

Frequently Asked Questions:

1. Why does the school have some split/composite classes?

Staffing is dependent on the enrolment numbers which can vary between year levels. Therefore composite classes are often necessary to ensure that we have appropriately sized classes and balanced teams of teachers. The practice of combining grades in one class is well supported by research and our beliefs about how children learn. That is, research shows us that students are not disadvantaged by being in a split grade class. The difference in students' academic ability and maturity can vary by about 5 years across a straight grade class and this is not much different for a split grade class. The added advantage of a split grade class is that students make friendships across grades. There are many social and academic advantages to be gained for students in composite classes. The development of co-operative behaviour patterns, leadership skills and independent study habits are examples of these advantages.

2. Can I request my child to be placed with another child?

Every student at Aberfeldie Primary School is provided with the opportunity to list 5 peers who they wish to be placed in a class with. This list should be based on children who have a positive influence on their learning and social development. Parents can influence this by speaking with their child at home & helping to draft a list of 5 peers together. We ask that parents don't send separate requests for pairings as this would lead to two separate lists and/or impact the equality of all students having the same opportunity. We use the wording 'positive peer' as not all friends benefit each other's learning and the learning of the other students in the classroom. We want children to be able to work and socialise with a variety of other children and build skills to make new friends. In addition, sometimes we may get competing requests from parents where one parent wants their child to be in a class with a friend but the friend's parents have requested that they not be in the same class. Friendships can change throughout primary school, students leave, more students arrive and so it is important for your child to develop friendship skills rather than always having the same friends.

3. Can I request my child not be placed with another child?

Parents may request their child not be placed with another student, given that there are clear reasons why this is necessary for their child's learning and social development. To put in a request for students to not be placed together, please fill in the form posted on Compass, which will be reviewed by Senior Leadership and classroom teachers. Any requests for students to be separated will be reviewed against school records and discussed with classroom teachers. Whilst all requests will be deeply considered, it is important to note that the school may not be able to fulfil all requests and the final decision is made by the school.

4. When will I know my child's placement?

Parents of children in Years 1-6 will be informed via letter on the day of the 'Orientation' session late in Term 4. Parents/Carers of Foundation students will also receive this information at this time.

5. Why do we ask parents to trust teaching staff with class placements?

As professional educators, we strive to make the right choices by taking into account all of the information we have about all students. Parents do know their children best, however, teachers have all

of the academic and social information about every child and can make sound judgments to meet the needs of every student, in every class and cohort.

6. What if my child or I am unhappy with my child's placement?

Under exceptional circumstances, class placement may be reconsidered in consultation with the principal team, however, significant evidence of disadvantage or risk will need to be presented and discussed. Requests that seem simple, such as switching a child from being with one friend to another, can mean that multiple other changes also need to take place to continue to meet the needs of all of the other students in each class. Unfortunately moving one child impacts a range of other students, groups and dynamics within multiple classes. The leadership team and classroom teacher will work with the parent to help students adjust to their new class. If your child is unhappy with their placement, we must speak to them positively and model how we want them to face disappointment now and in their future. Learning how to positively deal with disappointments builds resilience in children.

7. Can my child repeat a year level?

Department policy and research strongly suggests not to repeat students. Current research shows there is little to no benefit to repeating and that, in fact, the long-term effects can be detrimental. All parent requests will be given full consideration and decisions will take place in consultation with the principal, allied health professionals (paediatricians/psychologists), and other key staff.