

Procedure for class placements

Te Kowhai School
Reviewed: October 2020



Rationale

A school's primary task is to ensure that all children are experiencing successful outcomes. Placement of students into a new Learning Community each year requires careful consideration of the academic, social, physical and emotional development of each child, in conjunction with schoolwide logistics.

Guidelines

The Board of Trustees recognises that placement of pupils into classes is the professional task of the principal and teaching staff.

- Individual student learning needs will be catered for within their age group where possible. It is in the best interests of the child to be grouped as per identified need.
- Parents are invited each year, through the newsletter or email, to write to the principal on any specific academic, social or emotional considerations they believe the school should consider prior to placing children in classes for the following year. The school will consider these, but can't provide any guarantees that they will be acted on.
- Teaching teams will collate class lists. The Principal and Leadership team may make any changes to these lists that are deemed necessary.
- Parents will be informed in December (via Hero) of the placement of their child for the following year. *Only in absolutely exceptional circumstances will any changes to that placement be made by the Principal.*
- All class groups will be of mixed ability and may be a composite nature (i.e. x2 year groups). Composite classes allow for a greater degree of flexibility.
- Pupils will be classified Y0 – Y8 according to their time at school.
- New Entrants beginning after Term 1 finishes will be classified as Year 0 for the remainder of that year. These children will be Year 1 at the beginning of the next year.
- Children will move through the school with their chronological year group, except in exceptional circumstances which will be considered by the Principal on an individual basis. Reclassifications are only recommended if it would be in the child's best interest to repeat a year level.

Things we take into consideration when deciding on class placements:

- Age, year level and number of years at school;
- Academic ability;
- Social maturity;
- Emotional factors;
- Physical maturity;
- Peer groups;
- Strengths, interests and needs of students (and complementary teacher strengths)
- Specific concerns/considerations of parents;
- Prior relationship between teachers and parents (i.e. teacher has taught other sibling)
- Number of children in classes;
- Balance of children in classes - special needs, behaviour, gender

Frequently Asked Questions regarding class placements

Do we stream classes?

Our classes are not streamed based on ability. The programme is determined by the needs, interests and abilities of the students in the class. There are no separate programmes for each year level in the school, we use curriculum levels, based on individual student ability. Teachers run a wide range of groups based on abilities, and this is enhanced greatly with 2-3 teachers where they can differentiate more widely.

Why does the school have some composite (i.e. Year 4 & 5) Learning Communities?

This allows the school to manage class sizes accordingly. i.e. If we had tried to have all students in year groups together, then we would have had a class of 70 Year 5/6s, which is obviously too many, but not enough for 3. Composite LCs are a logistical necessity.

Example: My child is a Year 4 in a Year 3/4 class, does that mean they will be held back and should I be worried?

No, the level of learning is based on the curriculum levels and not the Year level. We don't stream the classes academically. Individual achievement/assessment info is crucial for each of our students and this is used to help determine individual, group and school programmes. Teachers use this information to help our students with their learning.

A year 4 student in a year 3/4 Learning Community will complete exactly the same level of work as a year 4 would in a year 4/5 class, assuming their individual abilities are identical.

How does the school support the students with the transition?

We will talk with the children about next year's arrangements and answer any queries they have. At the end of the year students find out their LC and teacher for next year and spend some time with them.

In addition, we have a student management system that ensures all information travels with the student into next year and teachers have all the information on each of their students so they are able to begin programmes from day one next year based on the needs of the children in their care.

What do I do if my child is upset about their placement?

Hopefully this will not be the case, as teachers will have talked to students and explained how things have been arranged. After classes are set, we would only consider exceptional circumstances regarding changing class arrangements. Factors we must consider include not only the individual but also possible flow on effects of changes as well.

During our lives we all have times of change and what is valuable is the ability to adapt and move forward. Changes in peer/social groups are an expected and essential part of developing as a child. Our students also need to develop coping strategies as per our resilience learner quality.

Can my child be reclassified?

Reclassification of a student's year level is a possibility depending on their age. If your child is born in certain months of the year (i.e. March - May) there is some flexibility for us to reclassify them to repeat a year. We discourage 'accelerating' a student as this fast-tracking can have consequences further into high school. Our recommendation is to allow your child to have as long at Primary School as possible. If you have questions in relation to this, discuss this with your child's classroom teachers or the Principal.

But what if they are extremely capable academically?

We differentiate all learning programmes to ensure that each students' needs are met. There are also a lot of other factors that determine your child's readiness for acceleration (i.e. social, emotional, physical considerations).