



Knocknacarra Educate Together
National School

Retention Policy

This policy has been formulated by Knocknacarra ETNS to establish guidelines and procedures related to the retention of pupils in the same grade level.

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Introduction and Rationale:

Knocknacarra Educate Together NS endeavours to support the holistic development of children in an atmosphere based on equality and respect for the individual. It is a child-centred school where the central question for decision-making is what is best for the child. The primary school curriculum is designed as an eight-year course, including a two-year 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 can be adapted to meet children's needs. Considerable support is provided for pupils with learning difficulties. These supports are based on the individual child's needs and are dependent on Department of Education and Skills allocations. These provisions enable pupils to make progress, in keeping with their needs and abilities, and to move consecutively through the different class levels in the school along with their peers. In exceptional circumstances the principal teacher, following extensive consultation, may conclude that a pupil would benefit educationally by repeating a grade level. This is in keeping with Department guidelines (see Circular 32/03).

Aims and Objectives:

- To describe the consultative process regarding the retention of a pupil in a grade level.
- To establish protocols for the retention of pupils that align with Department guidelines.
- To clarify the expectations and responsibilities required of all parties to ensure the retention of a pupil meets identified academic, social and emotional objectives.

Procedures:

Consultation Process

Any interested party may approach the principal regarding the potential retention of a pupil at the same grade level. This will initiate a consultation process involving the following individuals:

- Principal,
- Current class teacher,
- Learning support teacher,
- Special needs assistant (if applicable),
- Parents,
- Child (depending on the age) and
- Relevant professionals such as speech and language therapists, occupational therapists and psychologists.

Factors that may be considered in the consultation process include:

- The age of the pupil,
- The educational benefit to the pupil to be retained in a class,
- The present number of pupils in the class in question,
- Class and standardised test results,
- Professional reports and assessments,
- Presents supports provided by learning support teachers and/or a special needs assistant,
- Other supports that may be obtained or put in place,
- Attendance at school and
- Potential effects of retention on the pupil in terms of self-esteem, self-confidence and loss of friends.

Guidelines

- Consensus will be sought among all interested parties, giving particular importance to the decision of the parent(s), acknowledging that the ultimate decision will be made by the principal and approved by the Board of Management. If parents/guardians do not consent to the retention of the pupil, the school will not go against their wishes, but a record of the consultation will be kept on file. If parents agree, they must give written consent for the child to be retained at the same grade level.
- A document outlining the educational basis for the decision to retain a child will be kept for any pupil so retained. In addition, there will be a clear plan outlined for such a pupil that records precisely what new approaches will be used for him/her and what its expected benefit will be. A plan for social integration in the new class group will also be prepared and implemented. (See Appendix A.) These records will be retained within the school and will be brought to the Inspector’s attention by the Principal when she/he visits the school.
- No pupil will repeat a grade more than once in a primary school.
- No pupil may repeat 6th class. Likewise, a child who has completed 6th class in another school will not be able to enrol in 6th class in Knocknacarra Educate Together NS.

Ratification and Communication:

This policy was ratified on the date below. The policy will be distributed to all individuals involved in a consultation process as described above. It will also be available electronically for access at any time. It will be reviewed as necessary but no later than 2020.

Louise Shields, chairperson

Date of ratification

Appendix A: Agreement for the Retention of a Pupil in the Same Grade Level

Following an extensive consultation process, it has been agreed that {child’s name} will be retained in {name of the class} for the coming school year {20XX-20XX}. The reasons for this decision are outlined below:

- {reasons for retention}

The following plan has been agreed to provide support and ensure the reasons above are addressed by providing an additional year.

Proposed Intervention	Person(s) responsible

A plan for social integration with the new class will be implemented as described below.

Proposed Intervention	Person(s) responsible

Parent(s)

Date

Principal

Date

Chairperson of the Board of Management

Date