



## **St. Joseph's Primary School**

### **Policy on Retention of Pupils**

#### **Introduction**

The Board of Management of St. Joseph's Primary School has drawn up this Policy on Retention of Pupils in consultation with the staff and Parent's Council.

#### **Policy Aim**

- To provide guidance for the school management team and teaching staff in the event of a request by parents or guardians for a pupil to be retained in the same grade for another school year.

#### **Mission/Rationale**

The primary school curriculum is designed as an 8-year course comprising a 2-year infant cycle followed by six years in standards from 1st to 6th, 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 Department of Education and Skills (DES) provides considerable support for pupils with learning difficulties. This includes resource teaching, learning support, special needs assistant support, and a wide range of resources under schemes such as DEIS and the School Completion Programme for schools in areas designated as disadvantaged. The level of provision available should enable pupils to make progress in keeping with their needs and abilities and to move consecutively through the different grade levels in the school along with their peers. In very exceptional circumstances it may be educationally beneficial for a pupil to repeat a grade level.

#### **Procedures**

In St. Joseph's Primary School, the following procedures apply for retention of a pupil in the same grade for a further school year:

- DES policy is that children should only be allowed to repeat a year for educational reasons and in exceptional circumstances (circular 32/03).
- Applications for retention will be considered on a case-by-case basis for pupils in 2nd, 3rd, 4th, or 5th class.
- No pupil will be retained in 6th class, in accordance with DES circular 32/03.
- No pupil who has completed 6th class in another primary school will be enrolled in St. Joseph's.
- No pupil will be held back for longer than 1 year throughout his primary school career.
- In accordance with DES circular 32/03, the school will not operate a repeat 6th class.
- An application in writing must be made by the parents or guardians wishing to have a pupil retained in the same grade level. The application must state the reasons why the pupil should be considered for retention and must be received by the principal before 31st May for pupil retention in the subsequent school year.
- A record outlining the educational basis for the decision to retain a child will be kept for any pupil so retained. In addition, a clear programme will be outlined for such a pupil that records precisely what new approach will be used for him and what its expected benefits will be. These records will be retained within the school and will be brought to the Inspector's attention on his/her visits to the school.

## **Factors to Consider**

The following factors will be considered by the principal in reaching a decision on whether a pupil will be retained in the same grade:

- The age of the pupil.
- The educational benefit to the pupil to be retained in the same grade.
- The present number of pupils in the class in question.
- Class test results for the pupil.
- Standardised test results for the pupil.
- Psychological report if available.
- Present resources in place, such as learning support and SNA support.
- What other educational supports may be put in place or are likely to be obtained.
- The pupil's previous/present application to work in school and to homework.
- Compliance with the school's Code of Behaviour and Disciplinary Policy.
- Attendance at school.
- Disciplinary record of the pupil.
- Any potential detrimental/adverse affect of the pupil's retention on the teaching/learning of other pupils in the class in question.
- Any potential threat to the health and safety of other pupils and staff by the pupil's retention.
- The cooperation and support obtained from the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the pupil.
- Potential effects of retention on the pupil in terms of self-confidence, self-esteem and loss of friends.
- Any other issues that may affect the pupil, the class in question or the staff.

## **Consultation**

The principal will consult with the following in reaching a decision:

- The deputy principal
- The class teacher of the pupil
- The resource teacher, learning support teacher and/or special needs assistant of the pupil
- The home school community liaison coordinator
- The Behaviour and Discipline Committee
- Parent(s)/guardian(s) of the pupil
- The Board of Management

## **Decision Process**

After considering all the factors that relate to a specific retention application, the principal will reach a decision after consultation with the relevant personnel as listed above. The principal will then arrange a meeting with the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the pupil in question to inform them of whether the retention application has been approved or rejected.

- If the application is approved, the principal will outline the educational programme and supports for the pupil for the retention year.
- If the application is rejected, the principal will explain the reasons for the rejection.

**The allocation of classes and promotion of pupils are the responsibility of the principal and her decision in these matters is final.**

**Evaluation**

The Board of Management will monitor the implementation of all aspects of this policy, which will be reviewed on an annual basis. If no changes are required, a Policy Review Sheet will be issued to document that the policy has been reviewed. If changes are required, the policy will be amended accordingly in consultation with the staff and Parents' Council before being ratified by the Board of Management.

**Policy Approval/Ratification**

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management of St. Joseph's on 28/5/2014

Annual review will be due in May 2015. This review may result in amendment of the policy or documentation that no changes are required, as recorded on a Policy Review Sheet.

Signed by

Maia Keane  
Chairperson, Board of Management

28/5/2014  
Date

Maeve Sanderson  
Principal

28/5/14  
Date

Carol Joyce  
Chairperson, Parents' Council

28/5/14  
Date