ANNUAL CLASS GROUPINGS POLICY

INTRODUCTION
In order to increase the potential to promote increased educational outcomes and more effective socialisation, students are grouped according to certain criteria at St Mary’s Parish School (St Mary’s).

Individual class placements can have significant effects on student achievement and must primarily be based on the school’s professional judgements of the child’s educational needs, circumstances and interests. Pedagogical variations need to be made to meet the learning needs of the whole class group e.g. curriculum compacting, fast-paced learning, lateral enrichment, accelerative enrichment, and social and emotional enrichment.

Decisions with regard to the formation of classes are made with a view to establishing balanced and equitable class groups that will potentially work well together to provide the opportunity:
   a. For students to make new friends
   b. To work cooperatively with a number of different children and teachers
   c. Become accustomed to dealing with changes
   d. To expose children to many different values, talents, skills and ideas which occur in abundance in all groups of students
   e. To share many different values, talents, skills and ideas with others.

OBJECTIVES
The school will:
1. Form effective class groups, creating positive social and educational environments for all students
2. Maximise the use of staff and their teaching skills in satisfying identified curriculum needs.

POLICY AIMS
St Mary’s strives to form an equitable and considered approach to annual class formation. This policy aims to provide:
1. each child with the opportunity to be part of a class of children that will allow them the best opportunity to learn
2. well balanced classes of children that take into account the social, emotional, academic and physical characteristics/abilities of each child
3. the framework where optimum use is made of the prior knowledge that teachers and school staff of each child prior to class placement

VALUES
Responsibility, Equity, Opportunity, Support, Growth.

RATIONALE
Individual class placements can have significant effects on a student’s attainments and must be based on professional judgements about the student’s educational needs, circumstances and interests. The nature of St Mary’s population, together with the Department of Education’s teaching staff formula, often necessitates the inevitability of forming both composite (different year levels working within the one classroom) and non-composite classes.
POLICY

General

1. It is the policy of St Mary’s that students at each year level be regrouped each year.
2. The principal, in consultation with staff and after considering student numbers, will determine the number of classes for the following year, class sizes and the year levels of each class in accordance with:
   a. Creating balanced class groups across the school
   b. Whole of school organisation and flexibility
   c. Specialist teachers considerations
3. Preferred class composition is straight class year levels especially in grade prep, however:
   a. Multi-age/composite classes will be considered if and where appropriate
   b. It is possible for any child to be placed in either a straight or composite year level
   c. It is possible that students will placed in composite classes for two years or more in a row in some circumstances depending on student numbers, school flexibility and individual circumstances
4. While the allocation of children to various classes, class structures and class compositions are all ultimately responsibilities of the Principal, a collaborative process with all staff will be employed to ensure that all classes are made up of students of mixed learning abilities
5. The process of forming classes will commence in October of the previous year
6. Staff members will be required to work collaboratively to create draft classes of students
7. If appropriate, the Principal will inform staff of parent input prior to the formation of classes
8. The class placement of each student is the ultimate responsibility of the Principal in consultation with staff
9. Staff members will not disclose school organisation and the composition of proposed classes prior to any formal announcements

General Placements of students in grade prep

1. In establishing a balanced class structure, consideration will be given to
   a. staff allocation
   b. numbers of classrooms
   c. individual teacher’s abilities, talents and interests
   d. programs requiring specialist teaching
   e. Academic performance
   f. Special abilities and needs
   g. Social and physical maturity
   h. Gender balance
   i. Behaviour
   j. Friendship/familiarity groups where possible
   k. Needs of children for whom English is a second language or children from non-English-speaking backgrounds
   l. Information supplied by parents and/or relevant support personnel
2. The preferred class compositions is straight class year levels
3. Information on student academic ability will be gathered by Prep teachers during the school’s ‘Orientation into Prep’ transition program.
4. St Mary’s will aim to maintain no more than 28 students in Prep
5. Once draft classes are completed, the Principal will make any necessary final alterations
6. During the students first year of Prep, they will participate in Prep Entry Testing every Wednesday during the first 6 school weeks, whereby information about the child’s progress is gathered by the classroom teacher.

7. Children who enrol at the school during the year will be inducted by a member of staff according to the above criteria.

General Placements grade 1-6

1. Staff prepare draft class lists taking into consideration the following factors when placing students:
   a. staff allocation
   b. numbers of classrooms
   c. individual teacher’s abilities, talents and interests
   d. programs requiring specialist teaching
   e. Academic performance
   f. Special abilities and needs
   g. Social and physical maturity
   h. Gender balance
   i. Behaviour
   j. Needs of children for whom English is a second language or children from non-English-speaking backgrounds
   k. Information supplied by parents and/or relevant support personnel
   l. Previous class placements

2. It is possible for any child to be placed in either a straight or composite year level class based on the above considerations.

3. Individual needs and a whole school perspective must be considered.

Special Placements

1. ‘At Risk’ children or those with special needs will be identified and recommended for placement first.

Enrolments mid-year

Where students enrol after classes have been established, they will be allocated to a class based on class numbers and availability. The Principal is responsible for placing students in classes in this instance.

Release/Communication of Class Groupings

1. Staff members will not disclose the composition of proposed classes prior to any formal announcements.

2. Details relating to the school organisation, classes of children, and the roles of teachers will be released to parents during the last week of term 4 and formalised to the students via the orientation (“step-up” day).

3. Once draft classes are completed, the principal will make any necessary final alterations. Concerns regarding the placement of specific children in classes, the allocation of particular teachers to classes, or the overall structure of classes must be directed to the Principal.
Requests for changes of class lists by parents
1. Any parent concerns regarding the academic placement of specific children in classes must be directed to the Principal and placed in writing. If practicable, the Principal will inform staff of parent input prior to the formation of classes.
2. Where relevant information is supplied, this will be considered when looking at draft lists of classes
3. If issues or information supplied is of an ongoing nature, requests need to be made on an annual basis
4. Parent requests for alterations of the class lists will generally not be considered by the principal
5. Generally, no changes to individual placements will be made after formal announcement are made
6. Requests for particular teachers will not be considered

Related School Policies
• Parents as Partners in Catholic Education