**Class Organization for 2019-20**

We will soon begin the process of organizing class placements for the 2019-20 school year. Once again, we ask families that will not be returning to St. Andrew School in September 2019 to please inform the school office as soon as possible

This information brief is presented to the parent community with the hope that sharing information concerning school organization will help parents understand the care and thought required in the class-formation process. The task is complex, time-consuming, and because it is consensus-seeking, must be the subject of many revisions. The process will continue right up until the final publication of class lists in late August 2019.

Our goal at St. Andrew Catholic School is to develop balanced classes. A balanced class reflects the diversity of our community and allows the variety in interests and talents of our learners to emerge and be appreciated. Like families, the class unit provides a balance of opportunities for a range of learners to succeed through appropriate challenge. The learner develops a feeling of belonging and a feeling that in a variety of ways he/she makes a noticeable contribution to both the class and school communities.

Like the community, school offers the opportunity for socialization. Each new year brings opportunities to meet and make new friends and expand our circle of acquaintances.

Parents often feel that they would like their child to maintain the same friends in their class from year to year. However, this is often not in a child’s best interest. Learning how to make new friends and the ability to work with a wide variety of people are skills that children need to develop to be successful in the future. We have seen the ramifications caused when a child is dependent on only one or two friends, and then for different reasons, a move, or a falling out, that child loses their only friends and has not developed the skills to make new ones. Our teachers are skilled at assisting children in the beginning of the school year to get to know and appreciate one another; any angst felt during the first few days is usually resolved within the first two weeks of the school year.

Below you will see the criteria we use to create balanced classes in each grade.

**Listed in order of consideration and importance are the criteria we use to build classes**:

1. Balance of ability, interests and talents: A range of academic ability and potential in each class at any grade (i.e. classes are not “streamed” by ability). We enjoy being a member of a group that represents the potential for full participation in all that school has to offer.

2. Balance according to gender

3. Learning Style: How does the learner go about the process of learning? What kind of environment will best allow a particular learner to thrive?

4. Teaching style: How does a teacher go about the teaching/learning process? What kind of learners might best flourish with this teacher?

5. Social Blending: What is the best cluster of individuals to effectively and efficiently learn? This should not be viewed as a grouping of friends. At particular stages, some close friends learn best in separate classes.

6. Special Placement Consideration: In rare circumstances, there may be special considerations that a parent/guardian would like us to know about when creating our class lists. For more information, please see below.

**The Process for Classroom Organization**

Students are given the option of listing five people they consider to be friends. We use this information to ensure they have a friend or two from their list in their September class. The classroom teachers of a given grade will meet as a group to form class lists for the next academic year based on the criteria listed above. Alterations in class composition are discussed. Lists are then re-drafted based on these discussions and input from the Administration and the Special Education Department. The class lists then remain “tentative” pending necessary changes due to increased/decreased student enrollment. Class lists and school organization are not finalized until the Board’s Senior Administrative Staff approve of changes to the school’s plans based on increases or decreases in student population.

**Special Placement Consideration**

Should extenuating circumstances or special considerations affect class placement for your child(ren), please direct these, in writing, to me. This letter should outline the specific learning issues your child is experiencing. We need to receive these requests no later than **Friday, May 10, 2019.**

In all fairness and candor, the mere 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 as such, **letters specifying particular teachers will not be considered**. However, factors such as changes in family, living or marital arrangements, mental health, emotional and behavioral issues, serious illness and/or bereavement, unemployment or financial crisis, developmental concerns, as well as a history of difficulties with another pupil(s) and/or staff may well affect how a child functions and may require special placement consideration. **Names of students** **who you would like your child to be placed with will not be considered** as that placement may not be in that child’s best interest.

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

Sincerely,

Lorraine Boulos

Principal

St. Andrew Catholic School