



South Plympton/Wyoming Public School



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2018-2019 Tentative Classroom Organization and Class Placement Requests

May 1, 2018

Dear Parents/Guardians,

A significant amount of time and planning goes into organizing classes for the upcoming school year. Each year, parents/guardians ask how this is done. Once the tentative number of teachers has been allocated to the school and the tentative number of students determined, the organization process begins. Several important factors are considered:

1. **Balance:** Each class is balanced (as much as is possible) in terms of strengths, needs and gender in order to provide the best opportunities for full participation in all the school has to offer. No classes are "streamed" with only strong or weak students in any of the grades. Research has demonstrated that heterogeneous grouping, where strong, average and weak students work together, provides the best learning opportunities for all involved.
2. **Learning and Teaching Styles:** Children learn in a variety of ways compatible with the way they make sense of their work. Teachers teach in the ways in which they learn best. To match learning style with teaching style is a challenge. Often this may be a point of discussion between a parent and a teacher in terms of how a child's needs are best met.
3. **Classroom Management:** Children respond to a variety of situations in terms of the way things are done. Some need a more rigid structure with specific procedures in place. Other children need greater flexibility and less specificity. Again, parent and teacher perceptions can and do differ based on a how a child performs within the home or the school setting.
4. **Instructional Groupings and Program Continuity:** Children of similar needs and interests can be formed into groups for meaningful instruction more effectively than individuals who may feel isolated. Change in our world abounds. We need to be able to respond to change, but not be overwhelmed by it. While program is constantly evolving, we attempt to avoid a major shift in program directions for the child.
5. **Maturity and Work Habits:** Placement in a class according to this factor looks at both sides of the coin. A child may be mature and function best in an environment where that is encouraged. On the other hand a child may need to develop some independence and to be held accountable for schoolwork and need an environment which keeps those concerns front and centre. We attempt to match a child to a situation best suited to these needs.

6. **Peer Relationships and Group Dynamics:** No one wants to feel alone or left out. On the other hand sometimes being friends is not a productive experience that enhances learning. Who gets along with whom? Who should be separated? What kind of individuals could best come together as a group and develop? Who needs a new situation to extend themselves and grow in social relationships? We attempt to answer these questions as we construct a particular class.
7. **Class Size:** Ministry and LKDSB averages and class size caps (where applicable) are used when determining class size. There are a number of complicated variables and calculations that come into play when determining class size both within our school and then overall within the LKDSB district.
8. **Number of Years with the Same Teacher:** It is our belief that a variety of teachers are beneficial to students as they proceed through their elementary years. Every attempt possible is made to ensure that students are not placed with particular teachers for more than two consecutive years. When possible, tentative class lists are created through the input of both the sending and receiving teachers, resource staff, EAs, ECEs, Vice-Principal and Principal. Teachers are very careful to consider each child's strengths, needs and interests. "Combined" or "split" classes are evident most years along with some "straight" grades. Although most parents/guardians feel that "straight" grades are better than "combined" or "split" grades, the truth of the matter is that all classes are in effect "combined" or "split". Each teacher has to address the needs of the students within each class at several instructional levels.

If you have special concerns related to class placement for 2018-2019 for your child(ren) that directly relate to the needs of your child(ren), please put them in writing and submit them to Mr. Parnham by no later than Friday, May 18. Any request will be shared with the teachers and considered along with the many other factors listed previously. **Please note that a written request is not a guarantee that your request will be or can be accommodated.** It is a balancing act to get the "best placement" for 244 students, but we will attempt to do our best. As well, please do not request that your child be with or not be with a lengthy list of students as we will be unable to accommodate everyone's requests. A request for a friend or two is much more permissible usually as opposed to requesting five friends in the same class as your child, for example.

Sincerely,

Mr. A. Parnham
Principal