

Class Placement Policy

Sutherland Dianella Primary School has a rigorous process to place students in classes for the start of each year. Staff at Sutherland Dianella Primary School are committed to meeting the educational needs of all students. A great deal of thought, planning and time goes into placing children into classes each year. Every effort is made to place each child in a learning environment that is productive and successful.

RATIONALE

Sutherland Dianella Primary School creates its class structure based on the professional judgement of staff taking into account the students' academic, social and emotional needs.

GUIDELINES

Factors influencing class structure are:

- the educational needs of the students
- the projected number of students in each year level
- the ratio of girls to boys
- projected enrolments during the year based on past trends
- the number of teachers employed at the school
- the constraints of resources and facilities

Factors that are considered in the placement of students include:

- academic performance
- work habits e.g. ability to work independently
- behaviour
- gender
- social maturity
- special needs
- family situations e.g. twins, siblings
- special family considerations outlined to the Principal, prior to class placement procedures

PROCESS:

Staff meet in Term Four to establish the classes for the following school year. Teachers of the current and past year levels use their professional judgment to make the decision about where to place students for the following year. This is then shared with the Leadership Team, reviewed, revised and returned to teaching staff for further consideration.

Teachers ensure each new class has:

- a balance of academic ability
- gender balance
- socially balanced groups (students are not always put with best friends, this is to enable new friendships and social skills to develop).

Class placements are then presented and approved by the Principal and Leadership team.

Via our planning survey, parents may write to the Principal to request a particular placement based on their child's educational needs. Requests in relation to choice of teacher will not be considered as a placement factor.

COMMON QUESTIONS:

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 taking into account all of the information we have about all students. Parents know their children best, however please understand, teachers have all of the academic and social information about every child and make judgements to meet the needs of every student with consideration to the whole year cohort.

Why does the school have some split 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. Research shows us that students are not disadvantaged by being in a split grade class. The difference in students' academic ability and maturity can already vary by about 5 years across a straight grade class. The added advantage of a split grade class is that students make friendships across grades. Where possible, a student in a split grade will be placed in a straight grade the following year.

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 as to 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. The school has common break times where existing friendships can continue.

When will I know my child's placement?

Parents of children in Kindergarten are informed late Term 4 by email.

On the final day the school year, students leave class with a letter detailing which classroom they have been allocated for the following year. That evening, the allocation of Pre Primary to Year 6 teachers is shared via Connect. Please note, enrolments over the holidays may require changes to our class structures.

What if my child or I am unhappy with my child's placement?

Class placements are final. Changing one student at the request of a parent can mean that many other changes need to take place to continue to meet the needs of all of the other students. Class placement requires a complex balance of factors. Moving one child's class can affect many other children as these factors are balanced. Parents are encouraged to speak with the Principal or Deputy Principal about their concerns. 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.