

# Class Mixing & Class Allocation Policy

Approved/reviewed by	
Primary Principal & Secondary Principal	
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### Aims and Objectives of this policy

- To provide a framework for the mixing of classes.
- To explain the benefits of mixing classes.
- To explain the timeline for communication.
- To outline the criteria by which classes are selected and the factors that are considered when they are regrouped.

### Principles

- The arrangements for class mixing are based on the professional judgements of class/homeroom teachers, the Phase Leader/Pastoral Lead and the Primary/Secondary Principal, in consultation with the school Counsellors and Inclusion staff.
- We will always try to balance what is in the best interests of individual children with the needs of the class as a whole when making decisions.
- We will communicate the criteria for class mixing in an open and transparent way.
- We will always consider the happiness and welfare of the students collectively and will take into consideration existing friendship groups when we create new classes.
- We recognise that, in a transitory environment like Dubai, continuity is also important. Where we can we will factor this into the class reorganisation process.

## Reasons for Mixing Classes

We have seen the positive impact of mixing classes in the past. Regular, routine mixing of classes helps the student's relationships, helps to balance the classes and limits any ongoing challenges with friends which are not conducive to learning, allowing children to develop better resilience and create broader friendships in a safe and comfortable environment.

By mixing the grade level, the children see themselves *as a* Grade level team rather than just a class, thus building a stronger school community.

## Benefits for the children:

- opportunities for children to learn with a wider variety of peers.
- greater social interaction between children as they move through the school.
- better resilience in developing friendships in a safe, comfortable environment (particularly important for upper PYP when they will be moving to secondary school soon and be taught in a wider variety of groups).
- being part of a grade-level team and not just a class.
- building more relationships and connections with children in their grade which will benefit them throughout their whole school journey and in the wider community.

## Management of the mixing of classes

Parents will be informed of the process in good time so that they can have conversations with their children about who their friends in school are, and who they work well with.

- In school in mid-May, each child will be asked to nominate three pupils with whom they work well and would like to be placed in the next academic year. These could be students in their current class or another class in the grade level.
- Students' choices will be kept confidential so that they don't feel under pressure to choose particular friends in the class.
- These will be recorded either by the teacher (in the Early Years) or by the student.
- The teacher will collect these and store them should they need to be accessed at a later date.
- The staff will try to ensure that each child has **at least one** of the identified friends in the new class.

Each year the current class teachers, who know the children very well, work together to draw up the classes for the next academic year. Counsellors and Inclusion teachers also have input into the process. These lists are then finalised with the Phase Leader/Pastoral Lead and Primary/Secondary Principal. There are consistent criteria for teachers to consider in order to construct the classes for the maximum benefit of the students:

- Student's views on academic friendships
- Teachers' views on academic friendships
- Range of educational, social and personal needs
- Balance of gender
- Balance of Special Educational Needs
- Balance of English Language Learners
- Balance of ability
- Family relationships such as within grade siblings/staff children
- Number of new students

When dividing the students, consideration will be given to the above criteria to ensure that, as far as possible, the needs of all the children are met. The Phase Leaders/Pastoral Leads will meet with the class teachers, relevant learning support teachers, counselling colleagues and, if necessary, previous class teachers, to discuss and decide on the grouping of pupils.

The teachers, in collaboration with the counselling team, will also prepare the children for moving classes, being with a new teacher and in a new grade level. The final unit of our social, emotional learning program, Jigsaw is "Changing Me" and allows time for teachers to discuss the changes that students can expect.

## Homeroom and Sections in Secondary School

In the Secondary school, students are placed in both a homeroom and a class section.

### **Homeroom**

- Students are allocated a homeroom that is generally smaller than their class section, with a homeroom teacher.
- Students meet in their homeroom each morning where important announcements and information is shared. Students will usually spend core lessons in their homerooms in addition to other activities and events throughout the year.
- The role of the homeroom teacher is to oversee the general progress and day-to-day activities of their homeroom students. They will be the first

point of contact for students and parents for general enquiries and to share relevant information. Smaller homeroom classes allow the teacher to build effective relationships with students and get to know them more closely.

- Students will remain in the same homeroom and with the same homeroom teacher (where possible) throughout Grades 6-8 and Grades 9-12. Students moving from grade 8 to 9 will get a new homeroom teacher.
- Homerooms are identified by grade level and initials of the homeroom teacher. For example, 8JL.

### **Class Section**

- Sections are the classes in which students attend all of their regular subjects. Students will spend the vast majority of their time in class sections.
- Students will be in a section with students from other homeroom classes as well as their own.
- Unlike homeroom, sections change each year for reasons shared above.
- Some subjects, such as Maths, will prioritise some criteria depending on the grade level. For example, in upper MYP we offer Standard and Extended Maths so teachers will look more closely at achievement when making decisions about class placement.
- In Grades 11 and 12 for the Career and Diploma programmes, classes are mostly based on student subject selections.
- Sections are identified by grade level and a letter. For example, 8A.

### **Notification to Parents**

Previously we have not been able to announce classes before the summer break because of the number of students joining / leaving over the summer. However, now that the student population is more stable from one year to the next, we aim to engage students in a "Moving Up Day" in the last week of the school year. On the "Moving Up Day" students will get to know their classmates and, where possible, their teacher/s for the following year. We believe this will be best for the majority of students. Students in Grade 5 will also have the opportunity to spend a day in the secondary school to support their transition into a new phase and meet their new homeroom teacher and subject teachers again, where possible. Parents will be informed of their child's new class on the "Moving Up Day".

There are always some last minute student withdrawals over the summer which at the close of the year the school is not aware of. We will not be able to move students staying at Fairgreen in response to these late withdrawals because this would have ramifications for others.

All stakeholders should be aware that this is a complex process which takes many hours to complete. The number of factors which are considered means that the movement of one child can have a negative impact on many others. Moving a child can mean e.g.

- Another child does not get to be with a friend they have nominated
- Another child who did not want to be moved may have to change classes in order to restore a balance of abilities, genders, other friendship or academic needs
- Classes can become imbalanced
- Children who do not work well together find themselves in the same class

A positive and supportive attitude is a key element in ensuring a smooth and positive transition for the children.