



## Student Acceleration and Retention Policy for MACS schools

### Purpose

This policy ensures that a consistent, evidence-based approach that is in the best interests of students is taken in decisions on regarding the year-level acceleration of students who are gifted and students who are being considered for year-level retention.

### Scope

This policy applies to all students at MACS schools and particularly to students who are being considered for year-level acceleration or retention.

### Principles

This policy is underpinned by the following principles:

- each student's uniqueness should be celebrated and all students embraced as respected and valued members of the learning community
- all students are different and for a very small number of students, curriculum differentiation may require repetition of a year of study or the application of acceleration to meet their individual needs. Notwithstanding, appropriate and targeted intervention, and the progression of students with their age peers, is generally the best strategy for students who are at-risk
- decisions regarding the year-level acceleration or retention of a student should be made in the best interests of each student
- local pastoral discretion at the school level is an important element of decision-making regarding student acceleration or retention.

### Policy

All students, including those who are gifted or at risk, are to be provided access to a curriculum that encourages high expectations.

Retention should only be considered in exceptional circumstances where there is strong evidence that it is in the best interests of the student. Students at risk require specific and targeted interventions based on a detailed diagnostic evaluation of their needs. A range of interventions responding to individual learning needs, strengths, talents, and interests should be considered to best meet the needs of each student. A student can only repeat a single year level, e.g., a student who repeats a four-year-old kindergarten year will be deemed to have already been retained.

Acceleration generally occurs on entry into school or across year groups from Foundation to Year 10. Decisions to accelerate a student must be based on the best interests of each student. Consideration should be given to distinctions in individual learning needs, strengths, talents, and interests and to differences in aptitudes across a variety of domains. Acceleration options may include but are not limited to year level acceleration, subject-based acceleration, advanced placement, higher education studies in VCE, education courses, mentorship, and multi-year classes, which are decided at school level.

Maximum and minimum age requirements need to be considered in student acceleration or retention decisions. For example, a child under the age of 4 years, 6 months cannot be enrolled at primary school and a student aged 13 years and over must be enrolled in a secondary school. A person aged 18 years or older must not enrol in or attend a school unless an exception or exemption applies.

Exemptions for year-level student acceleration or retention may be granted in exceptional circumstances to individual students following application from the principal to the MACS office.

## Roles, responsibilities, and reporting

Role	Responsibility	Reporting requirement (if applicable)
Principal	Grant exemption to maximum age	Requires written approval from Executive Director or delegate (Director, Learning and Regional Services)
Principal	Grant exemption to student retention	Requires written approval from Executive Director or delegate (Director, Learning and Regional Services)

## Delegations and authorities

Role	Description of power/function	Limitations/conditions	Reporting requirement (if applicable)
Executive Director or delegate (Director, Learning and Regional Services)	Approval for exemption for enrolment under the maximum school entry age	Written approval required. Subject to student meeting criteria outlined in these procedures	
Executive Director or delegate (Director, Learning and Regional Services)	Approval for exemption for student retention and acceleration	Written approval required. Subject to student meeting criteria outlined in these procedures	

## Procedures

### 1. Establishment of review committee

- 1.1. Schools establish a committee to review all applications for year-level retention and acceleration, with reference to Student Acceleration and Retention Policy, Minimum Age Exemption criteria and Maximum Age Exemption criteria.
- 1.2. It is suggested the committee consist of at least three people, including the principal and the Learning Diversity leader.
- 1.3. Detailed minutes of all meetings should be kept, ensuring transparency of process.

### 2. Review of issues underpinning the request

- 2.1. A detailed review of the issues surrounding the request for acceleration or year level retention must be undertaken by the school.
- 2.2. Evidence is to be provided of student's ability and diverse learning needs in one or more curriculum areas.
- 2.3. For students considered for acceleration, students must have been assessed as having a Full-Scale Intelligence Quotient of  $\geq 130$ .
- 2.4. Additional formal assessments are to be sought if appropriate.
- 2.5. For early and late entry, students must meet the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority [Guidelines to the Minimum Standards and Requirements for School Registration](#), and where applicable, complete the Minimum Age Exemption Application Form or Maximum Age Exemption Application form.

### 3. School decision-making

- 3.1. Parents/guardians/carers' views should be considered during the process.
- 3.2. Where appropriate, the student themselves should be involved in the decision-making process.
- 3.3. Consideration must be given to any social or emotional effects and cultural needs that may transpire as an outcome of the decision.
- 3.4. The principal, having considered fully the views of all stakeholders and the best interests of the student and school community, will make a recommendation for year level acceleration or retention to the regional general manager only where retention or acceleration is in the best interests of the student.
- 3.5. The principal, in partnership with the family, must endorse all year level acceleration and retention applications. The application is submitted to the regional general manager by the

principal and forwarded to a committee chaired by Director, Learning and Regional Services for decision.

- 3.6. For cases of acceleration other than year level acceleration (e.g., subject-based acceleration, compacted curriculum, advanced placement courses), the principal, having considered the views of all stakeholders and the best interests of the student and school community, will make the final decision about an appropriate form of acceleration.

#### **4. MACS office decision-making for year level acceleration and retention applications**

- 4.1. The committee, chaired by Director, Learning and Regional Services, reviews all minimum age exemption, maximum age exemption, year-level acceleration and retention applications.
- 4.2. Each committee must encompass expertise required to make an informed decision.
- 4.3. Additional members should be involved to consider applications on cultural grounds, e.g., learning consultants – new arrivals/refugees, or education officers – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, as applicable.
- 4.4. A rationale for the final decision must be provided on application for repeating or accelerating a year level submitted by the principal and the outcome will be returned to the school by Director, Learning and Regional Services.

#### **5. Confirming year level acceleration and retention decisions**

- 5.1. Parents/guardians/carers will be advised formally of the decision by the principal, through completion of application for accelerating or repeating a year level.
- 5.2. Parents/guardians/carers are required to sign a consent form to confirm the proposed year-level retention where this is the final outcome.

#### **6. Complaints regarding decision**

- 6.1. The parents/guardians/carers should be referred to the MACS complaints resolution process as per the [MACS Complaints Handling Policy for MACS Schools](#).

## **Definitions**

### **Acceleration**

Refers to the progression through the regular curriculum at a faster pace than other students of the same chronological age.

### **Exception**

There are some exceptions which allow students to enrol with agreement by the principal. A student who falls within an exception automatically meets the age eligibility requirements to apply to enrol at a MACS school.

### **Exemption**

A student who does not fall within an exception is required to apply for special consideration. Exemptions from the minimum and maximum age requirements are rare, rather than being considered acceptable practice.

### **Gifted students**

Refers to students who exhibit high ability, creativity and task commitment with an intelligent quotient  $\geq 130$ .

### **Late entry**

Late entry refers to commencing school one year later than expected, according to chronological age.

### **MACS school or school**

A school which operates with the consent of the Catholic Archbishop of Melbourne and is owned, operated and governed by MACS, directly or through MACSS (as the context requires). References to schools or MACS schools also includes boarding premises of schools operated by MACS and specialist schools operated by MACSS.

**Parent**

Parent is used as a reference to a parent, guardian or carer.

**Principal**

Individual appointed as principal by MACS in a MACS school.

**Student**

Student means a person who is enrolled at or attends a MACS school.

**Twice exceptionality**

Refers to gifted students who also experience a learning difficulty in one or more areas.

**Underachievement**

Refers to gifted students who are achieving less than their potential.

**Year level acceleration**

Year level acceleration refers to the skipping of the last year of schooling in which a student was enrolled.

**Year level repetition or retention**

Year level repetition or retention refers to the repeating of the last year of schooling in which a student was enrolled.

## Related policies and documents

**Supporting documents**

Enrolment Procedures for MACS Schools  
Repeating a Year Level Application Form  
Accelerating a Year Level Application Form

**Related MACS policies and documents**

Complaints Handling Policy for MACS Schools  
Enrolment Policy for MACS Schools  
Privacy Policy – Template for Schools  
Recordkeeping Policy for MACS Schools

**Resources**

[Horizons of Hope Foundation Statement: Learning Diversity in a Catholic School](#)  
[Evidence for Learning – the Teaching and Learning Toolkit on Retention](#)  
[Gifted and Talented Students: A Resource Guide for Teachers in Victorian Catholic Schools](#)  
[Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority \(VCAA\) – Diversity of Learners](#)  
[Victorian Department of Education and Training \*The Alice Springs \(Mparntwe\) Education Declaration 2019\*](#)

**Legislation and standards**

*Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Cth)*  
*Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)*  
*Disability Standards for Education 2005 (Cth)*  
*Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic.)*  
*Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017 (Vic.)*  
*Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)*  
*Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)*  
[Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority \(VRQA\) minimum standards for schools](#)

## Policy information

Responsible director	Director, Learning and Regional Services
Policy owner	General Manager, Learning Diversity

<b>Approving authority</b>	MACS Board
<b>Assigned board committee</b>	Education Strategy and Policy
<b>Approval date</b>	10 May 2023
<b>Risk Rating</b>	High
<b>Date of next review</b>	May 2025
<b>Publication</b>	CEVN, school website

<b>POLICY DATABASE INFORMATION</b>	
<b>Assigned framework</b>	Enrolment
<b>Supporting documents</b>	Enrolment Policy for MACS schools Enrolment Procedures Maximum Age Exemption Application form Minimum Age Exemption Application form
<b>Superseded documents</b>	List policies and procedures that have been superseded by this document. List in alphabetical order.
<b>New policy</b>	New