Class Structures - FAQ and Answers

When will my child know which class they are in?

On the first school day students will be organised into new classes with the understanding changes may happen. You will receive a letter home with your child at the end of the first day informing you of their class name, location and the name of their teacher. In very exceptional circumstances, classes can sometimes be restructured at any point during the year.

My child’s friends are in another class. What should I do?

You should be assured that your child’s teacher will be sensitive to the needs of children in his/her class and will be encouraging the class to develop working relationships with each other. It is important that children learn to adapt and not be fearful of change. Children usually make friends very quickly and can cope far better than adults imagine. Children will spend time in the playground mixing with their friends and there will be many opportunities for your child to continue to be involved with his/her whole year group including some curricular activities and social activities such as playtimes.

Isn’t it better if children are in a class of the same age and year group?

Classes are made up of children of the same age or year group are part of our school system today simply because they reflect how educational administrators originally set up schools, not because they were found to reflect good educational practice. This model of schooling was intended to prepare workers for the factory societies of the 1850s.

What is a composite class?

A composite class is where children from different year groups or stages are placed together in one class. Families are composite with adults and children of different ages and stages. How many of you’re adult friends are the same age as you?

What if the composite class studies different topics from a single stage class? Should I be worried?

There is no need to be concerned. Different classes can be studying different topics and still covering the syllabus in any grade or stage. Topics are used to provide relevant context, case study or example for teaching the key concepts in each subject area. For example ‘Antarctica’ is a topic. It is an example of a much broader concept of Endangered Environments. This allows the teacher to choose the most relevant example for their students.

How can a teacher teach two stages at once?

The curriculum in NSW is organised as a learning continuum from Kinder to Year 12. Students can be anywhere along this continuum. This continuum is broken into stages, which usually correlates to two years of learning. Students are expected to achieve particular goals or outcomes by the end of each stage.

The following examples show the expected outcomes for Reading in Stage 2 (Year 3 & 4) and Stage 3 (year 5 & 6).
Stage 2 Reading: *Reads independently a wide range of texts on increasingly challenging topics and justifies own interpretation of ideas, information and events.*

Stage 3 Reading: *Reads independently an extensive range of texts with increasing content demands and responds to themes and issues.*

You will note the expectation for Stage 3 is more challenging and complex. It is quite possible for students to be studying the same text with a completely different set of expectations. It is not the age of the child that determines what students are ready to learn next. If that were the case every child would learn to walk, talk or read at the same age. Students are at many stages of readiness in any classroom, regardless of whether the class is a straight class or a composite class. Teachers cater for differences in readiness by grouping children according to purpose and setting curriculum goals appropriate to the needs of the individual students.

**Will the children in the composite class get the same opportunities as the children in the single stage class?**

Children in all classes will follow programs constructed to help them progress at their own level, regardless of whether or not they are in a composite class or single year stage class. In addition the College will make every effort to involve children in any one year group in activities, which bring them all together. However it is important that the natural identity of each class is maintained and the College will ensure this happens.

**My child has been put in a composite class with students from a stage or year below him/her. Is he/she being kept back?**

No, this is certainly not the case. You can be confident that classes have been constructed to make best use of available staff, resources and space. Children will progress through learning experiences appropriate to their developmental level.