

## Composite Classes – Information for parents

### What if my child is in a composite class?

Every class is a composite class filled with students with different learning needs, rates of learning, interests and strengths at different points in terms of their progress and achievement depending on what they are learning.

### Is a composite class an 'A' class?

No. 'Streaming' students (i.e. forming classes by perceived ability) is not supported by the research nor at Middle Harbour Public School. Nor would we create a composite class consisting of advanced younger students and place them with older students needing remediation. These practices are outdated and not supported by the research and can have a negative impact on student engagement and academic achievement.

### Why is this the only composite class?

This is explained in our Formation of Classes Policy. Staffing is allocated using the formula (right). Children in the early years receive a higher allocation so fewer students are required to be entitled to a full time teacher.

K x 0.0513	20 students = 1 teacher
Y1 x 0.0435	22 students – 1 teacher
Y2 x 0.0400	24 students – 1 teacher
Y3-6 x 0.0333	30 students – 1 teacher

However, staffing is calculated on the TOTAL number of enrolments in the school, not the number of students in a particular year. For example, a school with the following enrolments is not able to form straight classes because the numbers simply do not allow for it.

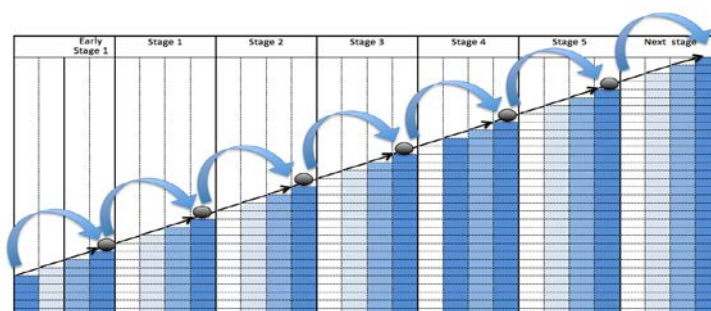
Kindergarten	Year 1	75	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
66	60	50	67	70	76	68
3 x 20 + 5 over	2 X 22 +18 over	2 X 24 + 2 over	2 X 30 + 7 over	2 X 30 +10 over	2 X 20 + 6 over	2 X 30 + 8 over

In many schools composite classes are the preferred model because they support a **stage based** view of learning rather than an **age based** approach. When we focus on the age or class year group some students will find their work too hard and some too easy.

### How does the teacher cater for different year groups in the same class?

The curriculum is based on stages of learning from Kinder to year 10. Each stage builds on the next stage. Curriculum content is organised around key concepts and skills.

Students revisit the same concepts every year but it is expected that over time students will develop deeper understandings and greater proficiency and competence in applying the skills and processes.



For example students in stage 2 (years 3 & 4) focus on the **same concepts** in History.

Students in stage 2 (years 3 & 4) also focus on the **same skills** in History.

Students in year 3 are simply at the beginning of the stage and year 4 students are working towards the end of a stage. Students have two years to demonstrate achievement of the stage standards.

Stage	Concept - Continuity & change
ES1	in their own <b>lifetime</b> & that of their <b>families</b>
1	in <b>family life</b> & the <b>local community</b> over time
2	due to <b>British colonisation</b> of Australia
3	in <b>Australian society</b> over time

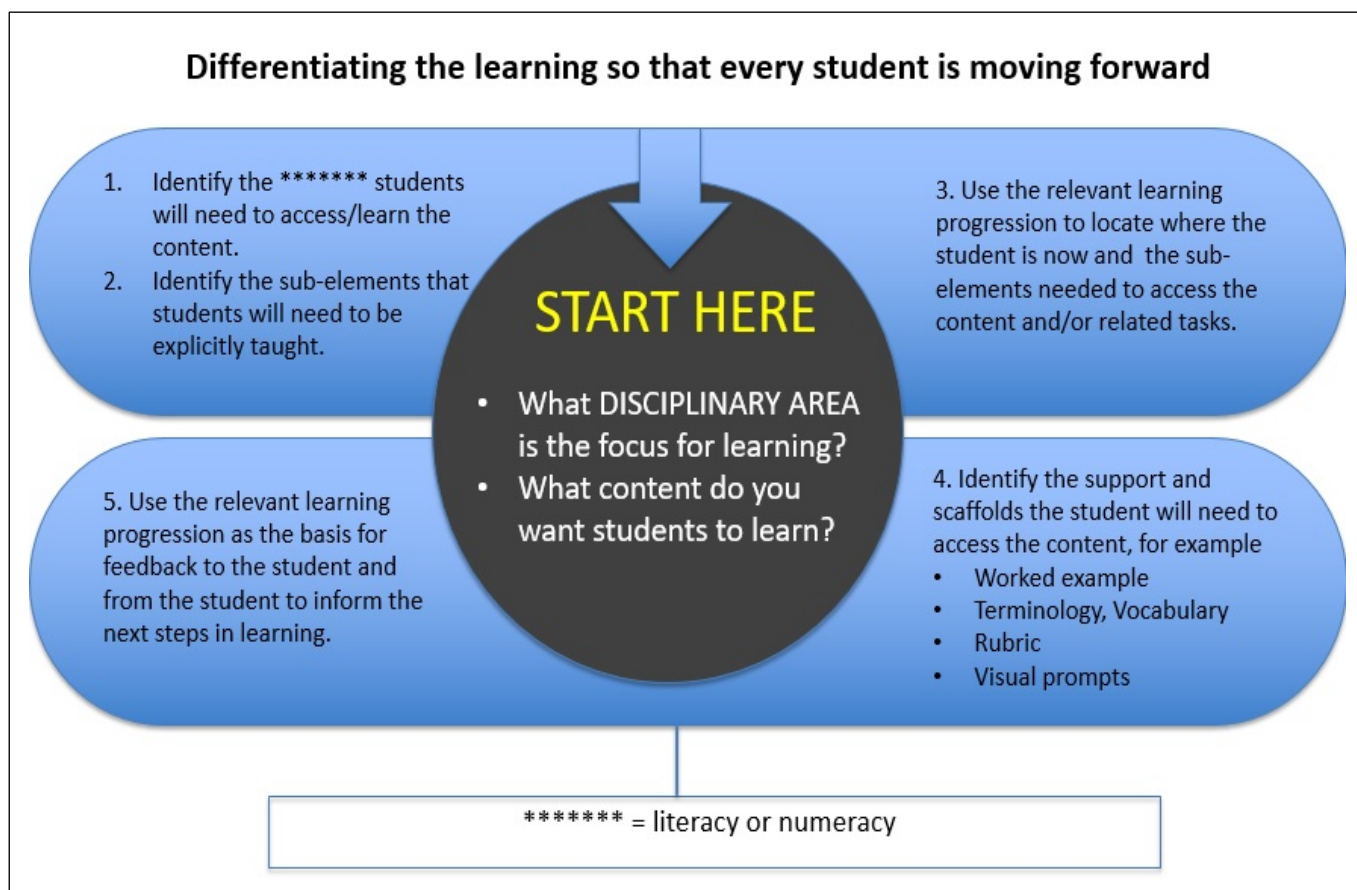
Stage	Comprehension: chronology, terms & concepts	Analysis & use of sources	Perspectives & interpretations	Empathetic understanding	Research	Explanation & communication
2	*respond, read & write to show understanding of historical matters  *sequence familiar people & events *use historical terms	*locate relevant information from sources provided	*identify different points of view within an historical context	*explain how & why people in the past may have lived & behaved differently from today	*pose a range of questions about the past  *plan an historical inquiry	*develop texts, particularly narratives *use a range of communication forms (oral, graphic, written) & digital technologies

### What if my child needs support or extension in literacy and numeracy?

Teachers cater for different instructional needs in the key disciplinary areas by using the National Literacy and Numeracy Learning Progressions. These progressions can be used from K-10 and designed to ensure all students develop strong foundations in literacy and numeracy.

[Learning progressions](#) describe the developmental sequence of learning in a particular domain. We can think of them like learning maps. These maps help students, teachers and parents to better understand where the student is now and the next steps in learning. This process assists all students to be challenged and supported in their learning regardless of their year group or stage of learning.

Learning progressions are not the curriculum. They are not a checklist. The diagram below shows how teachers can use the learning progressions in conjunction with the syllabus in the context of the teaching and learning cycle.



### Why is my child in the composite class?

Teachers spend a lot of time considering class placement and use the criteria outlined in our [Formation of Class Policy](#) to guide their decision making.

### How will being placed in a composite impact on my child?

Research, shows there is no discernible difference between composite and 'straight' year group classes in terms of academic performance because every class is a composite class.

In our experience most parents who express concerns about their child being placed in a composite class at the beginning of the year are keen for their child to be placed in a similar class in the following year. Some children take longer to settle but this can be due to factors other than being placed in a composite class.

### What are the evidenced based practices that research show improves student learning?

For the most part, it is the **quality of teaching**, combined with student interest and engagement that has a greater impact on learning than on class organisational structures.