North Ryde Public School is a place where the education and care of children is paramount. Our students are encouraged to achieve their personal best in all areas and are supported to develop socially and emotionally.

Our aim is to provide quality education, to cater to the needs of all students, to instil the values of our Australian community, as outlined in the DET Values document, and to develop effective future citizens.

When classes are formed at our school we take great care to consider the needs of the individual, as well as the needs of the whole school and staff. We are required to form classes based on DET staffing ratios.

- 1 teacher - 20 Kinder students
- 1 teacher - 22 Year 1 students
- 1 teacher - 24 Year 2 students
- 1 teacher - 30 Year 3-6 students

Unfortunately, student numbers do not fall neatly into these numbers. eg We have 48 Kinder students this year and Kindergarten classes should not be greater than 20 without DET approval. One year we may have more composites than another year. It relates to student numbers in each grade. It is highly likely that any student will be in two or more composite classes during their time in primary school.

When class arrangements are made, the school has to consider all students. We consider:
- the number of teachers
- the number and gender of students
- the DET limits for student numbers at different grade levels
- the grade balance in any composite/multi-age class
- the needs of all students academically, physically, socially and emotionally
- student work habits
- the age, maturity and independence of the students. This is particularly the case when we need to form a K/1 class
- the experience and expertise of teachers

The general philosophy of the school is to have classes where all students have the opportunity to learn from their peers, as well as their teacher. Students are placed in classes where there are at least some other students of a similar academic ability. This enables the teachers to form groups, which is common teaching practice in all classes, composite or not. Any class requires the teacher to provide a range of lesson instructions to cater to the different student abilities. The teachers are trained to differentiate their classroom curriculum to suit the needs of the students in their class through group, modified and extension activities.

Composite classes are not inferior to other class arrangements. In fact, several schools set up all their classes as multi-age classes because of their benefits. We have done this for several years.
Information about Composite and Multi-age Classes

with our Year 5 and Year 6 students. All students in the composite classes cover the outcomes appropriate to their grade/stage. Teachers program to ensure the needs of all students in the class are catered for.

We do also ensure that students within all classes have the opportunity to do some activities with their grade group, e.g., sport/fitness, dance, music. And, of course, students are always free to mix with their grade peers during lunch and recess.

“Multi-age classes are a necessary pattern of organisation in many government and non-government schools across NSW and Australia, especially in rural areas. They will continue to be a significant proportion of classes formed in NSW schools. While in larger schools, forming classes by years is the more common practice, multi-age classes are usually formed because of the uneven pattern of enrolments at the school. Sometimes, however, these classes are formed for educational reasons in schools where it is considered that mixing children of different ages is educationally and socially advantageous.”

“Research continues to confirm that multi-age classes do not disadvantage students academically and may benefit them socially and emotionally.”

“There is general agreement that organising classes in a particular way can not guarantee improved learning outcomes. The determining variable is the quality of the teaching and learning provided within that organisation.”

“The key finding of this report is that the type of class organised will not determine either educational advantage or disadvantage. Important success factors for multi-age classes will include the degree of commitment of teachers, the acceptance and support of parents and, above all, the quality of classroom teaching. Multi-age classes can encourage student-centred learning, widen choices for placing students in classes and facilitate the flexible progression of students through a curriculum organised in stages and associated learning outcomes.”

Excerpts from Review of Multi-age Classes in NSW by the DET 1997

I hope this has helped to answer some parent questions. If you have any further questions regarding this information, please make an appointment to see me after you have attended the Parent/Teacher evening.

Erika Southam
Principal

* For several years North Ryde Public School has been able to form Stage 3 classes because the Year 5 and Year 6 student numbers suited this arrangement. I would like to take this opportunity to flag that this may not be possible in 2112 based on 2011 grade numbers.