



Epping North Public School

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Dear Parents,

Happy New Year! Welcome back to all families. I hope you enjoyed some rest and relaxation during the school holiday break. Last Thursday was a very special day for all Australians celebrating **Australia Day**. I hope everyone enjoyed this special day. During February many in our community will celebrate their lunar new year.

I would like to warmly welcome our new families to the school. We hope that you enjoy a long and happy association with the school. **On Friday 3 February, our P & C will hold a welcome BBQ.** All families are invited to join us at 5pm here at school. I would like to welcome back our teaching, administration and support staff. They are looking forward to another rewarding year working at Epping North.

Today you are receiving a brief newsletter to provide some important information. Over the holidays Block B & G had air conditioning installed, thanks to the efforts of our parent community and the generosity of the Bendigo Bank. This now means, that three quarters of our school is air conditioned. In addition the DEC has upgraded the staff bathrooms in our administration building, with new tiles, paint, basins and cisterns.

At the end of last year our P & C committed additional funds to purchase a digital projector and electronic screen for our hall. These will be installed in the next few weeks. This is directly the result of you, our parents who support the fundraising efforts of our school and the Bendigo Bank.

Class Organisation

I would like to explain the way in which we form classes at Epping North. Parents may not be aware of the hours and hours that are put into planning the best class structures to create the most positive learning environment for all children for the year. The process begins towards the end of the previous year and involves further refinements right up until the day the classes are formed. A great many factors are taken into consideration and include the following:

* **Department requirements** in relation to class sizes – the DET has mandated the size of classes from K – 6. The formula is designed such that on average across NSW, **no class need exceed** a certain number in each grade. The principal is also advised to **from classes in the best interests of all children**. In order for this to occur, composite classes may need to be formed and in some cases the number be exceeded. Classes are allocated to a school based on the following formula:

- * Kindergarten - 20
- * Year 1 - 22
- * Year 2 - 24
- * Years 3 – 6 - 30

The school also takes into account the ‘Stages of Learning’ and attempts to form composite classes across these stages. However, once again this is not always possible. In these cases teachers are supported in planning effective programs to cater for students in different stages.

* **Friendships** - all children are given the opportunity to choose friends that they would like to be with in their class. We aim to ensure that all children have at least one of these friends in their new class/

* **Class dynamics** - generally classes are 'parallel'. This means they include a range of abilities, allowing children to have 'models' amongst their peers ensuring a balance within the class. It is also important that the individual needs of children are taken into account. These needs include 'learning needs' (learning difficulties, gifts and talents, ESL), behaviour, emotional needs, special needs (diagnosed disabilities).

* **Independent work habits** - in composite classes it is important for the children to be able to work independently on some occasions if required. Where possible we try to include independent workers in these classes. However, due to the number of composite Classes that are sometimes necessary, these classes may not always comprise independent workers.

* **Teacher qualities** - the teachers at Epping North are all qualified professionals. Teachers have the right to their own continuing professional development through experience on a range of classes. On occasions teachers are selected for their particular suitability for a group of children or their desire to move from teaching one stage to another.

Although a few children may be initially unhappy about their class placement, experience has shown that children settle very quickly into their new classes. Parents are encouraged to support the school's decision regarding class placement and support their child by assuring them that they have been well-placed for a happy, rewarding and successful year at school.

If you have a particular concern about your child's class placement, please phone the school office to make an appointment to see me after Friday 3 February.

Today, children in Years 1 – 6 have been placed in what we anticipate to be our 2012 classes. I hope to be able to confirm the placement of your child in these classes by the end of the week.

Best wishes for a wonderful year ahead.

Betty Ploeg
Principal