

Homegroup placement process

It is that time of year again when thoughts turn to next year. Inevitably this leads to questions about next year's class and teacher. Well, if you had hoped to find out now, sorry about that! That sort of information takes a lot of planning and can't really be finalised until much later this term.

We are however starting our process for homegroup placement and as usual teachers face the very challenging and complex task of placing students in classes for the following year. Each year we follow a clearly established process which has well established criteria aimed at providing a balance of talents, abilities, social issues and behavioural challenges in each class. This is to avoid one class having too many challenges and to aim for *a fair go for all*.

Last year we introduced a new process which included an opportunity for parents to make requests about placement if they felt there had been any issues for their child. It then left the process of placement with the people who know the students the best in terms of their academic and social needs at schools; the teachers.

Like all processes, not all parents or students were pleased with the final placements however we have reviewed this approach and made some changes to our process to include more 'double checking'.

So, in this process the role of each teacher is to make professional judgments following the complex criteria detailed below. The role of each parent is to discuss their child's placement with them and explain that if they are not in the same class as their 'best friend' then there is a good reason for this and that they can still meet in the yard. Each new year is a chance to make new friends. It is each parent's role to model resilience.

Student placement process

2010

1. Explanation of the process, including the **optional** parent request proforma, is placed in our newsletter. **Please note that we cannot guarantee that all requests can be met.**
2. Optional proformas (**due back to the principal by Friday 6 November**) are read and considered by members of the leadership team; Julie Nixon, Alison Devereux, Jenny Hornidge, Leanne Weston, Maria Stella and Claire McInerney.
3. Lists are compiled of approved parent requests without specific reasons detailed. These lists to be placed in the confidential care of the pedagogical leader of each year level.
4. Teachers (class and specialists) use the process detailed below to construct a draft of the classes for the following year.

To ensure '*a fair go for all*' in terms of the structure and membership of classes for each year we plan for, **as far as is practicable:**

- equal size classes in the year level
 - equal spread of boys and girls in each class
 - equal spread of student abilities in each class
 - teacher and student welfare coordinator recommendations about separation of children because of behavioural issues
 - the sensitive placement of children who are on the disabilities program
 - the sensitive placement of gifted children
 - the sensitive placement of children consolidating (repeating) or accelerating a year level
 - placement of twins according to parent request and teacher recommendation
 - placement of children whose parents request they be separated from another child
 - placement of children who have worked with the same teacher for two or more years and who request a change
 - placement of children whose parents request not to have a specific teacher because of a previous unsatisfactory relationship
 - teacher requests not to have a child because of a previous unsatisfactory relationship with a parent.
5. Drafts are presented at Leading Student Learning meeting (LSL) where each pedagogical leader is present and able to review all lists and to check placement of students on 'request list'.
 6. Pedagogical and leadership members of staff will pay particular attention to the placement of students with special needs; intellectual, physical, social or emotional. Leaders to make any recommendations or changes.
 7. Units (class and specialist teachers) to review class lists to make any further recommendations and check any changes made by leadership members of staff.
 8. Pedagogical and leadership members of staff review class lists again.

9. Leading Student Learning (LSL) team to draft a plan of classes and teachers for the following year at each year level and in each specialist area.
10. Final recommendations to principal class.
11. If a teacher feels they need to discuss any aspect of the placement process with a parent, they will contact them prior to the official notification.
12. Students and parents notified of 2010 class.

Please be assured that *respect* and *care* will be shown by teachers when placing children and please *trust* that teachers do know your child and will make the best possible decision for them, even if it is not the one you would have chosen.

In the past teachers have tried very hard to follow the school's criteria however this process has been compromised when we promised that students would have at least one friend in their class. When this becomes the priority the management of the balance across the other factors often becomes impossible and increasingly time consuming. It also sets students up to be disappointed if the 'friend' they get is not the one they really wanted.

To help prepare your child for the next year of school we will continue to set up many transition activities, particularly this term. Your year level unit will inform you of the transition activities your child will experience to help them with the move into a higher year level next year. Our aim is to ensure the children move smoothly to their next year and that all children have a *fair go*.

We seek your support by following the PPS process. Even when children are in the same class they do not necessarily sit with their friend nor do they necessarily learn best with their special friend. Friends may be in quite different learning groups. Sometimes it is better to have learning partners in class and special friends for playtime. If your child is not placed in a class with their best friend, help them to become more resilient and *tolerant* of others so they can make additional friends. Children can still meet their special friend and play together every recess and lunchtime. It would be wonderful if children could make additional friends each year. This is a very beneficial life skill for children to learn so that they are not timid about going to a new school, to secondary school, to new sporting clubs, to TAFE, to University and when entering the workforce.

When thinking about next year please do not presume teachers will be teaching the same year level in 2010 as they did in 2009 as there may be changes.

If you have any questions about the process please contact me.

Claire McInerney
Principal



2010 HOME GROUP PLACEMENT PROCESS

Optional parent request proforma for student placement for 2010

Due back to the principal by Friday 6 November

(Please note that we cannot guarantee that all requests can be met.)

Name of student _____

Name of 2009 teacher _____ 2009 home group _____

Request for the placement of your child away from another student

Name of the child you request your child be separated from in 2010.

(This will only be considered if it does not involve discrimination).

Name of child _____ 2009 class _____

Reason _____

Name of the teacher you do not want your child to have again

a) because your child has already had the teacher for two years and you would prefer they did not have that teacher for a third year. (This is a reasonable request)

b) because of a previous unsatisfactory relationship.

Name of teacher _____

Reason _____

Sometimes children have very special needs which have an impact on home group placement (i.e. twins)

Please elaborate if applicable.

