

## **CLASS PLACEMENT POLICY**

### **PURPOSE**

Individual student class placements at Fremantle LDC are based on careful consideration through extensive discussion and the professional judgements of teachers, speech pathologists and Executive Leadership Team with the aim of providing the best learning environment for each student.

### **OVERVIEW**

All Fremantle Language Development Centre (Fremantle LDC) students receive targeted and intensive oral language support. Each student also receives academic intervention and access to the West Australian curriculum throughout their placement. Every child enrolled at Fremantle LDC has their own Individual Education Plan (IEP). Regardless of which class a child is placed, the learning each student receives is targeted at the individual's specific learning needs.

Students' time spent at Fremantle LDC is limited with the LDC's aim to return students to mainstream classes as soon as practicable.

The student enrolments at Fremantle LDC are predicated upon the number of referrals received at the school in any one year. These numbers vary each year, meaning the school does not know until quite late in each year how many classes will be formed and how many teachers will be required to staff the school effectively. The school also has a ceiling on the number of students it can take across its three campuses due to availability of classrooms. This means the composition of classes varies from one year to the next.

### **PROCESS**

Once student enrolment numbers have been confirmed late in the academic year, the Fremantle LDC Administration team establishes class structure options for the following year, based on Department of Education policy and guidelines. Further, due to the nature of the students enrolled at Fremantle LDC and their individualised learning needs, maximum student numbers in each class are much lower than in mainstream schools.

### **FACTORS TAKEN INTO CONSIDERATION WHEN ALLOCATING STUDENTS TO CLASSES**

- the date of birth of the student
- the projected number of students in each year level
- facilities available (e.g. classroom, toilets, playground space)
- resource allocations (e.g. education assistants and specialist teachers)
- the educational and emotional needs of each student

### **PARENTAL INPUT**

Parents may wish to provide, in writing, educational grounds or personal information of relevance to the placement of their child in a class at Fremantle LDC. This information must be presented upon application for enrolment to the Fremantle LDC.

All parental requests are considered; however, this does not guarantee any preferred placement for your child over and above what the Fremantle LDC Administration team has decided in this regard. The placement of each student is based upon the range of factors outlined above.

Parents should be aware that requests relating to a child's peer and/ or friendship groups may be difficult to accommodate. Fremantle LDC staff do consider social networks at school when deciding on where each student will be placed.

## **COMPOSITE CLASSES**

### **Background**

Grouping students of various ages into composite classes is not new. Primary schools have traditionally used this organisational arrangement to ensure equity in class sizes and as a strategy to support children's learning. These classes provide flexibility to cater for the requirements of individual students in terms of age, academic, social and emotional needs.

Composite classes are also formed because of uneven enrolment numbers across student ages. In public schools the school needs to ensure class sizes remain within required Department of Education prescribed limits.

Composite classes are at times referred to as "split classes", "multi-age groups", "mixed classes" or "vertical groups".

### **Research**

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 and skills and expertise of the teacher.

Research has also indicated that composite classes actually 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.

### **Benefits**

Placement in a composite class allows 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 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 many opportunities to join their same year level peers in social and learning situations whilst at school. This includes lunchtime eating, some class learning activities as well as phase of learning, year level and whole school events.

Where possible, Fremantle LDC releases probable class structures and student placement lists before the end of Term 4 to support a seamless transition process.

**Review Date: Semester 2, 2024**