

Class Placement Policy

Kapinara Primary School

Purpose

Kapinara Primary School creates its class structure and student placement based upon the professional judgements of staff, with the aim of providing the best learning environment for each student.

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 the given due date each year.
- supporting and accepting decisions made by the school; and
- being positive with their child about the class placement decision that has been made

Process

At Kapinara Primary School, we are committed to fostering the holistic development of each child, guiding them towards their full potential. A key part of this process is the trust that parents and carers place in us to make decisions that best serve their child's interests. We believe that every child has the ability to build new friendships and should have the opportunity to do so within a new classroom setting. These experiences promote resilience, encouraging children to embrace new challenges, work collaboratively with peers, and adjust to different teaching styles. This growth is essential in preparing them for the future, whether it be high school, further education, or the workforce.

Our classrooms are dynamic learning environments, led by highly qualified teachers who understand and cater to the unique needs of each student. We ask parents to support the school's class placement decisions, as their confidence and reassurance can greatly shape their child's

positive adjustment to these changes. Under exceptional circumstances, the Principal may reorganise class structures if required.

Some of the factors that are considered when allocating students to classes are:

- The educational and emotional needs of each student.
- Ratio of boys to girls in classes.
- The creation of classes that are balanced with respect to academic performance, social development and behaviour.
- Constraints of resources or facilities.
- Friendship groups. Students are asked to identify 4 friends. They are reminded that we will make every effort to ensure they are with at least one of their identified friends, but that this is not always possible.
- Class size
- Cohort dynamics

Publication

Class lists will be shared with parents two days before school resumes. This timing allows the school to account for various factors that may affect class structures, including changes in student enrolment numbers over the holiday break. These fluctuations can necessitate adjustments to class structures or compositions for several reasons, such as:

- If student numbers exceed the maximum class size allocation.
- If a decrease in student numbers affects the financial viability of staffing classes with available funding.
- If circumstances change over the break, such as a student leaving the school, which may impact planned social dynamics (e.g., a student leaving who was part of a friendship group, leaving another student without a preferred peer).
- Additionally, new enrolments may necessitate adjustments to class composition to accommodate the needs of the new or existing students.

This approach ensures that the school can remain flexible and responsive to any changes, creating the best possible environment for all students.

Student Orientation Afternoon

The day before school resumes, classrooms will be open from 2:00pm to 3:00pm for student orientation. During this time, parents are welcome to accompany their child(ren) to meet their new teacher, explore the classroom, and become familiar with the new environment. This opportunity helps students feel more comfortable and prepared for the first day of school. Families are also encouraged to bring in and unpack their book supplies during this visit.

Composite Classes

Government schools are funded through a student-centred funding model, where the amount of funding is directly tied to the number of enrolled students. A smaller class size can result in a disproportionate amount of funding being allocated to staffing, which may require reallocating funds from other essential areas of the school to cover the costs. It is the responsibility of the principal to determine the optimal class structure to balance educational needs and resource allocation. Additionally, the formation of classes is influenced by the teachers' industrial agreement, which outlines recommended maximum class sizes, as follows:

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

Should there be a need to form a composite (split) class, the teaching staff from the previous year and the Administration team will decide the placement of individual students. As with the above, the following will be taken into consideration when forming splits classes:

- Work habits
- Social maturity
- Academic performance
- Previous class placement

Further information and research regarding the benefits of composite classes can be found in Appendices 2.

Class Placement 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 kapinara.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 the given due date each year 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. Once class lists are out, class changes will not be made but the school will work with parents to help them support their child if there are issues in class.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – FAQ

Appendix 2 – Composite Class information

Policy Review Date: 2025

APPENDIX 1

FAQ

Why does the school have some composite grade classes instead of having all straight year level classes?

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

As professional educators, our goal is to make thoughtful and well-informed decisions regarding class placements. Throughout the year, our teachers have the opportunity to observe and understand each child's learning style, interests, social connections, emotional needs, and academic progress. We also collaborate closely with previous and specialist teachers to ensure we have a comprehensive view of each student's needs.

We deeply value the insights that parents provide about their children. At the same time, our teachers bring a broader perspective, considering the needs of all students within a year level to create balanced and supportive learning environments. This allows us to make placement decisions that best support every child's growth and development.

When will I know my child's Kindergarten placement?

Parents of children in Kindergarten will be informed of their child's placement before Term 4, Week 7 (Friday).

Can I request a particular teacher for my child either in writing or through discussion with my child's present teacher?

No, this is not part of the Class Placement Policy.

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?

Class teachers ask children to list 4 students in their friendship group during Term 4. While some parents make a friendship request, 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 best friends will work and play exclusively with each other, and this does not promote the social interaction we try to foster. We also find young children change best friends.

When allocating children to classes, we endeavour to foster positive social interaction across a year group, by making socially balanced classes and to help prevent non-constructive relationships. If your child is having difficulty with a student in his/her class, please inform the teacher so problem solving can take place. This is the aspect of the school experience that reflects 'real life'; where students learn to function socially with all kinds of people.

Can we assume our second child will get the same teachers?

It is a coincidence if this happens as the school does not use historical records when placing children. 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?

You may talk with one of the Deputy Principals about your concerns and be assured that those concerns will be shared with the teacher so you and the teacher can work together to support any anxieties. Teachers run specific programs and activities at the beginning of the year to help children feel comfortable, get to know other students in the class and feel connected to the school. Class placements are considered final. Changes to placements are not considered due to precedence and the chain reaction that this would create. While we feel we consider the individual child during the placement process, parents must realise their child is part of a complex equation in school placements.

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

We will do everything we can to solve problems. Parents need to talk firstly to the class teacher; if the matter needs to be referred on, a Deputy Principal or Principal will be involved so your child's needs can be addressed. Changing classes is not part of the Class Placement Policy. Please be assured that all information about children is valued and heard. Teachers work hard to make the transition between years a smooth process for all our students. Parents can help by being as positive and encouraging as possible to their children in this process.

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.

APPENDIX 2

What Are Composite Classes and How Do They Work?

At times, student enrolments in a particular year level do not align neatly with standard class sizes. In such cases, it may be necessary to form a composite or 'multi-aged' class that combines students from two consecutive year levels. This approach is well-supported by educational research and aligns with our understanding of how children learn, particularly in the primary years. Often, it is also a practical solution given our enrolment numbers.

Curriculum and Learning Opportunities

Students in a composite class receive the same curriculum entitlement as those in a single-year class. Whenever possible, students in these classes participate in activities alongside their year-level peers, ensuring they remain engaged with age-appropriate content. If a child is placed in a composite class one year, they will not be placed in a similar arrangement the following year without consultation with parents.

Research and Benefits of Composite Classes

Studies, including those focused on primary schools, show that there is no significant difference in academic outcomes between students in composite classes and those in single-grade classes. However, composite classes can offer unique benefits, such as fostering independence, responsibility, and strong study habits. Younger students often look up to older peers, aspiring to reach their level, while older students gain confidence through leadership and mentoring opportunities. This dynamic can enhance self-esteem and create a more collaborative and supportive classroom environment.

Composite classes can also be more flexible, allowing students to progress at their own pace and offering a broader range of friendship opportunities. The philosophy behind composite classrooms is that children learn "by stages, not ages," mirroring real-life situations where age groupings are less rigid.

Quality of Teaching and Student Suitability

While composite classes offer many advantages, their success is closely tied to the quality of teaching. Our teaching staff carefully consider which students are best suited for composite classes, focusing on the overall benefit for each child. Decisions about placements in composite classes are made by the teaching staff, not parents.

Will We Have Composite Classes Next Year?

The formation of composite classes depends entirely on the number of students enrolled in each year level, which can change from year to year. Some years may require the creation of composite classes, while in other years, all classes may be single-year levels.

Further Research on Composite Classes

Research highlights the advantages of multi-age classrooms. For instance, Professor Barbara Pavan's review of 64 studies on non-graded (multi-age) schools, published in *Educational Leadership* in 1992, found that 58% of students in such settings outperformed their peers in traditional classes, while 33% performed equally well, and only 9% performed less well. Students in multi-age settings also tended to have higher self-esteem, more positive attitudes toward school, and greater social skills. Underachieving students, in particular, benefitted from being in a non-graded environment.

In a composite class, older students can serve as role models, helping younger students both academically and socially. Younger students, in turn, have a wider range of peers from whom they can seek support, reducing their reliance solely on the teacher. This dynamic creates a classroom environment where cooperation, tolerance, and positive behaviour are fostered.

Social and Emotional Development in Composite Classes

Students in composite classes often become more confident, develop stronger social skills, and learn to work effectively as part of a group. They gain respect for individual differences, become more independent learners, and improve their problem-solving abilities. Building friendships across age groups can also enrich their social experiences and reflect the natural diversity of social interactions in families and communities.

Addressing a Common Misconception

The idea that all students in a single-grade class are at the same learning level is a misconception. In reality, there is a wide range of abilities within any class. For example, a Year 4 class might include students reading at a Year 6 level alongside those reading at a Year 2 or 3 level. Composite classes often have a smaller range of abilities because students selected for these classes are typically working above their current year level, making the composition more balanced.

If you have any further questions about how composite classes work or how they may affect your child, please feel free to contact the Deputy Principal responsible for your child's year level. We are here to support your child's educational journey and ensure a positive experience for all students.