



Class Placement Guidelines



Endorsed by School Board Term 4, 2024
Review: Term 4, 2025

Aim

Individual student class placements at Dunsborough Primary School (DPS) are based on the professional judgements of staff with the aim of providing the best learning environment for each student. Our aim is to be clear about our processes, ensuring there is a consistent approach across the school and keeping our school community informed.

Setting Class Structures

The Executive Leadership team establishes class structure options for the following year based upon anticipated enrolments. We set classes in accordance with the Schools Education Act Employees' General Agreement 2019. The suggested maximum class sizes are:

- Kindergarten: 20 students.
- Pre-Primary: 27 students.
- Year 1 to 3: 24 students.
- Year 4 to 6: 32 students.

Where possible, there is space left in each classroom for new enrolments that may occur during the next school year.

Composite (Split) Classes

A composite class or split class is a class with two-year groups combined. For example: A Year 1/2 class. They are usually formed because of the uneven pattern of enrolments at the schools and differing suggested class sizes per year group. Basically, there are too many or not enough students in a particular year level to make a full class. Your child will more than likely be in at least one to two composite classes over the course of their primary school years. **Regardless of a straight/composite class, all students are catered for at their level.** Further information has been provided in Appendix A (page 7).



Our Placement Process

We implement the following process when placing students into classes for the following school year. Annually, DPS has approximately 700 students to place into classes. It is a long, complex task and many factors are taken into consideration.

Stage 1 Week 1-4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The classroom teacher conducts friendly peers' activity with their class and provides information on all students in their class based on academic behaviour and social and emotional needs.• The information above is used to create proposed class lists based on projected enrolments. Each class at this stage does not have a teacher assigned.
Stage 2 Week 5-7	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All teaching staff, including specialist teachers review the draft class lists to ensure classes are balanced with respect to gender, friendly peers, academic performance and social development• At this stage, teaching staff are assigned to each proposed class list.
Stage 3 Week 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Executive Leadership Team review proposed class lists and may suggest or make amendments due to health, social, emotional, and academic requirements or parents requests.• Any amendments are discussed with the necessary staff.• Proposed class lists are finalised, ready for sharing with school community in Week 10.

Factors Taken into Consideration When Allocating Students to Classes

- Projected number of students in each year level
- The educational and emotional needs of each student
- Special circumstances such as siblings or individual family matters
- Social network and friendly peers
- Work habits (e.g. ability to complete learning activities independently)
- Gender distribution
- Resources and facilities



Student Voice and Transition Support

We believe it is important to hear from students about which peers they work well with in class, and which peers they play well with. You can imagine that this can sometimes change within the year, and sometimes as they grow older.

To allow for students to have a familiar face in their new class, all students from Year 1 to Year 5 participate in a friendly peers activity. During this activity with their classroom teacher, they select two peers they work well with in class, and three peers who they work or play well with, from different classes.

We also support students to transition to their new year level towards the conclusion of each year. One morning or afternoon is dedicated to students from Kindergarten to Year 5 visiting their next year's classrooms and teachers. During this time, we ensure children are mixed across all classes from that year group to encourage further opportunities to build or strengthen friendships.

Building Confidence and Resiliency

Through our You Can Do It Program, we teach our students to be confident and resilient. Our message to parents is that if you or your child are not happy at first with the class placement, we are highly unlikely to move students between classes. This is because a move will then impact on the factors that were taken into consideration when allocating students to classes.

In collaboration with parents, we will support your child in navigating this aspect of school which reflects 'real life' social and work situations.



Parent Requests

Parents wishing to advise the school of personal information or educational reasons that may influence where their child is placed in the following year, are able to do so in writing. This information is included in the Class Placement FAQ's later in these guidelines. The closing date for parents to submit their requests is Friday 15th November, 2024.

Parent requests are considered; however, it may not always be possible to fulfil these. The school considers the placement of each student based upon the range of factors outlined above before determining whether individual student requests from parents can be met.

Class List Communication

Dunsborough PS, where possible, releases probable class structures and student placement lists before the end of term 4. This allows students to know who their teacher is and where their class is, establish connections with other students who will be in their class the following year and for parents to arrange social catchups over the December holidays.



CLASS PLACEMENT FAQs

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

As professional educators we strive to place your child based on the information that the teachers have been gathering daily such as learning styles, interests, social groups, emotional needs as well as their academic ability. Previous teachers and specialist teachers are also consulted when placing students.

When will I know my child's placement?

Where possible, we aim to advise families regarding classroom placements for the following year prior to the school holiday break. In situations where student enrolments significantly increase or decrease from the planned class structure, a reallocation of some students to revised classes may occur at the start of the new school year.

I'd like to provide a request in writing. What are examples of educational reasons that I can include in my request?

Parents can provide a request via email to the Principal. The type of reasons that would be considered are:

- Special needs such as twins and siblings
- Family situations that the school may not be aware of
- Existing co-dependency between children, wanting your child to be considered for separation from another child to foster new friendships
- Previous class placements

What requests are NOT taken into consideration?

The type of reasons that would NOT be considered are:

- **A particular teacher.** Rather, you may state a preferred teaching style that may be better suited to the needs of your child.
- **Being placed with a particular student.** While parents may make a request for students to stay together, 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 same children be placed in separate classes. Often children placed with a 'best friend' will complete work and play exclusively with each other and this does not promote the social interaction that builds stronger connections. We also find friendship groups change throughout the year.
- **Not being placed in a class with a particular student.** If your child is experiencing difficulty with a student/s in their class, you are encouraged to please inform the class teacher or one of the Associate Principals at the time, so that support and strategies can be implemented to assist your child navigate the situation. Primary school provides an opportunity for students to learn a range of skills and strategies that will assist them to function socially with all kinds of people. In collaboration with parents, we will do all we can to assist your child in navigating this aspect of school which reflects 'real life' social and work situations.

What if my child doesn't have any friends in their class?

We use the term 'friendly peers'. All students in Year 1-5 are asked to name 5 students who they are friendly with and who they work well with. A cohort activity takes place prior to the friendly peer lesson, so students can mingle with all students in that year group. All children are placed with at least one friendly peer in their class. These may not be the friends that they play with on the weekend, or in their current class; however, they are peers who they work well with in class, across classes and/or often play with during break times.

When I get my child's placement, what is the process for raising any concerns?

The class placements are considered final. Changes to placements are rare due to the fact they set a precedence and can impact on the class balance. This may be unfair to other students in the group. We strongly encourage you speak with your classroom teacher in the first instance. You can also talk to one of the Associate Principals or Principal where pertinent, this information will be shared with the teacher so that your child's apprehensions will be addressed.

What if my child is having difficulties in his/her class placement after school has started?

We will do everything we can to support you and/ or your child. Parents need to firstly talk to the class teacher. If the matter needs to be referred on, the class teacher or parent can request additional support from the Student Services team, Associate Principal or Principal.



Appendix A: Composite (Split) Class Information

What is a composite class?

A composite class or split class is a class with two-year groups combined. For example: A year 1/2 class.

They are usually formed because of the uneven pattern of enrolments at the schools and differing suggested class sizes per year group. Basically, there are too many or not enough students in a particular year level to make a full class.

Why do composite classes occur in public schools?

1. Schools are staffed based on enrolment numbers
2. They ensure class sizes remain within recommended limits where possible
3. They provide flexibility to cater for the requirements of individual children and cohorts including academic, social and emotional needs.

What is the impact on academic achievement?

Research shows that composite classes make no difference to the academic outcomes of student learning. The factor that has the most significant influence by a very large margin is the knowledge, skills and expertise of the teacher, sometimes referred to as teacher quality. Research also indicates that composite classes can enhance the development of some children as it provides opportunities for them to bolster independent learning skills and develop confidence and assertiveness as they operate as part of a class group.

What are the positive social aspects of a composite class?

Placement in a composite class can allow children to develop a wider group of friends outside of their year group. This often gives them more friendship options in the playground, greater connections throughout the school and can also benefit them when engaging in activities in the wider community. In addition to assisting in the development of social skills, for some children composite classes can also help in building resiliency. For example, younger children within a composite class generally aspire to emulate older children in their work, and older children enjoy the leadership and mentoring opportunities that can lift their self-esteem. Students in composite classes are given opportunities to join their same year level peers in both social and learning situations whilst at school. This includes lunchtime eating, some class learning activities as well as whole school, phase of learning (K-2, 3-6) and year level events.

Teachers at Dunsborough work collaboratively to plan their teaching and learning programs, ensuring that students in composite classes are provided with the same content and opportunities as all students in their year level. Staff who have prior teaching experience in the year groups involved are often selected to work in composite classes.

Composite class teachers have proven classroom management strategies and have expertise in working collaboratively across multi-year levels.

Evidence shows that most students quickly adapt to new classroom situations, expanding their social connections whilst being provided with the opportunity to continue existing friendships.

Why has my child been placed in a composite class?

Our teachers make decisions about which students are best suited for composite classes. They take the whole child into consideration and look at factors such as social and emotional maturity, independent working skills, behavioural needs, cohort dynamics, siblings, gender balance, existing relationships and previous class placements.