

Class Placements for September + Parent Input- DEADLINE, Friday May 28th

Maple Grove likes to work with our parent community and as such, we like to confer about placements of students for September. Our staff works very hard to decide on the perfect placement for your child- they consider a number of factors that parents may not have knowledge of. Similarly, you often have information that we need to know. The first thing you need to do- if you have a placement request for your child- is talk to this year's teacher! The classroom teacher plays a huge role in determining where your child will be placed.

Background Information:

In September, it takes some students several days/ weeks to settle to new classroom environments. Generally, after a couple of days/weeks students settle nicely into the rhythm of the new school year/grade/teacher. The beginning of the school year can be emotionally difficult for some students due to the many changes: different classmates, different teachers, different school, different everything! Disappointments can be magnified. With your support, and ours, most students adapt to their new class and routines quickly. During this time, please reflect on, rather than react to, your child's placement. It is extremely important to remain supportive and positive about your child's placement and to trust last year's teacher for making the recommendation. Teacher recommendations are made after hours of discussion and debate among teachers. Decisions are not made lightly. We trust your children to be able to adjust to new learning situations and to make new friends – these are normal life challenges. In an effort to assist teachers in making decisions regarding student placements, Maple Grove traditionally offers parents an opportunity to provide some input into learning circumstances that may be beneficial for their child, or for staff to consider when casting classes.

We have found in the past that with your support, children are able to adapt to and benefit from a variety of experiences and that as parents, we tend to underestimate their ability to do so. Your help with this process is crucial. Please help your child by encouraging them and normalizing change, making new friends and meeting new challenges. As well, work to develop a positive relationship with your child's teacher. Our goals are the same as yours – we are striving for your child and all children to be successful.

How We Organize Classes:

Organizing students into classes for the following year is one of the more complex things that we do at Maple Grove. We go to great efforts to ensure that children are placed in optimal educational settings; teams of teachers as well as our Learning Assistance staff work to create what we feel is the best placement for each and every child. The factors we must consider are numerous- there can be many reasons to place a child in a given class and sometimes reasons not to. Both combined and single grade classes will be developed for next year at various grade levels. As well, there is often teacher movement from grade to grade, and to and from the school. Our aim is to build diverse and

successful groups of learners who will function and learn well together. To do this, we use a wide range of criteria for grouping students, including:

Class Placement Requests: DEADLINE, Friday, May 28th

We do not accept teacher requests. We have criteria that we publish annually. Class placement requests must be made in writing and are sent directly to the Principal and must adhere to the criteria. A written request does not guarantee that your request will be granted!

Criteria For Class Placement:

The objective of class placement is to create and organize classes so that each student is in a positive learning situation. The school also wants to ensure that each teacher has a manageable teaching assignment that conforms to Ministry of Education standards and the teachers' Collective Agreement.

A. Instructional Criteria:

1. Ability Distribution
2. Work Habits
3. Teaching/Learning Styles
4. Equitable distribution of students
5. Groupings appropriate for the best learning environment for all

B. Positive Social Grouping:

1. Friendships
2. Peer conflicts
3. Boy/ Girl ratios
4. Positive leaders
5. Social needs / friendships

C. Other Criteria:

1. Previous Experience: Previous class assignment of teachers & students is considered.
2. Teacher Recommendations
3. Parental Input
4. Resource Team Input
5. Class size + Composition criteria
6. Special factors or extenuating circumstances
7. Grade level balance in combined classes
8. Effort, achievement, independence and leadership
9. Cultural diversity

D. Attention to Each Child:

1. Each child's academic needs + progress
2. Each child's social needs
3. Class group dynamics
4. Gender balance

5. Physical and emotional maturity
6. Personalities
7. Each child's need for attention in social, emotional and behavioral areas
8. Logistical requirements concerning the child's access to the support of an education assistant whose service is provided in more than one classroom

Parent requests must be emailed to Mr. Land (kland@vsb.bc.ca). DEADLINE is May 28th

Additionally, we must make placements within the constraints of staffing allocations, Collective Agreements and contractual guidelines. In the end, each classroom will have its own character, offering different benefits to each child. We ask that you trust the team of educators working with your child to make the best placement for next year. We know it can make a difference when students have a familiar face in their class. We also know that sometimes, friends do not make the best classmates and that at times, friends should not be in the same class as they can disrupt one another's learning. When we do place students for social reasons, we primarily consider students your child will succeed with in class, not necessarily friends; the two groups may be completely different. Finally, making new connections, meeting new challenges, and dealing with change are all important life skills. We will be asking students about friends prior to class building.

In the past, we have had a large number of parent requests for class placement that made class building very challenging. Many of the requests were regarding friends and sometimes were at odds with what staff saw as a 'best placement' or the requests of the friends. Please consider the following information.

Most times, it should not be necessary to make a special request. Your child's previous teacher and our extended team know your child well and will have good ideas about who they learn well with. On occasion, there can be special circumstances such as special needs or past history that we may not be aware of or that you feel we may need to be reminded of. Please give writing a letter serious consideration based on the above information.

If you feel you need to write a letter outlining your perspective regarding September class placement, please focus on the kind of learning environment you believe your child learns best; please remember, you cannot request or exclude certain teachers – this will not be considered, and your request may be discarded altogether.

Letters that focus on learning are welcome and can at times be very helpful. It is also important to note that requests may or may not be met, depending on the input of staff and administration. In other words, writing a letter of request does not guarantee your request will be met. Multiple requests from parents (e.g., for friends, avoiding combine classes or teachers) cannot be met. As well, requests for 'non-split classes' or upper or lower parts of splits cannot be accommodated- please don't even make that a point. This is not a perfect process, but we work very hard at it and look at many factors many times between now and September to do the best we can for all children.

Parents who feel that they have educational information that would help the decision-making process should convey that information **in writing** to the Principal BEFORE Friday, May 28th . You may email Mr. Land at kland@vsb.bc.ca . The VSB Microsoft Mail Server Clients are state-of-the-art and we do not accept late requests or “I sent it” as a reason. We do not lose email. Information will be used as **one** of the factors staff will consider when forming class lists. **Please do not request a specific teacher in your letter.** It may eliminate your letter from consideration. Further, submitting a request is not a guarantee that your request will be granted. Requests are not confirmed. You will not receive an email confirming receipt of your request.

** Parents are reminded that they should speak with the current classroom teacher regarding placement of their child, as the current classroom teacher has a significant role in placing the student in next year’s class.*

** We respectfully ask that you do **not** directly talk to, or contact by phone or email, any teachers about your child’s class placement with other teachers. Teachers are bound by their Professional Code of Ethics, and these conversations cannot occur without violating this code.*

** Parents are reminded that the final decision and authority for pupil placement remains with the Principal, as per the School Act.*