St Francis Xavier’s Catholic Primary School

School Structure and Class Formation Policy

1.0 Rationale:
A clearly defined and collaborative process for the formation of school organisation, structure and the placement of students into classes leads to an improved, fair and equal opportunity for learning, and an increase in understanding and greater efficiency of the process.

2.0 Aims:
2.1 To provide a school structure that offers students the best possible range of learning experiences.
2.2 To provide a school structure that provides students with an equal opportunity for learning.
2.3 To form evenly balanced classes in which the social, emotional, academic, spiritual and physical needs of each child are taken into account.
2.4 To provide the fairest selection process in the allocation of students to classes.
2.5 To ensure that optimum use is made of prior knowledge that teachers, parents and relevant others have of each child before class placement.

3.0 Implementation:
3.1 While school and class structures, class composition and the allocation of children to various classes are ultimately the responsibility of the Principal, a collaborative process will be employed.
3.2 The process of forming school organisation, structure and classes for the following year will commence towards the end of Term Two at the time of the Prep Enrolment.
3.3 The Principal, in consultation with staff (School Development Committee, Consultative Committee, Leadership Team) and after considering student numbers, will determine school structure which includes the number of classes, specialist subjects, class sizes and the year levels of each class for the following year. In relation to class sizes, policies and guidelines and the Industrial Agreement of Catholic Education Commission Victoria (CECV); Catholic Education Melbourne (CEM) Archdiocese of Melbourne; Independent Education Union Victoria Tasmania (IEUVICTAS) are employed in the process.
3.4 In determining specialist subjects, the following is taken into consideration; student needs and interests, Curriculum mandates from Federal and State governments and Catholic Education Melbourne, the Industrial Agreement, teacher qualification and availability and the overall general needs of the school.
3.5 The Principal will seek expressions of interest from teaching staff for their preferred teaching role including specialist subjects. This takes place in Term Three.
3.6 Once teaching roles have been decided, existing and newly appointed teaching staff will be allocated to particular classes and specialist areas.
3.7 The school structure and class compositions recommended by the staff each year will be based on best practice, informed by educational research, school and student performance data and the annual School Improvement Survey.
3.8 Where student enrolments permit, it is preferred that two or more classes of the same year level be formed creating teacher level teams and avoiding any one class and teacher to be working in isolation.
3.9 Where there are 2 or more classes of the same year level a fair and equitable criteria will be used in the selection process of students to classes, providing all students with the best possible opportunities for on-going success.
3.10 The selection criteria includes consideration to each child’s gender, religious background, previous class placements, range of abilities, specific learning, social, physical, emotional, spiritual and behavioural needs of students, student progress and social groupings. Both individual student needs and a whole school perspective will be considered. The overall composition of all classes will cater for mixed abilities, and an evenly balanced composition of classes.

3.11 Throughout Term Four, several teacher meetings are held at each year level to determine student allocation to classes. Class room teachers, the Enhanced Learning Team, Learning Support Team, specialist subject teachers, and the School Leadership Team will work collaboratively to prepare draft classes of students. Using the selection criteria (3.10) the teachers use a range of collated student performance data and observation notes to draft class lists. Students are invited to nominate in writing to the classroom teacher 5 children with whom they can work well with and they would like to be in class for the following year. As part of the selection criteria each child will be guaranteed one of the children nominated (except where parent requests are honoured this cannot be guaranteed). The full selection criteria is applied to ensure that every student has the very best opportunity for on-going growth and success.

3.12 Parents of children with particular learning needs, learning concerns or special circumstances are invited to state this in writing, to the Principal for consideration. Such requests must be received no later than the end of Term 3. Requests received after this date will not be considered. Written requests are only valid for 12 months.

3.13 The Principal will inform the appropriate staff of parent requests prior to the formation of the classes.

3.14 Requests from parents for specific teachers, students and classes are not accepted.

3.15 It is preferable for students not to have the same classroom teacher for more than two years throughout their primary school years. Any exception to the preferred guideline is at the discretion of the Principal.

3.16 Parents of children who have specific requests accepted by the Principal will have the request made as precedence in the overall selection criteria. In doing so may result in some aspects of the selection criteria to become void, such as not being able to guarantee student selection of his/her peers (3.11) having the same teacher more than twice, previous class placements ....

3.17 When draft classes have been completed, the Principal, in consultation with the Leadership Team and teachers, will make any final alterations to the class lists.

3.18 Staff members will not disclose the composition of proposed classes prior to any formal announcement which is made by the Principal.

3.19 Details relating to the school organisation, including the structure of classes for the coming year will be released to parents during the first two weeks of December via the school newsletter.

3.20 Parents will be notified of their child’s placement in classes for the following year by personal letter. Details include the name of the teacher, room allocation and a list of staff roles. Where possible, this letter will be placed with the child’s end of year school report which will be sent out in the last week of the school year. These class lists are final.

3.21 In order to assist all students (Prep to Year Six) with transition from one year to the next, the school’s Orientation and Transition Program is implemented where each student will have the opportunity to meet with their new year’s teacher, peers and class room setting. Transitional programs exist for in coming Prep students, currently enrolled Prep to Year Five students and new students to the school. The transition program commences in November and concludes towards the end of the school year. In some cases identified students requiring additional transitional needs will have an individual plan devised. A family class list is made available to parents at the beginning of the new school year.

3.22 All families will be provided with a copy of this policy.

3.23 New families to the school will be provided with a copy of the policy at the time of their child’s enrolment.

4.0 Evaluation:
This policy will be reviewed as part of the school’s policy review cycle.