

## RATIONALE

Ardross Primary School creates its class structure based on the professional judgement of staff, considering the students' social, emotional and academic needs. Impacting the number and composition of classrooms is a range of factors inclusive of student enrolments, local boundaries, and industrial requirements surrounding class sizes.

## GUIDELINES

Factors influencing class structure are:

- industrial implications around class sizes
- the projected number of students in each year level
- the ratio of gender
- projected enrolments during the year based on past trends
- the number of teachers employed at the school and
- the constraints of resources and facilities.

Factors which are considered in the placement of students include:

- social network and social maturity
- academic performance
- work habits e.g. ability to work independently
- behaviour
- gender
- special considerations e.g. twins, siblings, medical or disability factors

Classes are not streamed. Should there be more than one class in a particular year level, or the need to form a split grade class, the professional judgement of the teachers, specialist staff, education assistants and administration team will decide the placement of individual students.

All students devise small friendship lists at the end of each year, with staff considering these lists, when forming classes for the next year.

Parent input regarding their child's educational needs will be considered. During Term 4 the principal advises parents via the school newsletter that student placements are being considered for the following year. Parents and carers may provide the principal with specific information about their child's learning needs that they believe the school may not be aware of. Requests in relation to choice of teacher, split versus straight class, or friendship groups will not be considered as a placement factor.

Based on the criteria listed above, teaching staff and administration meet during Term 4 to establish classes for the following school year. Teachers of the current year level confer regarding the class groupings (i.e. Year 2 teachers decide Year 3 placements, and so on.) During this process, changes and adjustments are made. Each change may trigger a chain reaction of other changes. Lists will be submitted to the principal for final ratification.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### Why does the school have some split grade classes instead of all straight classes?

As a Public School, every student who resides in our boundary, between Years Pre-primary and 6, is guaranteed an enrolment place, so numbers will never balance perfectly for straight classes.

As staffing is dependent upon the enrolment in each grade, multi-aged or combined classes may occur. This practice is well supported by research and our beliefs about how children learn. It is also often a practical necessity with our enrolment numbers and maximum class sizes, as per relevant Industrial Awards and Agreements

### What is a reasonable class size?

The Department of Education has recommended maximum class sizes for various year levels, hence split class become unavoidable. Our school always starts the year within these recommendations. If numbers increase during the year, additional support is provided to teachers, usually in the form of additional relief days or education assistants. On very rare occasions, schools may need to restructure their classes to accommodate student growth throughout the year.

### Maximum recommended class sizes

Kindergarten - 20	Pre-primary - 27	Yr. 1-3 - 24	Yr. 4-6 =
32			

### How do teachers cover multiple year level curriculums?

The curriculum acts as a guide of what teachers must cover in a given year. More importantly however, is that students receive the curriculum content that allows them to progress and achieve. This might mean modifying or extending the curriculum. It is quite common that in any given class, a teacher will need to support, or extend students who may be up to two years ahead, or behind the given curriculum. This is done through group or individual plans. As such, being in a split class is less of a factor, than receiving the curriculum content that is needed and teachers are highly skilled and supported at achieving this.

### When will I know my child's placement?

Parents of children in Kindergarten are informed of their child's placement mid-term 4. The Pre-primary to Year 6 will receive a Connect notice notifying them of their child/ren class. Classes are always subject to change as new enrolments are common in the first weeks of the year.

### Can I request my child's placement with another child in the classroom or not be placed with another particular child?

While some parents make a friendship request, the decision is complex. A number of times a request is received from one family to place particular children together, while the second family requests that same children be placed in separate classes. The final decision on placement rests with the principal. Teachers also ask children to compose friendship lists at

the end of each year and these lists are factored in when making new classes. Often, children placed with best friends will work and play exclusively with each other, and this does not promote the social interaction we try to foster. We also find young children change best friends. When allocating children to classes, we endeavour to foster positive social interaction across a year group, by making socially balanced classes.

When I get my child's class placement, can I request that it be changed?

The class placements are considered final. Changes to placements are rare, due to the fact they often cause a chain reaction and impact on the class balance, which in turn is unfair to many students within the group. While we feel we consider the individual child during the placement process, parents must realise their child is part of a complex equation in school placements.

What if my child is having difficulty in his/her new placement after school has started?

We will do everything we can to problem solve. Parents need to talk to the teacher so the child's needs can be addressed.

My child has been in a split class this year; will they avoid one next year?

Teachers will consider factors such as history of split classes, but research does show there is no negative impact academically, from being in split classes. Parent concern regarding consecutive years in split classes, tends to focus on friendship groups, hence staff will consider this each year.