



Year Level Acceleration Policy

Policy Statement

At Canning Vale Primary School all students will be enrolled into their age appropriate year level. In certain circumstances however, acceleration may be the best option for a small number of exceptionally gifted students.

Rationale

Acceleration is a placement strategy that enables a gifted student to work within an older chronological grouping. It is one form of flexible provision. The decision to accelerate any student needs to be made with considerable care by a principal in consultation with the student, parents, teachers and school psychologist. The development of a range of suitable options to meet a child's learning needs, of which acceleration may be one possibility, is necessary in this process.

Decisions regarding permanent, full-time acceleration of younger students, in particular, should proceed only after thorough and careful consideration of the implication for the whole long-term schooling experience of the student. This includes the academic, social, emotional and behavioural needs of the student. In certain situations acceleration may be the best option for a small number of exceptionally gifted students.

Decisions may have to be made on behalf of younger students to address their individual learning needs. It is desirable that gifted students become progressively more involved in, and responsible for, the decisions regarding provision of appropriate education and development programs.

To determine the appropriateness of acceleration for a particular student it is desirable to monitor and evaluate the relevance and effectiveness of strategies that may include learning and teaching adjustments, such as an Individual Education Plan, peer tutoring and/or mentoring programs. The Curriculum Framework's principles of assessment need to be kept in mind when evaluating the suitability of acceleration: any measure of the child's readiness to accelerate should be valid, educative, explicit, fair, and comprehensive.

Policy Details

Acceleration may occur in the following situations

- Teacher / school request when a student's needs may not be met by keeping the student with the age appropriate cohort;
- Parent request – if the following factors are considered -
 - A significant process of consultation between parents, principal, school psychologist and teachers of the student has been undertaken;
 - The provision of individual education plans, indicating the student has been working at an accelerated level on a program recognised as "best practice" and at a level commonly recognised across the state as being "accelerated";
 - Acceleration should proceed only after thorough and careful consideration of the implication for the whole long-term schooling experience of the student;

- Academic progress – demonstration that the student is working at a level considered well in advance of the year level expectation across a range of experiences. This could include where the student averaged in the top 15% of the state NAPLAN scores across the four areas of Reading, Writing, Spelling and Numeracy.

in Years other than Year 3, 5 and 7, the student's progress should be comparable with students in the top 5% of the next year level;

- Social benchmarks such as maturity, age, size, behaviour, ability to work cooperatively;
- Work habits – including ability to work independently, maintain focus;
- Availability of space within the class structure;
- The consideration of the best interests of the child. The Principal determines this.

Negative aspects to be considered –

- ✚ Elimination of boredom in other ways such as by the enrichment of the learning experiences;
- ✚ Maturation may be uneven with social and physical maturation lagging behind cognitive and academic maturation;
- ✚ Student can miss out on leadership opportunities by missing specific years of school, particularly the final years of primary;
- ✚ Acceleration may leave the student as a passive recipient of knowledge rather than as an active learner and decision maker if the student not only has no say in what is learned and how, but also in making the decision to assume the additional workload.
- ✚ Some students may have learning styles more suited to enrichment than acceleration.

Important personal criteria for success include children who:

- ✚ are well adjusted;
- ✚ participate in extra-curricular activities;
- ✚ have leadership qualities;
- ✚ have a strong internal locus of control, i.e.: take responsibility for successes and failures;
- ✚ have a degree of interpersonal effectiveness;
- ✚ have interests such as music, drama, arts, or games that can be shared with older students;
- ✚ demonstrate absence of serious adjustment problems;
- ✚ have a high degree of task commitment and motivation to learn;
- ✚ have a receiving teacher who is enthusiastic about acceleration and is prepared to make the necessary adjustments.

(Mackenzie-Sykes, 1996)