

20 April 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Although so much is new for students and schools at the moment, and we are focused on providing ongoing learning for your children while physical schools are closed, we are still following our processes for planning for next year as best we can. It may be hard to believe, but soon we will be starting the process of drawing up **tentative** classes for the 2020–2021 school year. The task is complex and takes a great deal of care and time, and the class lists undergo many revisions as late year and summer registrations will undoubtedly affect our actual September 2020 school organization. (We once again ask any families who will not be returning to Our Lady of Peace in September 2020 to please inform Mrs. Lupton at luptonn@hcdsb.org as soon as possible.) I feel that it is important to take the time to review with you both the goals and the process for placement of students in classes so that you understand the care the school staff take in determining the placement of each child.

Our goal at Our Lady of Peace is to develop balanced classes that reflect the diversity of our community and allow the interests and talents of our learners to emerge and be appreciated. We want our students to feel that they belong, to experience appropriate challenges, and to make contributions to their classroom and school communities. In each class students should have opportunities to make new friends and expand his or her circle of acquaintance.

To meet this goal, we consider the following criteria when forming balanced classes:

- Students' abilities, interests, talents, learning styles, and needs. No class will contain one particular kind of learner.
- The number of boys and girls in each class.
- Class size (in accordance with Ministry of Education guidelines).
- Social relationships. Please note that this should not be viewed as a grouping of friends. At certain times some close friends learn best in separate classes to promote academic independence or encourage positive behaviours. Students will be asked by their classroom teachers to share the names of five people with whom they work and learn well, and we will ensure they have at least one or two people from these lists in their new classes. (Details about how we will manage this process will be shared through the weekly updates and by your child's current teacher in the coming weeks.)

To meet this goal, we follow the following process when forming balanced classes:

- The classroom teachers from a given grade will meet, virtually if necessary, to form class lists for the next academic year based on the criteria listed above.
- These lists are taken ahead as proposals to the principal. Lists are then redrafted in light of these discussions and input from the principal and other staff such as the special education resource teachers.
- The class lists then ***remain tentative*** pending necessary changes due to changes in student enrollment.

To meet this goal, we consider the following information from parents and guardians about extenuating circumstances when forming balanced classes:

Please note that the preference for one teacher over another does not qualify as an extenuating circumstance or special need. As you know, staffing can change in June and over the summer, and so **letters requesting particular teachers will not be considered**. However, personal factors such as changes in family, living or marital arrangements, mental health, emotional and behavioral concerns, serious illness or bereavement, unemployment or other financial crises, developmental concerns, as well as a history of difficulties with another person may well affect how a child functions and may require special placement consideration. **Names of students with whom you would like your child to be placed will not be considered** as that placement may not be in that child's best interest.

As well, please note that all students at Our Lady of Peace will probably experience more than one combined-grade class over the course of their elementary schooling due to the size of our student population. **No student, including a student with an individualized education plan (IEP), is exempt from such a placement even if he or she has been in a combined-grade class in this school year.**

If you feel that there are special circumstances when considering your child's class placement, please contact me through email at dorer@hcdsb.org **no later than Monday, May 4, 2020**. Requests received later than that date will not be considered.

We apologize for the fact that we are unable to issue replies to placement letters.

Thank you for your understanding.

Sincerely,

Mrs. R. Dore-Anderson
Principal
Our Lady of Peace Catholic School