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Principal: Ken Andrews Vice Principal: Paul Stevenson

Class Building & Parent Placement Requests at Monterey

- We ask that Monterey families **refrain from making class placement requests except in extraordinary circumstances**
- In such extraordinary cases, it is important that **such requests be sent by email to our Vice Principal, Paul Stevenson at pstevenson@sd61.bc.ca by our May 4th deadline**, including:
 1. Your child's name & grade level in the next (2023-24) school year
 2. The nature of your placement request
 3. The extraordinary learning, social-emotional, and/or other need warranting such special class placement consideration
- Note that no requests are guaranteed, but your request and rationale will be considered during our class building process if submitted by this deadline
- While no request is guaranteed, late requests (after May 5th) are far more difficult to accommodate; moreover, class changes once school has started are *extremely* rare
- Please see the following description below regarding our rationale and processes in relation to class building, placement and change requests, timelines, etc.

In May of each year, Monterey Middle School engages in an extensive class building process for the subsequent school year. In doing so, we gather information and input from students' current teachers and we consider many factors, including: various intellectual, physical, social, and emotional needs of particular students; balancing the numbers of students as well as varying aptitudes and needs between classes; providing opportunities for enriched and remedial support; and so much more . . . all aimed at creating balanced, diverse classes that provide the best overall educational setting for our students. With so many interrelated factors to consider, class building is a complex process only made more complicated if a high volume of parental placement requests are received.

Moreover, by middle school, we believe that students should be open to forming new peer relationships and that it's important for students to develop their skills to work with a wide variety of peers beyond their current social circle. Most kids shouldn't need an already established friend in their class to thrive; they can see close friends at recess breaks and such a friendship in their class often limits the potential to widen peer connections and develop other friendships. Finally, in most circumstances, we believe that special placement requests can convey to children that we – their teachers, parents, etc. – prioritize classroom friendships and cliques over fostering an inclusive environment for *all* children, or that they don't have the resiliency to thrive without a particular teacher, peer(s), or special accommodations, thereby decreasing their ability to be (or to become) more flexible and adaptable human beings. Instead, we believe that our students are capable of working with and learning from the different personalities and approaches of varying peers and

teachers throughout their many years of schooling. Through such an approach, we are striving to meet our students' long-term needs as well as further Monterey's positive culture as an inclusive learning community in which we all value, benefit, and learn from one another, problem-solving together if/as concerns arise along the way.

Having said the above, we also understand that for some children, there may be special circumstances that warrant consideration of a particular class placement request. In those circumstances, it's important that we receive such requests by May 5th at latest, in advance of our class-building process. Based on all of the above, we ask that parents only make a class placement request in situations they feel warrant special consideration and, if doing so, to submit their request by email to our vice-principal by May 5th.

Late requests (after May 5th) are far less likely to be accommodated because, once we begin building our preliminary classes, trying to accommodate further requests turns the class-building process into a "Rubik's Cube" in which accommodating one request can necessitate moving several other students, which in turn requires moving several more, which may ultimately benefit one child at the expense of others.

Students will be informed of their class assignment at the start of the school-year (not prior) and, except in the most extraordinary circumstances, all class assignments are final. Once classes have been assigned, students/parents with particular concerns about their class placement may contact the principal about their concerns *only after trying their assigned class for the first two weeks of school*. Even at that point, please know that class changes are still extremely rare since only a limited number of class changes, if any, are even logistically possible and, even if possible, not necessarily advisable given the impact of such changes to the balance and dynamics we've tried to create for all classes. Also, we wish to be fair to others with similar change requests, so we generally ask parents to work collaboratively with their child's teacher(s) and other staff to address concerns within their assigned class. Once again, we want to encourage parents to support their children in navigating (rather than removing) concerns, through which children at this age level further their problem-solving skills, capacity to cope with challenges, and overall resiliency.

Ken Andrews, Principal

Paul Stevenson, Vice Principal