



West Beach Primary School

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WEST BEACH
SA 5024

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Information about 2017 Class Structures and Student Placement Processes

Dear Parents and Caregivers

26th October 2016

This term we will be undertaking the process of organising classes and staffing for 2017. The decisions about the organisation of classes within the school for each year, including the year levels in each class, their location, the teacher/s and student placement within these classes are made by teachers and the Personnel Advisory Committee (PAC) of the school. The committee consists of the Principal or their nominee, an equal opportunity representative elected by the staff, an Australian Education Union representative elected by AEU members in the school and a support staff representative elected by those staff.

When making these decisions this committee must consider certain industrial entitlements and legal agreements. These include things such as the size of classes (maximum averaging 30 for year 3-7 and 26 for year R-2), the fair distribution of workload so that classes have ideally the same number of students as well as students with disabilities and other significant learning difficulties evenly distributed amongst classes. All of this must be done within the constraints of the school budget. Smaller class sizes and additional student support or teaching staff must be funded by the school through cutting back on other resources, charging higher materials and services charges or fundraising.

Determining the class structures and deciding into which class your child will be placed is a highly complex and complicated process involving the PAC and teachers. Basically the following are the steps we take and the considerations we make in this process.

Budget

We determine the budget in consultation with the school council for classes, teachers and support staff for the next school year.

Number of Students Per Class

We determine the likely numbers for each year level.

Number of Classes

We decide on the number of classes we can afford for the whole school based on the expected numbers.

Composition of Classes

We decide on the composition of these classes across the school in relation to year levels and numbers of students in each. This must be a reasonably even distribution with no more than an average of 30 for primary classes and 26 for junior primary classes. There are also curriculum delivery considerations which means that with composite classes, certain combinations of year levels work better than others. We can rarely have totally straight year levels in classes as the numbers of students are not evenly distributed across year levels in multiples of 30 or 26.

Identify Staff Numbers / Advertise New Staff Positions

We identify the staff we know about for the following year and at which levels they will be teaching. We then enter vacancies for the new teachers that are needed with details about the skills we require. This commences a process of placement where the Principal and department negotiate as to who will be appointed to the school. Permanent teachers have priority over contract teachers. This process usually is not complete until mid January.

Place Students With Additional Needs Equally

We allocate students with disabilities and other risk factors such as behaviour or serious learning difficulties evenly across the classes for their year levels. We allocate any students where we



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know there are court orders of any type or family circumstances that make placement with certain other students highly inadvisable.

Student Friendship Groups Considered

We allocate the remaining students so that they are with at least a couple of students who are in their friendship group and attempt to avoid combinations of individual students that we know from experience have serious conflicts or do not support positive behaviours with each other.

Staff Allocation

We allocate classes to teachers based on our judgement of best fit for the teacher's experience, skills and preferences and the student group within each class. We work within the knowledge that all our teachers are registered and suitably qualified, and while they may be different in some aspects of their approaches, we match teachers to classes using our professional judgement as to the most suitable for each class within the personnel we have. We do this with considerable thought and considering the needs of all children as best we can, given the constraints within which we have to operate. It is common that there will be some classes which don't have an allocated teacher before the end of the year.

Parents / Students Informed

Parents and students are informed of their class placement with their end of year reports.

Parent Appeal Process

Parents who believe that their child has been inappropriately placed may appeal in writing to the Personnel Advisory Committee before the end of the school year (16th December 2016). They will consider the appeal in the light of the criteria. Changing the placement of students is not done lightly as it means that other children might also have to be moved to accommodate the changes. While parents are free to make further appeals to regional office of the department, it is highly unlikely a decision based on the process described above would be overturned.

Student Attendance Checked in the Following School Year

At the beginning of the following school year the actual number of students who attend on the first day is checked to ensure that the number of classes and the distribution of students is still fair and equitable. Should there be major changes to numbers then some restructuring may need to be considered.

Personal Circumstances Taken Into Account

I would like to invite parents to inform the Principal's Advisory Committee in writing of any particular circumstances or considerations they believe should be taken into account when placing their child within a class **by Friday 11th November 2016**. These might include social, emotional, health or learning issues. Those that have been diagnosed or identified by professionals will take priority. Confidential information relating to issues between families that might impact on the school, should also be submitted. It is important that parents provide information each year and not rely on the current school staff necessarily being aware of your child's needs. Parents do not have the right to select the teacher they want for their child and should be careful about making judgements about any teacher's ability based on the opinions of other parents or children. All our teachers are suitably qualified and capable, even though they may be different in character or have particular specialist expertise. Often children relate very well to teachers that their parents do not expect them to.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further questions about this process.

Kind Regards

Katrina Sexton

Principal