



## Class Formation Procedures

### RATIONALE:

There needs to be a clear and consistent policy in the formation and allocation of classes at Merimbula Public School, so students and teachers are treated equitably and according to their needs within the organisational structure of the school as defined by Department of Education guidelines.

### CLASS STRUCTURE:

The school structure and the formation of classes at Merimbula Public School are constrained by the Department of Education staffing formula. A school structure that best meets the needs of students and teachers is designed by staff and ratified by the Principal. Generally, final structures cannot be decided until the total school enrolments are known.

The school, in the second half of the Term 4, begins to formulate structural alternatives based on projected numbers. The Principal has the delegated authority and responsibility to determine the final make up of classes.

### STUDENT ALLOCATION PROCESS:

Students will be allocated to classes by the school Executive Team in consultation with class and specialist teachers. This is a lengthy process that involves a great deal of analysis and discussion. The school employs a number of balancing criteria to ensure that the classes that are formed are in the best interests of ALL students.

- *High Potential and Gifted Education* - Classes will be parallel, i.e. all classes will be formed to be *academically balanced*. \*HPGE students may attend Learning Assistance Programs for extension, or Aurora College Opportunity Classes.
- *Behaviour Support Requirements* - Students who are best separated so their learning and the learning of other students is not affected.
- *Language* - Students who need to be together to provide language support for each other.
- *Learning Difficulties* - Students who are experiencing difficulties are spread between available classes so they can be withdrawn in small groups or supported within the Learning Assistance Program.
- *Special Needs* - These may be social, intellectual, emotional or physical.
- *Cultural Balance* - Each class is formed to have a range of nationalities and cultures.
- *Personalities* - In some special cases, the personalities of both teachers and students are considered before a decision is made regarding the placement of a student.
- *Gender Balance* - We also like to keep a balance of boys and girls in each class.

- *Friendship* - Friendship will be considered in the preparation of classes. Teachers will decide as to the nature and quality of student interaction. Where appropriate, placement with a friend will be given consideration as long as the relationship is not a distraction from the focus on the curriculum. Where teachers feel that a relationship, though strong, is not in the best interest of a child's personal, social or academic development, placement will be made in separate classes. It should be noted that helping a child develop a broad circle of friends is in the long term best interest of any individual.
- *Previous Class Placement* - Consideration is given to whether a teacher and student have been together before.
- *Team Teaching* - Team teaching may be required at times when: staff are returning from leave, returning from maternity leave, have difficulty accessing childcare, are accessing the Department's approved part-time teaching option for parents of pre-school/primary-school aged children, or for staff nearing retirement.

Consideration will be given to reducing team-teaching in classes at pivotal transition points (Kindy), in Family (Support) Classes, and if a child has regularly had team teachers, where possible.

- *\*\*Student Leadership* - There will be a balance of student leaders across Year 6 classes. \* This condition may be varied by the Principal if the formation of enrichment, remedial, family, Stage (multi-age) or composite classes best meet the needs of all students. \*\* This may vary if a senior enrichment class is formed as academic ability will supersede the requirement to have equal representation of leaders across Year 6.

### IDENTIFICATION OF NEEDS:

#### **The identification of these needs will be achieved through:**

Professional deliberations of staff that are familiar with students. Academic and welfare data. Students' educational history (previous classes, special circumstances). Parents are asked to make a written submission to the Principal if they wish to supply information about their child's needs that may not be known to the school, if such has particular relevance to class placement. Such written information needs to be sent to the Principal before the end of each year and should relate to the child's educational needs. Requests for particular teachers will not be considered.

## ALLOCATION OF TEACHERS:

**The allocation of teachers to classes is determined after a consultative process that takes into consideration:**

- Teacher preferences.
- Past experience, professional skills and expertise of teachers.
- Professional learning goals of staff.
- The creation of effective, balanced stage teams.
- The needs of new teachers to the school.

**These considerations are not in priority order.**

### **Kindergarten Classes**

Children commencing their school life are grouped in comprehensive classes. Teachers of Kindergarten will undertake a series of observations during Kindergarten Orientation Days, and at pre-schools and early learning centres where possible. Parent, pre-school and early learning centre input is also very welcome. In some cases, pre-school information will also be used to ensure the most appropriate class placement. Information gained from the Orientation Visits, parents/carers, pre-schools and early learning centres (such as English language proficiency, academic, personality, learning needs, social skills etc) will be used to form classes that are as even as possible.

In the rare event that a student needs change, or observations do not provide all of the necessary information to form classes; whilst classes will be formed for the first day of Kindy, students may be required to move classes within the initial weeks of the year. This will take place after discussion with the child's parent/carer.

### **Composite Classes**

Composite or multi-aged classes are formed when numbers of children in the grade are such that two complete classes cannot be formed, or when the Principal, in consultation with staff, feels that this structure best meets the needs of students.

Classes will be formed using the same criteria as the comprehensive classes, using data from the current year's assessments. The teachers forming the classes will give consideration to the independent work habits of the children and their ability to work in a multi-aged environment. Consideration is also given to those children who have been in a composite class in the previous year.

In some cases, where a minority group is formed in a composite class, in the interest of all students in a stage group, consideration will be given to creating all classes to be stage-based within the stage.

## PARENT ENQUIRIES AND PRIVACY:

Whilst any parent is entitled to know how their own child came to be placed in a particular class, the school is required to maintain the privacy of the needs of other students and is not able to outline the particular reasons as to why other students have been placed in particular classes.

## TIMELINE:

- During Term 4, information regarding the possible staffing of the school will be communicated to parents.
- During Term 4, information will be collected from class teachers regarding the class placement needs and recommendations for the following year.
- Due to the unpredictable nature of mainstream enrolment numbers in the Merimbula Public School catchment, students will not find out their new class until the new school year.
- Students in Family (Support) Classes will find out their class teacher in Term 4, where possible.
- As soon as it is practicable, new classes will be formed.
- The principal will only vary the placement of a student in exceptional circumstances.
- The principal will have the final decision as to the placement of all students.
- Changes may occur to teacher allocation/classes and, if so, parents/caregivers/staff will be notified of changes as soon as possible.

This policy has been developed with reference to the Department of Education Policy *Leading and Managing the School*.



## EVALUATION:

This policy will be evaluated annually in consultation with staff, students, the P&C and school community.

*Implemented: June 23, 2025.*

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