will

work well together. It is possible for any child to be placed in either a straight or composite year level class based on the above considerations.

* Children will be given the opportunity to create a friendship group list of 3 to 5 children, whom they would like in their class for the following year. This list should be based on children who have a positive influence on their learning and social development. A notice will be sent home and parents will have an opportunity to contribute to this list and return it to the class teacher. The school will endeavour to place children with at least one person from their friend list.
* Every effort will be made to follow the Department of Education and Training recommendations regarding class sizes.
* Class lists are submitted to the Leadership Team for review and final ratification.
* If scheduling allows the school may implement a “Meet the Teacher” session whereby the new classes will meet their teacher. This is an opportunity for students to meet their teacher, but also for the school to review the new classes and make any relevant adjustment.
* Staff members will not disclose the composition of proposed classes prior to any formal announcements.
* Once class lists are published, given the rigorous nature of the placement process requested changes will not be made.
* Class teachers meet at the end of the year to discuss each child’s transition using the 2019 Handover File information.
* The ultimate decision for student and teacher placement rests with the Principal and Deputy Principals.
* Under exceptional circumstances, the Principal may re-organise classes throughout the year.
* Children who enrol at the school during the year will be temporarily allocated to classes, with the possible need to alter their placement once further information is known about the child.
* Where students enrol after classes have been established, they will be allocated to a class based on class numbers and availability. The Principal is responsible for placing students in classes in this instance.
* Class lists will not be distributed to parents due to privacy reasons.

**PARENT AND CARER COMMITMENT**

Parents and carers commit to supporting the school's Student Placement Policy by:

* Supporting and accepting decisions made by the School; and
* Being positive with their child about the class placement decision that has been made.

**SCHOOL COMMITMENT**

The School commits to supporting the Student Placement Policy by:

* Using informed professional judgement when deciding class placements; and
* Considering all available information, including that received from parents and carers, to assist the process.

**COMMON QUESTIONS:**

1. **Why do we ask parents to leave class placement in the hands of the teaching staff?**

As professional educators, we strive to make the right choices by taking into account all of the information we have about all students. Parents do know their children best, however, teachers have all of the academic and social information about every child and can make sound judgements to meet the needs of every student.

1. **Why does the school have some split/composite grade classes?**

Staffing is dependent on the enrolment numbers which can vary between year levels. Therefore split grade classes are often necessary to ensure that we have appropriately sized classes.

The practice of combining grades in one class is well supported by research and our beliefs about how children learn. That is, research shows us that students are not disadvantaged by being in a split grade class. The difference in students’ academic ability and maturity can vary by about 5 years across a straight grade class and this is not much different for a split grade class. The added advantage of a split grade class is that students make friendships across grades.

OR

Composite classes are a traditional feature of many schools. They are often formed for strategic educational benefits but are also done due to operational constraints.

There are many social and academic advantages to be gained for students in composite classes. The development of co-operative behaviour patterns, leadership skills and independent study habits are examples of these advantages. The majority of children selected for composite classes already display the traits of self-discipline, a willingness to work cooperatively with others and a degree of independence in work habits.

Educational research indicates that general co-operation, self-regulatory behaviour and participation levels all tend to improve in students placed in composite classes. If possible, the number of children in composite classes is kept lower than those in straight classes.

No class, composite or straight, should be viewed as being better than another. Children are placed into classes after due consideration and review of their development in the eight learning areas, with special attention to language and mathematics. It is the policy of this school that current class lists are carefully scrutinised in December before drawing up lists for the following year. New students are placed on lists based on information from their previous school and on class numbers.

1. **Can I request my child to be placed with another child or not placed with another child?**

Parents may request this but need to give clear reasons why this is necessary. It is important to consider that the school knows your child’s friendships and that placing them without that particular friend may be so that your child expands their friendship base. We want children to be able to work and socialise with a variety of other children and build skills to make new friends. In addition, sometimes we may get competing requests from parents where one parent wants their child to be in a class with a friend but the friend’s parents have requested that they not be in the same class. Friendships can change throughout primary school, students leave, more students arrive and so it is important for your child to develop friendship skills rather than always have the same friends.

At the end of every year, parents are reminded that they can write to the school requesting student placement based on educational issues; not friendship groups or choice of teacher. Whilst the requests are considered, the final decision is made by the school.

1. **When will I know my child’s placement?**

Parents of children in kindergarten are informed late term 4 by mail. Pre Primary to Year 6 class lists are displayed in the front of the library before school starts in term 1. This is because we often have enrolments over the holidays and may have to change our class structure.

1. **What if my child or I am unhappy with my child’s placement?**

Class placements are considered final. Changing one student at the request of a parent can mean that many other changes also need to take place to continue to meet the needs of all of the other students. Parents need to understand that it is a complex balance that cannot just be solved by moving their child. Many other changes are likely to be needed in addition. Parents can talk to the principal or deputy principal about their concerns but changing a student placement would be rare. The principal or deputy and the classroom teacher will work with the parent to help students adjust to their new class.

If your child is unhappy with their placement, we as parents must speak to them positively and model how we want them to face disappointment now and in their future. Learning how to positively deal with disappointments builds resilience in children.

1. **Can my child repeat a year level?**

Department policy strongly suggests not to repeat students. Current research shows there is no benefit to repeating and that, in fact, the long-term effects are detrimental. Parent requests will be given full consideration in consultation with the principal, school psychologist, learning support coordinator and other key staff.