

Outlined below is the process we use at Nedlands Primary to place students in their respective classes for the start of the year. Also included are answers to questions that parents may have about class placement. A copy of the Class Placement Policy, which is endorsed by the School Board, is included as an appendix.

Nedlands Primary staff 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 happy, productive and successful.

What are the criteria that we use to make up class lists?

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; and
- resources and facilities.

Factors which are considered in the placement of students include:

- academic performance – judgements over time
- work habits e.g. ability to work independently
- behaviour
- gender
- social network
- social maturity
- exceptional circumstances

Classes are not streamed. Should there be more than one class in a particular year level, or the need to form a multi-age grouping grade class, the professional judgement of the Principal, administration team and relevant teaching staff will decide the placement of individual students.

Requests in relation to choice of teacher will not be considered as a placement factor.

What is the process for placing students into classes?

Based on the criteria listed above, teaching staff and administration meet mid-term 4 to establish classes for the following school year. Teachers of the current year level meet with the other year level colleagues to develop the class lists.

Teachers ensure each new class has:

- a balance of academic ability
- gender balance
- socially balanced groups and children from existing classes, so new friendships can be formed.

During this process, changes and adjustments are made. Each change may trigger a chain reaction of other changes. It is acknowledged by all that friendships are important. However, to ensure balanced classes as outlined above, friendship groups are not a primary determining factor in class placement and this is not part of our Class Placement Policy.

Proposed class lists are submitted to the Principal and administration team for final ratification.



Why does the school have some multi-age grouping instead of having all straight year level classes?

Parents often ask why we need to split year levels and wonder why we can't have 'straight' year levels throughout the school. Nedlands Primary School is an inclusive school with an open enrolment policy; therefore, we don't have control over the number of students in each age group. This means some age groups may have 30 students while other age groups may have 40 students. Having large differences in the enrolments of each age group results in having split classes to meet Education Department class size requirements.

As staffing is dependent upon the enrolment in each grade, multi-aged or combined classes may occur from year to year. This practice is well supported by research and our beliefs about how children learn. Two findings stand out in the research undertaken by Hattie, 2012:

- it makes no difference to performance whether students are in a straight year group or in a multi-age class. The most important factors in determining how well a student does are the quality of the teacher and his or her teaching.
- multi-age classes may benefit students both socially and emotionally.

Teachers are required to differentiate the curriculum for all their students (based on ability not age).

How do teachers progress learning in a multi-age grouping?

At NPS our teachers are highly skilled in differentiation. In any of our classrooms we have students working at individual levels, and teachers are required, and confident, in progressing their students at each individual point of need. Our data collection processes, consisting of NAPLAN, PAT, On Entry and various others allow us to ensure that every child is making optimal progress.

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

While it is certainly true that parents know their children the best, when a parent requests a specific placement for their child, they do not always have all the relevant information. Teachers, on the other hand, have the academic and social information about all children in a particular year level.

When will I know my child's placement?

Parents of children in Kindergarten are informed of their child's placement in Term 4, at the orientation meeting. The Pre Primary to Year 6 class lists **are emailed to families in January of that school year, prior to school starting in Term 1**. This year we are continuing to have enrolments submitted later than in previous years which impacts on the class structures and placement process. Class structures or teacher allocation may need to change for the start of the year if we have increased or decreased enrolments, or if staff circumstances change.

Can I request a particular teacher for my child either in writing or through discussion with my child's present teacher?

No, this is not part of the Class Placement Policy.

Can I request my child's placement with another child's in the classroom? Or, can I request my child not be placed with another particular child?

While some parents make a friendship request, the decision is complex. A number of times we have received a request from one family to place particular children together, while the second family requests that the same children be placed in separate classes. The final decision on placement rests with the Principal and the leadership team.

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 of embracing new peers and making new friendships. 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 and to help prevent non-constructive relationships.

If your child is having difficulty with a student in his/her class, please inform the teacher or one of the Associate Principal or Principal, so problem solving can take place. This is the aspect of the school experience where students learn to function socially with all kinds of people.

Do teachers request certain student placements into their classes?

No, as teachers are not assigned to a class until after the class placement process. Teachers focus on class balance to ensure a successful year for all students.

We really like the teacher one of our children had. Now our other child will be entering that year level. Can we assume our second child will get that teacher?

It is a coincidence if this happens as the school does not use historical records when placing children. New relationships are constructive and help us grow. All children are different and may respond well to a different teacher.

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? Can we request a change then?

We will do everything we can to problem solve. Parents need to talk to the teacher, the Associate Principal or Principal, so the child's needs can be addressed and be assured that those concerns will be shared with the teacher so your child's anxieties will be addressed. Teachers are expected to have the skills to help children adjust.

Finally, I want to stress that all information about your children is valued and heard. Teachers want to construct the smoothest transitions possible for the students for which they care so much.

Parents can help also by being as positive and encouraging as possible to their children in this process.

If you have any more questions, please feel free to contact one of the administration staff or your child's teacher.

Fiona McBeath
Principal



RATIONALE

Nedlands Primary School creates its class structure based on the professional judgement of staff taking into account the students' academic, social and emotional needs. The leadership team establishes class structures for the following year based upon anticipated enrolments and the number of teachers allocated to the school.

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; and
- the constraints of resources and facilities.
- Allow for planned and unplanned increase in enrolments.
- Ensure that students identified as requiring additional support are where possible "shared" throughout the school.

Factors which are considered in the placement of students include:

- academic performance
- work habits e.g. ability to work independently
- behaviour
- gender
- social network
- social maturity
- special needs e.g. twins, siblings
- exceptional circumstances

Classes are not streamed. Should there be more than one class in a particular year level, or the need to form a multi-age grouping grade class, the professional judgement of the Principal, leadership team and relevant teaching staff from the previous year will decide the placement of individual students.

PROCESS

Based on the criteria listed above, teaching staff and the leadership team meet to establish classes for 2020. Teachers of the current year level confer regarding the class groupings (i.e. Year 2 teachers discuss and build Year 3 placements, and so on.)

Lists will be submitted to the Principal and leadership team for final ratification.

Parents / Caregivers role in the process

In order to make the best decisions we need as much information as possible. Class teachers have an excellent knowledge of your children, particularly in relation to their social and academic needs in the classroom and school setting.

As stated previously the setting of classes requires a great deal of time and thought. Staff will use their professional judgement and expertise, along with relevant information provided by parents in an effort to achieve effective class groups that satisfy, where possible, the needs of the individual and the needs of the group. No single factor determines placement, or will necessarily be acted upon.

Parents may submit written input with respect to class placements. The submissions are to be based on **educational reasons**, addressed to “The Principal” and marked “Confidential” by **Friday Week 4 Term 4**. All written parent submissions will be given consideration but not automatically accommodated. Class placement throughout the year will be at the discretion of the leadership team.

The following will not be considered:

1. Requests to have or not to have particular teachers.
2. Requests not to be placed into multi age group classes.
3. Requests not to be placed with specific students without sufficient educational context and evidence.
4. Any requests provided after the due date.

NB The provision of this information should not be seen in anyway as a guarantee that requests can or will be met.