



Safety Bay

Primary School
Independent Public School

CLASS PLACEMENT GUIDELINES



Updated 2025

RESPECT | RESPONSIBILITY | RESILIENCE | RELATIONSHIPS | REFLECTION

AIM

Individual student class placements at Safety Bay Primary School (SBPS) are based on the professional judgements of staff with the aim of providing the best learning environment for each student. Our aim is to be clear about our processes, ensuring there is a consistent approach across the school and keeping our school community informed.

SETTING CLASS STRUCTURES

The Administration Team establishes class structure options for the following year based upon anticipated enrolments. We set classes in accordance with the Schools Education Act Employees' General Agreement 2019. The suggested maximum class sizes are:

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

Where possible, there is space left in each classroom for new enrolments that may occur during the next school year.

COMPOSITE (SPLIT) CLASSES

A composite class or split class is a class with two-year groups combined. For example: A Year 1/2 class. They are usually formed because of the uneven pattern of enrolments at the school and differing suggested class sizes per year group. Basically, there are too many or not enough students in a particular year level to make a full class. Your child will more than likely be in at least one to two composite classes over the course of their primary school years. Regardless of a straight/composite class, all students are catered for at their level. Further information has been provided in Appendix A (page 7).



OUR PLACEMENT PROCESS

We implement the following process when placing students into classes for the following school year. Annually, SBPS has approximately 600 students to place into classes. It is a long, complex task and many factors are taken into consideration.

Stage 1	• The classroom teacher records peer preferences with their class, and provides information on all students in their class based on academic, behaviour and social and emotional needs. • An opportunity for additional parent information is provided. • The information above is used to create proposed class lists based on projected enrolments. Each class at this stage does not have a teacher assigned.
Stage 2	• All teaching staff, including specialist teachers review the draft class lists to ensure classes are balanced with respect to gender, friendly peers, academic performance and social development. • At this stage, teaching staff are assigned to each proposed class list.
Stage 3	• The Administration Team review proposed class lists and may suggest or make amendments due to health, social, emotional and academic requirements or parent/s additional information. • Consideration is made for possible changes to enrolments and/or staffing. • Any amendments are discussed with teachers. • Proposed class lists are finalised, ready for sharing with the school community,. The timing will depend on enrolment factors which may impact finalising.

FACTORS TAKEN INTO CONSIDERATION WHEN ALLOCATING STUDENTS TO CLASSES

- Projected number of students in each year level
- The educational and emotional needs of each student
- Special circumstances such as siblings or individual family matters
- Social network and identified peers
- Work habits (e.g. ability to complete learning activities independently)
- Gender distribution
- Resources and facilities



STUDENT VOICE AND TRANSITION SUPPORT

We believe it is important to hear from students about which peers they work well with in class and which peers they play well with. You can imagine that this can sometimes change within the year and sometimes as they grow older.

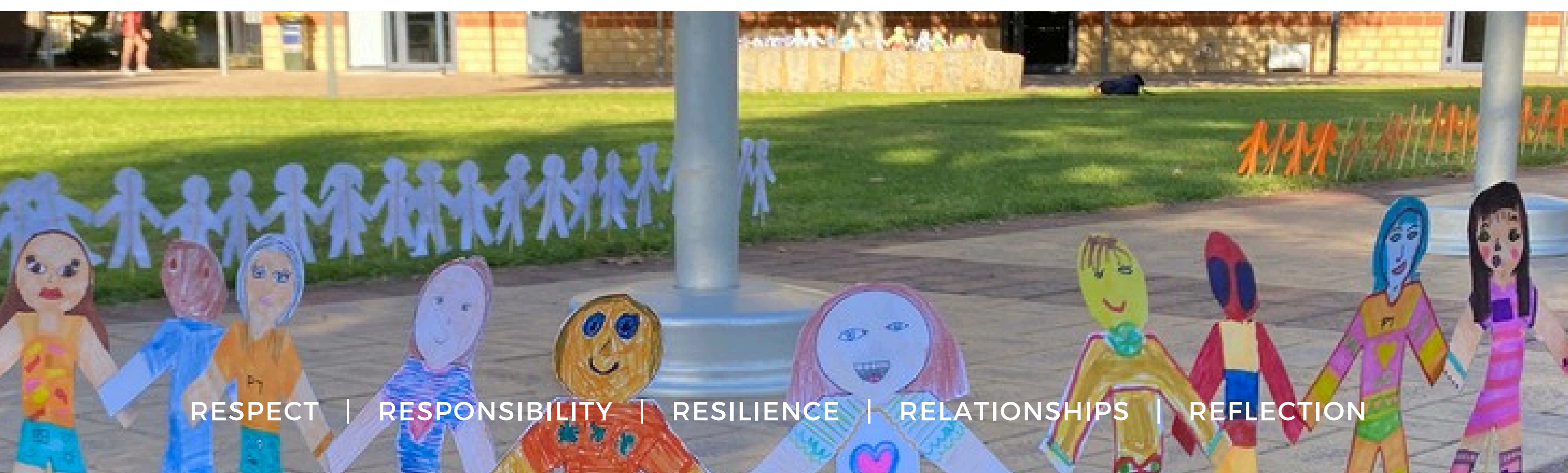
To allow for students to have a familiar face in their new class, all students from Year 1 to Year 5 will have an opportunity to voice preferred peers. During this activity with their classroom teacher, they select five peers they work well with in class or who they work or play well with in their cohort.

We also support students to transition to their new year level towards the conclusion of each year with a brief transition session. Several learning blocks are dedicated to students from Kindergarten to Year 5 visiting their potential next year's classrooms and teachers. At this time, class placements may not be fully finalised and this transition session is aimed at making year level expectations clear. It is also an opportunity for students to meet year level teachers and peers. During this time, we ensure children are mixed across all classes from that year group to encourage further opportunities to build or strengthen friendships. Parents and students may not be notified of their final placement prior to this day. Timelines around this information being released may be impacted by enrolment factors. It will be communicated to the school community when and where this information will be available towards the end of the school year.

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS AND RESILIENCY

Through our social learning programs and school R values, we teach our students to build relationships and be resilient. Our message to families is that if you or your child are not happy at first with the class placement, we are highly unlikely to move students between classes. This is because a move will then impact on the factors that were taken into consideration when allocating students to classes. We encourage families to communicate positive messages about class placements to their children to support them to feel confident about their class placements.

In collaboration with families, we will support your child in navigating this aspect of school which reflects 'real life' social and work situations.



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PARENT ADDITIONAL INFORMATION OPPORTUNITY

As per Stage 1 of the placement process, parents wishing to advise the school of additional personal information, including unique reasons that may influence where their child is placed in the following year, are able to do so via an electronic Microsoft Form. Only information received via this electronic form will be considered and emails, conversations with staff and written letters will not form part of this placement process. The information for finding this form will be included in the school newsletter in early Term 4, with the closing date occurring mid Term 4.

Parent information is considered. However, it may not always be possible to fulfil specific requests. The school considers the placement of each student based upon the range of factors outlined above before determining whether individual information from parents can be considered. Specific requests for particular teachers or peers are not considered to be additional information.

CLASS PLACEMENT COMMUNICATION

SBPS releases probable student placement as early as possible. Please note that with increasing enrolment factors, and an increase in student movement in recent years, this information may not be provided during Year Level Transition Day in 2025. Information regarding the timing of release of this information will be provided towards the end of the school year.

Significant increases or decreases in student enrolments, and late staff changes may require some class restructuring or changes in class teachers. Thank you for working with us by following this process to support your child's placement.



CLASS PLACEMENT FAQs

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

As professional educators we strive to place your child based on the information that the teachers have been gathering daily such as learning styles, interests, social groups, emotional needs as well as their academic ability. Previous teachers and specialist teachers are also consulted when placing students.

When will I know my child's placement?

Where possible, we aim to advise families regarding classroom placements for the following year prior to the school holiday break. In situations where student enrolments significantly increase or decrease from the planned class structure, a reallocation of some students to revised classes may occur at the start of the new school year.

I'd like to provide additional information about my child's placement. What can I include in my form?

Parents can provide information via the Microsoft Form. This is the only information that will be considered. The type of reasons that would be considered are:

- Special needs such as twins and siblings
- Family situations that the school may not be aware of
- Wanting your child to be considered for separation from another child to foster new friendships
- Previous class placements
- Specific educational needs

I'd like to provide additional information about my child's placement. What can't I include in my form?

The type of reasons that would NOT be considered are:

- **A particular teacher.** Rather, you may state a preferred teaching style that may be better suited to the needs of your child.
- **Being placed with a particular student.** While parents may make a request for students to stay together, 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 the same children be placed in separate classes. Often children placed with a 'best friend' will complete work and play exclusively with each other, and this does not promote the social interaction that builds stronger connections. We also find friendship groups change throughout the year.
- **Not being placed in a class with a particular student.** If your child is experiencing difficulty with a student/s in their class, you are encouraged to please inform the class teacher or one of the Deputy Principals at the time so that support and strategies can be implemented to assist your child navigate the situation. Primary school provides an opportunity for students to learn a range of skills and strategies that will assist them to function socially with all kinds of people.

CLASS PLACEMENT FAQs CONTINUED

What if my child doesn't have any friends in their class?

We record information from students about preferred peers. All students in Year 1-5 are asked to name 5 students who they are friendly with and who they work well with. We endeavour to place all children are placed with at least one preferred peer in their class. These may not be the friends that they play with on the weekend or in their current class. However, they are peers who they work well with in class, across classes and/or often play with during break times.

When I get my child's placement, what is the process for raising any concerns?

The class placements are considered final. Changes to placements are rare due to the fact they set a precedence and can impact on the class balance. These changes may then be unfair to other students in the group. If you have concerns, we strongly encourage you to speak with your classroom teacher in the first instance. You can also talk to one of the Deputy Principals or Principal where pertinent. This information will then be shared with the teacher so that any further apprehensions can be addressed.

What if my child is having difficulties in his/her class placement after school has started?

We will do everything we can to support you and/or your child. Parents need to firstly talk to the class teacher. If the matter needs to be referred on to Admin, the class teacher or parent can request additional support from the Administration Team.

APPENDIX A: COMPOSITE (SPLIT) CLASS INFORMATION

What is a composite class?

A composite class or split class is a class with two-year groups combined. For example: A Year 1/2 class. They are usually formed because of the uneven pattern of enrolments at the schools and differing suggested class sizes per year group. Basically, there are too many or not enough students in a particular year level to make a full class.

Why do composite classes occur in public schools?

- Schools are staffed based on enrolment numbers.
- They ensure class sizes remain within recommended limits where possible.
- They provide flexibility to cater for the requirements of individual children and cohorts including academic, social and emotional needs.

APPENDIX A: COMPOSITE (SPLIT) CLASS INFORMATION CONTINUED

What is the impact on academic achievement?

Research shows that composite classes make no difference to the academic outcomes of student learning. The factor that has the most significant influence by a very large margin is the knowledge, skills and expertise of the teacher, sometimes referred to as teacher quality. Research also indicates that composite classes can enhance the development of some children as it provides opportunities for them to bolster independent learning skills and develop confidence and assertiveness as they operate as part of a class group. All classes, including straight grade classes have students with a diverse range of learning needs that our teachers expertly cater for.

What are the positive social aspects of a composite class?

Placement in a composite class can allow children to develop a wider group of friends outside of their year group. This often gives them more friendship options in the playground, greater connections throughout the school and can also benefit them when engaging in activities in the wider community. In addition to assisting in the development of social skills, for some children composite classes can also help in building resiliency. For example, younger children within a composite class generally aspire to emulate older children in their work, and older children enjoy the leadership and mentoring opportunities that can lift their self-esteem. Students in composite classes are given opportunities to join their same year level peers in both social and learning situations whilst at school. This includes lunchtime eating, some class learning activities as well as whole school, phase of learning (K-2, 3-6) and year level events.

Teachers at SBPS work collaboratively to plan their teaching and learning programs, ensuring that students in composite classes are provided with the same content and opportunities as all students in their year level. Staff who have prior teaching experience in the year groups involved are often selected to work in composite classes.

Composite class teachers have proven classroom management strategies and have expertise in working collaboratively across multi-year levels.

Evidence shows that most students quickly adapt to new classroom situations, expanding their social connections whilst being provided with the opportunity to continue existing friendships.

Why has my child been placed in a composite class?

Our teachers make decisions about which students are best suited for composite classes. They take the whole child into consideration and look at factors such as social and emotional maturity, independent working skills, behavioural needs, cohort dynamics, siblings, gender balance, existing relationships and previous class placements.



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