

My Lower School Child's Teacher for Next Year

A significant amount of thought and prayer go into selecting students for each of the following year's classes. It is not unusual for several parents to request that their child have a specific teacher for the next school year, so I thought I would attempt to explain the guidelines we follow as we organize the class lists. Please allow me to express, in all grace and with gratitude for the families we joyfully serve, that it is not my intent to encourage class placement requests. In actuality, I am asking the opposite.

At the end of the school year, the teachers from every grade level meet as a team. The three teachers pray and then discuss possibilities for the class placements of each student for the following year. When they are doing this, several factors are considered. Initially, they try to balance the classes in terms of students' abilities. Every classroom has some students who catch on quickly whereas others are more challenged academically (and, of course, there are many in the middle). We are very intentional about balancing the abilities of the students within the three classes. Following this, the teachers try to establish comparable boy/girl ratios for each class. After that occurs, they may attempt to spread out families who are members of Christ Covenant and families who worship elsewhere.

When it is relevant, teachers consider which students have particular needs and spread those among the classes. At times certain combinations of students may be disruptive to learning, and in such cases those students are separated. On the other hand, there may be times when students function best when they are paired with another student. If possible, the teachers try to accommodate that.

Once all of these factors have been taken into account, teachers assign the students to a specific list/grouping. It is then my responsibility as the principal to assign teachers to each list of students.

In cases where a parent has requested a particular teacher, that may be precisely the teacher to whom the student has been tentatively assigned. If this is not the case, I must weigh the merit of making that change and determine what effect it may have on the group as a whole. Would moving John mean that he is now in class with James and those are two students whom we purposed to separate? Would it unbalance the classrooms in terms of academic ability? In our professional judgment, did we think that it was better for Jane to have Mrs. Jones rather than Miss Thompson?

During the summer months, it is not unusual for a family to move and need to withdraw their children (before class lists are mailed to families). In addition, new students typically enroll, and I will need to determine their placement. Such moves may affect the gender balance or other factors in a given class. Therefore, I may need to make a change over the summer after once again considering the factors mentioned above.

You may have heard something about a teacher that especially pleases you and you want that teacher. Or you may have had an older child who had a great experience with a particular teacher. Please consider committing to three things. First, please pray for the school as we interview teacher candidates for any potential openings we may have. Teachers are the school's biggest asset, so this is a very important step. Next, please pray that the Lord will cause your child to be placed exactly where he/she needs to be—with whoever will be most beneficial. Finally, please trust us to have your best interests at heart and to make wise decisions. We, too, want things to go well for your child at CDS.

If there is critically important information that you think I must know as I consider class placement, please send me a note or e-mail. Please refrain from engaging in class placement discussions with the teachers; it is best to send information directly to me should you wish to communicate something.

Partnering with you,

Mark Helmer
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Covenant Day School