



## Upper Swan Primary School Class Structure and Student Placement for 2024

A range of factors impact on the number and composition of classrooms. These include student enrolments, local boundaries, pre-compulsory versus compulsory schooling and industrial requirements for class sizes.

Formulating class structures and student placement is a lengthy, well-considered and important process. The Leadership Team decide upon the structure of classes across the school and staff placement. Teaching and Leadership staff determine the best fit possible when placing students into classes, considering a range of criteria and variables. Staff are best placed, and do consider, the needs of all students.

The following *Frequently Asked Questions* and responses address some of the questions schools are asked about class structure and student placement. The following questions and responses are organised into *Class Structure* and *Student Placement* (ie the class your child is in).

### **Class Structure**

#### **Why does the school have some split grade classes instead of all straight classes?**

As a Public School, every student who resides in our boundary, between Years PP and 6, is guaranteed an enrolment place. In addition, Upper Swan has students from outside our boundary. In Public Schools student numbers rarely balance perfectly, across the school, for straight classes, at recommended class sizes.

As staffing is dependent upon the enrolment in each grade, multi-aged or combined classes do occur. This practice is well supported by research and our beliefs about how children learn. It is also often a practical necessity with our enrolment numbers and maximum class sizes, as per relevant Industrial Awards and Agreements.

#### **What is a reasonable class size?**

The Department of Education has recommended maximum class sizes for various year levels. Our school always starts the year within these recommendations. If numbers increase during the year, additional support is provided, in negotiation with teachers. This is usually in the form of additional relief days during busy reporting periods. On rare occasions, schools may need to restructure their classes to accommodate student growth throughout the year.

Maximum recommended class sizes

K = 20            P = 27            Yr 1-3 = 24      Yr 4-6 = 32

#### **How do teachers cover multiple year level curriculum, in a split (or composite class)?**

The curriculum acts as a guide of what is covered in a given year. Importantly however, is that students receive the curriculum content that allows them to progress and achieve. This might mean modifying, or extending the curriculum. It is common practice that in any given class, a teacher will need to support, or extend students who may be up to two years ahead, or behind the year level curriculum. This is done through differentiated instruction and group or individual education plans. As such, being in a split class is less of a factor for a student than receiving the appropriate teaching and learning that is needed. Teachers are highly skilled at achieving this.

### **Student Placement (The class your child is in)**

#### **What is considered when staff place students into classes?**

Student placement is based on the professional judgement of staff, taking into account students' academic, social and emotional needs, in this school setting. Classes are designed with all student's needs in focus. Factors which are considered in the placement of students include:

- academic performance
- work habits eg ability to work independently
- student behaviour
- gender
- social networks, social dynamics and social maturity
- special considerations eg twins, siblings, medical or disability factors

**When will I know my child's class placement?**

Parents of children in Kindergarten are informed of their child's placement mid-Term 4.

For Pre-Primary to Year 6 class lists, the school aims to communicate with families, via Connect, about class placement before the end of the school year, at the end of Term 4. Occasionally factors impact on the process and class placements cannot be confirmed until the week before the start of the school year.

Class placements can change as enrolments invariably fluctuate over the holiday and start of the new school year. Sometimes factors impact on the number of students, for example, new housing developments.

**Can I request my child is placed with another child? Can I request my child is not placed with another child?**

School staff determine the composition of classes. Staff have the unique perspective of, and consider dynamics and social implications for all children, as part of the complex class structuring process.

When allocating students to classes, we endeavour to foster positive social interaction across a year group, by making socially balanced classes. Staff are best placed, and do consider, the emotional and social needs of all students. The final decision on placement rests with the principal.

**Do teachers request certain student placements for their classes?**

No. Teachers focus on class balance to ensure a successful year for all classes. Classes are formulated with the best interests of all students, at the forefront of decision making.

**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. Teachers do not always teach the same year level two years in a row. In addition, the school does not use records of who a child's sibling was taught by, when placing children. Rather, the needs of that cohort are considered. New relationships are constructive and support emotional and social growth and development.

**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 very rare, due to the fact they impact on the very carefully considered class composition and balance. While we consider the individual child during the placement process, we hope parents understand, their child is part of a complex equation in school placements.

You may talk with one of the school's administration team about your concerns and be assured that those concerns will be shared with the teacher so your child's anxieties will be addressed. Teachers have the skills and support to help children adjust. We find that children, generally adjust quickly.

**What if my child is having difficulty in his/her new placement after school has started? Can we request a change then?**

Teachers are highly skilled at creating positive, welcoming, inclusive classroom communities. Some students take a little longer than others to settle into their new classroom environment. If you have concerns, please arrange a time to see your child's teacher to problem solve and plan together, how you can support your child.

**I have noticed that a small group of my child's friends have been together in classes for a few years in a row, but my child has been in different classes. What's going on here?**

If this is happening, it would be a coincidence. Please bring it to the attention of one of the administration team if this is the case so they may make a note of it for future class placement processes.

**My child has been in a split class this year, so will they avoid one next year?**

Teachers will consider factors such as history of split classes, but research does show there is no negative impact academically, from being in split classes. Parent concern regarding consecutive years in split classes tends to focus on friendship groups, hence staff will consider this each year. If students do end up in consecutive split classes, it will be the result of very careful consideration of all the factors previously mentioned.

***Thank you for taking the time to consult this Q & A. Please contact a member of the School Leadership Team if you would like clarification on any of these points.***