



Class Formation Policy

Rationale

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

Class Structures

The school structure and the formation of classes at Sylvania Heights Public School are constrained by the Department of Education and Training 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 Four, 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 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.

- Classes will be parallel, i.e. all classes will be formed to be academically balanced.*
- Behaviour problems - 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Learning Difficulties - students who are experiencing difficulties are spread between available classes so they can be withdrawn in small groups or supported within the LA program.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 will be considered in the preparation of classes. Teachers will decide as to the nature and quality of student interaction. Where appropriate the 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.
- Consideration is given to whether a teacher and student have been together before.
- **Student Leadership - in Year 6 a balance of the elected leadership is to be maintained across grade 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 Six

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 written submission to the principal if they wish to supply information about their child's need that may not be known to the school and 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 day and Head Start. Parent input is also very welcome

The information gained – English language proficiency, academic, personality, learning needs, social skills etc will be used to form classes that are as even as possible.

In some cases, pre-school information will also be used to ensure the most appropriate class placement.

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 assessment. 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 stage classes 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 enrolment numbers in the Sylvania Heights area, students will resume the school year in the classes from the previous year.
- As soon as 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.

This policy has been developed with reference to the DET policy *Leading and Managing the School*.

Dennis Burke
Principal

This policy will be reviewed in 2010