

Holy Family NS

Retention of Pupils

Introduction

The staff of the school worked on this policy to give clarity on the retention of pupils in the same class in our school (Staying Back). The policy has been written following guidance from the Department of Education and is in keeping with Circular 11.01 and Circular 32.03

Rationale

Through working on this policy we hope it gives guidance to the staff and parents on the retention of pupils in the same class (staying back).

The DES does not encourage this generally, but may to be justified on the basis of sound educational reasons which would benefit the needs of the child. Under the Department's policy, children should only be allowed to repeat a year for educational reasons and in exceptional circumstances.

Procedures:

- The Primary School curriculum is designed as an eight year course, including a two year infant cycle followed by six years in standards from first to sixth, with children progressing to the next grade at the end of each school year. The primary curriculum is flexible and child-centred, and can be adapted to meet children's needs
- The DES are providing SET teachers and SNA's to support learning in Primary schools.
- Under the Department's policy, children should only be allowed to repeat a year for educational reasons and in exceptional circumstances.
- For a child to be retained in a class in our school agreement must be made between parents, class teacher, SET, principal and BOM.
- The decision will be made in keeping with Circular 32.03
- Parents should initially discuss retention with the class teacher/SET/principal.
- A written application for retention should be made to BOM. This should be signed by both parents, where possible.

Consideration for retention

When deciding whether it is in the best educational interest of the child to stay back the BOM, in consultation with the principal/teacher/SET will consider the following:

- The child's age must also be taken into account – a school should always endeavour to place a child in an age appropriate setting.
- The decision will be based on the developmental/learning needs of the child.
- The effect on the child's self-esteem by repeating a class. How this will affect their friendship group.
- The child's attendance over the last number of years
- Extra provision that has been previously made to support the child's learning
- Engagement by the child in school and homework (also to include work over lockdown)
- The educational programme that could be put in place, for the child, to improve educational outcome.
- Children with an assessed learning need (SEN), may be best supported by "moving on" with appropriate supports in place
- Are both parents (where applicable) in agreement about the issue?
- Available space in the class and the impact of the retention on annual returns to the DES.
- The effect of the decision to allow a child repeat, on the learning of others.
- **N.B:** Pupils who have completed sixth class must not transfer to another primary school to repeat sixth class. In the event that a school were to enrol pupils from another school to repeat sixth class the pupils shall not be included as eligible pupils for staffing and other purposes. Capitation and other grants in respect of such pupils shall not be paid.

Following the decision making

- Following the decision making process the BOM will contact the parents with the decision.
- A record outlining the educational basis for the decision to retain a child should be kept for any pupil so retained.
- A clear programme outlined for such a pupil that records precisely what new approach will be used for her/him and what its expected benefit will be. These records should be retained within the school and should be brought to the Inspector's attention by the Principal when s/he visits the school.
- The retention of a pupil will be recorded in the annual returns to the DES.
- No pupil should repeat a grade more than once in a primary school.
- If the decision to retain the child is made, an IPLP should be drawn up indicating what interventions will be put in place for the child to maximise their learning experience.
- In instances where a school has approved the retention of a pupil in 6th class, no capitation grant will be paid by the DES for this pupil in the following school academic year.
- In all cases where the proposed retention of pupils has staffing implications the Primary Payments Section of the Department of Education & Science should be notified.

Communication

This policy will be placed on the school website for all parents to read.

Ratification

The policy was prepared by the staff to meet the needs of the school. It was ratified by the BOM following discussion.