



Primary Circular 32/03

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE PRIMARY BRANCH

TO: BOARDS OF MANAGEMENT, PRINCIPAL TEACHERS AND ALL TEACHING STAFF IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

RETENTION OF PUPILS IN SAME GRADE IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Circular amends [Primary Circular 11/01](#) regarding the regulations governing the retention of pupils in Primary Schools.

2. Current Policy on Retention

- 2.1 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.
- 2.2 The Department is providing considerable support for pupils with learning difficulties in schools. Learning support teachers, resource teachers, special needs assistants and a wide range of resources under the various schemes for schools in areas designated as disadvantaged are among the forms of provision allocated to schools for these pupils. 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 class levels in the school along with their peers.
- 2.3 Under the Department's policy, children should only be allowed to repeat a year for educational reasons and in exceptional circumstances. An additional grade level should not operate through the retention of all or a substantial number of pupils at a grade level.

- 2.4 In such exceptional circumstances a Principal teacher, following consultation with the learning support teacher/resource teacher and class teacher and parent(s) may conclude that a pupil would benefit educationally by repeating a grade level. A record outlining the educational basis for the decision to retain a child should be kept for any pupil so retained. In addition, there should be 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. No pupil should repeat a grade more than once in a primary school.
- 2.5 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.

3 Transfer of Pupils to another Primary School to Repeat Sixth Class

- 3.1 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.

4. Elimination of Nine Year Cycle

- 4.1 Since the issue of [Primary Circular 11/01](#) in March 2001 a school must not operate a middle infants class or a repeat sixth class/ seventh class. In the event that a school continues the practice of enrolling pupils in a middle infant or a repeat class the Department will discount the pupils in such classes for the purpose of determining the valid enrolment of the school. Capitation and other grants in respect of such pupils shall not be paid.

This circular may also be accessed on the Department of Education & Science website at www.education.ie

Johnny Bracken
Principal Officer.

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