



Class Placement Policy

Mount Hawthorn PS has a procedure in place for allocating students to classes each year. Class placements are based on professional judgements about the academic, social, emotional, psychological and physical wellbeing of every student. A significant amount of thought, planning, time and collaboration goes into the process, with our students at the centre of all decision making.

This policy aims to ensure an equitable outcome for all students whilst providing a clear framework to be applied by the school's leadership team and staff for the placement of students.

Responsibility for the final decision on class structures and student placement lies with the principal.

Class structures

Schools are funded through the Department of Education's student-centred funding model. The school commences planning in August by projecting enrolment numbers for the following school year. We then work to establish a class structure (ie: how many classes of each year level) based upon anticipated enrolments, available facilities, and the educational needs of students.

Class structures are planned in accordance with the School Education Act Employees' (Teachers and Administrators) General Agreement.

Class placement

Once class structures have been set (typically Term 4), staff meet to establish class lists for the following school year. The following factors are considered when allocating students to classes:

- Projected number of students in each year level
- Gender balance
- An even spread of students with respect to academic performance, social development and classroom behaviour
- Students' social networks and friendship groups
- The best educational needs of the student
- School Psychologist recommendations (limited to students they work with)
- Special circumstances, such as twins or individual family members
- Constraints of resources or facilities
- Parent requests made to the principal prior to the due date (see Parent requests section below).

Specialist teachers and the leadership team review all year level cohort recommendations. Class placements are then submitted to the principal for final approval.

To enable students to know which class they are going into the following year, the school aims to publish class lists in Week 10, Term 4. When this occurs, the school will provide an orientation session in Week 10 so students can become familiar with their new class prior to the school holiday break. Class lists released in the previous year are always provisional, as modifications are sometimes necessary over the summer holidays to

allow for greater-than-predicted new enrolments. Where unforeseen changes are necessary, the school will contact parents of students affected by the move as soon as practicable.

If the leadership team determine the likelihood of modifications over the summer holidays due to that year's circumstances is high, the school will communicate the decision to hold lists over for release in the week prior to school commencing.

Parent requests

To make the best decisions we need as much information as possible. Class teachers have an excellent knowledge of your children, particularly in relation to their social and academic needs in the classroom and school setting. Class placements takes a great deal of time and thought, and staff always use their professional judgement and expertise to make decisions in the best interests of students.

Occasionally parents wish to provide additional information for the consideration of school staff. Parents are able to make a class placement request based on the educational needs for their child as follows:

- Send an email to mounthawthorn.ps@education.wa.edu.au
- In the subject line, put **Class placement request – confidential**
- State your request, including supporting reasons/evidence

All class placement requests received on or before **Friday, Week 4 of Term 4** will be considered in relation to the class placement process outlined in this policy. Late submissions will not be considered.

Please remember that requests are exactly that: requests. The school cannot guarantee that every request can or will be met. Please note that whilst parent input is welcomed and valued, requests for individual teachers will not be considered.

School and parent/carer commitments

The school commits to supporting the Class Placement policy by:

- using informed professional judgement when deciding class placements,
- considering all available information to assist the process, and
- ensuring year level teachers, specialist teachers and leadership team members all have input into the final lists.

Parent/carers commit to supporting the Class Placement policy by:

- submitting class placement requests, where applicable, on or before Friday, Week 4 of Term 4.
- supporting and accepting decisions made by the school; and
- being positive with their child about the class placement decision that has been made

Frequently Asked Questions

Can I request my child's placement with another child in the classroom? Or can I request my child not be placed with another particular child?

Parents may request this but need to give clear reasons why this is necessary. It is important to consider that the school knows your child's friendships and that placing them without that particular friend may be so that your child expands their friendship base.

We want children to be able to work and socialise with a variety of other children and build skills to make new friends. This is an aspect of the school experience where students learn to function socially with all kinds of people. While some parents make a friendship request, the decision is complex. Several times we have received a request from one family to place particular children together, while the second family requests that the same children be placed in separate classes. Often children placed with best friends will work and play exclusively with each other, and this does not promote the social interaction we try to foster of embracing new peers and making new friendships. Often young children change friendships throughout their early years.

When allocating children to classes, we endeavour to foster positive social interaction across a year group, by making balanced classes to minimise non-constructive relationships. If your child is having difficulty with a student in their class, please inform the teacher or the relevant deputy/associate principal, so we can work together to address the problem.

Do teachers request certain student placements into their classes?

No, teachers are not assigned to a class until after the class placement process. Teachers focus on class balance to ensure a successful year for all students.

Can I request my child's placement with a specific teacher?

No. As per the previous question, teachers are not assigned to a class until after the class placement process.

We really like the teacher one of our children had. Now our next child will be entering that year level. Can we assume our next child will get that teacher too?

It is a coincidence if this happens. New relationships are constructive and help us grow. All children are different and may respond well to a different teacher.

When I get my child's class placement, can I request that it be changed?

Given the exhaustive process undertaken class placements are generally considered to be final. Changing one student's placement at the request of a parent after lists are published often means many other changes are required so we can meet the needs of all students. Parents can help by being positive and encouraging to their children if they don't receive their perfect placement.

Parents can make an appointment with the relevant deputy or associate principal about their concerns, however, changing a student placement at this stage would be rare. In the event a change does not occur, the classroom teacher and the deputy or associate principal will work with the parents to help the student adjust to their new class.

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

Our teachers go over and above to assist students to settle into their new classes. If your child is having difficulty, please make an appointment to talk to the teacher and relevant deputy or associate principal so the child's needs can be addressed. Teachers are expected to have the skills to help children adjust, and we are fortunate to have exceptionally caring and positive teachers in all year levels at Mount Hawthorn PS. Teachers want to construct the smoothest transitions possible for the students for which they care so much.

Will our school have composite classes next year?

This completely depends on student enrolments in each year level and this changes from year to year. In some years it is necessary in schools to have composite (split or multi-age) classes; in other years all classes can be single-year levels.

The good news is that composite classes are not detrimental to student learning!

Research has shown that students in composite classrooms are at least as successful academically as their typical school peers. Professor Barbara Pavan's October 1992 article for Educational Leadership pp.22-24 titled "The Benefits of Non-Graded Schools," reviewed 64 research studies on non-graded (multi-age) schools. Pavan found that 58% of those students in multi-age classes performed better than their peers on measures of academic achievement. 33% performed as well as their peers, and only 9% did worse than their peers. Pavan also found that students in multi-age settings were more likely than their peers to have positive self-concepts, high self-esteem, and good attitudes toward school. Her review of the research also indicates that benefits to students increase the longer they are in a non-graded setting, and that "underachieving" students also benefit from being in multi-age classrooms.

Older students provide models of intellectual development and appropriate behaviour for younger students. Interaction between less and more advanced students, benefits all individuals both academically and socially. Younger students can seek help from a wider range of people rather than relying on the teacher to help them all the time. Older students are able to augment their own understandings by teaching them to the younger students. There are less behaviour problems because younger students integrate quickly into established class routines as older students model appropriate behaviour.

Students are more confident, can operate better as part of a group, are more assertive, develop a greater respect for individual differences, become more independent learners and better problem-solvers. They also make friends outside of their standard age-groups. Older students can benefit from helping younger students in cooperative learning situations. Composite classes build self-esteem and personal competence and provide opportunities to build social skills in a context more reflective of the social interactions within families and the community.

Finally, the notion that all students are at the same stage of learning in a single-level class is flawed. A typical single-level primary school class will have students of abilities that span 5 (or more) years. For example, many Year 4 classes have students reading at Year 6 level (or above) mixed with students reading at Year 2 or 3 level. In composite classes the spread is often less because the students chosen to 'go up' are usually working above their current year level.