



## ALCUIN COLLEGE GRADE LEVEL AND PROMOTION POLICY

### 1. PRINCIPLES:

Alcuin College believes that the promotion, retention and acceleration of students are actions that directly relate to student success in achieving expected learning outcomes and Ministry Curricular Competencies.

Formal and informal assessments of student learning, and a comprehensive file review of measurable data should be completed when making decisions about retention, and acceleration. The consideration of emotional, social, physical and intellectual development must be included in the final decision.

### 2. DEFINITIONS:

**PROMOTION** to the next grade occurs when a student meets or exceeds explicitly stated learning outcomes associated with a certain grade level.

**RETENTION** occurs when a student does not meet the required outcomes associated with his/her grade level. The student's planning team determines that it is in the best interest of the student to be retained at the grade level.

**ACCELERATION** occurs when a student has progressed beyond age-appropriate course work and is not able to be challenged in their current grade level programme. The student's planning team determines that it is in the best interest of the student for acceleration to occur.

### 3. PROCEDURES:

Students at Alcuin are placed within grade level groupings according to their age. However, students learn at their own pace and, in some areas of the curriculum where appropriate, students are regrouped across grade levels to support those who perform significantly above or below their chronological grade level in a particular area. In this instance, students will continue to receive report cards that indicate student achievement in relation to their chronological grade level, and the comments will reflect changes made to the curriculum and progress made beyond Ministry expectations.

In the event that a student is working in some areas of the curriculum that are significantly above or below their chronological grade level, a student learning support plan will identify the necessary adaptations. Occasionally modifications to the curriculum may be needed. Learning support plans are required to be completed by the learning support teacher in collaboration with the class/subject teacher in these instances, except where a formal written Individualised Education Plan (IEP) is required for designated students and a SPED is assigned. The classroom/subject teacher will continue to support the student's needs as set out in the IEP, and

work with the learning resource teacher who will oversee and approve progress tracking and reporting for the IEP.

Under exceptional circumstances and following rigorous assessment, including a possible psychological educational assessment for giftedness, it may be determined that a student is best served to change grade levels. Thoughtful, in-depth discussion between teachers, parents and the Head of school is required to ensure that the decision is in the best interests of the student.

Any gaps in learning, in relation to learning standards, are clearly noted, and become an initial focus for the student learning support plan the following year. If, after all avenues of school support have been activated, and the student has such significant gaps in their learning that the teacher or parent recommends holding the student back a grade level, a team including parent, teacher, and administrator will meet to determine a plan. The final responsibility for deciding appropriate student placement (grade assignment or course level) rests with the Head of School.

### **3.1 Retention:**

3.1a. Educational research supports the belief that most students benefit from being in class with their peers in age-appropriate settings. The Alcuin environment provides for multi-age groupings and, as such, students can often remain in their peer group while being served at their required academic level. Retention is likely to be considered only when the situation is extreme, and in the best interests of the individual.

3.1b. When it is recognised that a student is in jeopardy of not successfully meeting the majority of the BC Ministry learning competencies, a learning team will be set up to support the student and develop a plan of action. Where retention is being considered, a comprehensive file review will be completed. Communication with the family will be made in the middle of the second term, using the Retention Information Template (Appendix A).

3.1c. Retention will only occur when the advantages to the student clearly outweigh the disadvantages. In those cases where retention is being considered for a student, comprehensive communication with the student's family must be an integral part of the process.

3.1d. When the decision has been finalised a copy of the completed Retention Notification Letter (Appendix B) will be provided to the family at an in-person meeting.

### **3.2 Acceleration:**

3.2a. Educational research supports the belief that most students benefit from being in class with their peers in age-appropriate settings. The Alcuin environment provides for multi-age groupings and, as such, students can often remain in their peer group while being served at their required academic level. Acceleration is likely to be considered only when students would be best served by being challenged at a level exceeding their age group.

3.2b. When it is recognised that a student is capable of far exceeding Ministry Curricular Competencies related to the grade level in which they are learning, the teacher will develop an informal learning plan for the student to ensure that the student continues to be challenged in areas where they are excelling.

3.2c. When acceleration to another grade level is recommended, a comprehensive file review will be completed. Social and emotional maturity, as well as intellectual ability, must be considered. Communication with the family will be made before the end of the second term, using the Acceleration Information Template (Appendix C).

3.2d. If acceleration occurs, a copy of the completed Acceleration Notice Letter (Appendix D) is provided to the family at an in-person meeting and added to the student's file.

#### **4. APPEAL PROCEDURE:**

Students and their families have three business days from the date of promotion, retention or acceleration to contact the Head of School to appeal. The decision will be reviewed at the school level and the family will be notified in writing, within three days of the decision being made.



Appendix "A"

Retention Information Template

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ School Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Definition:

Retention occurs when a student does not meet the required outcomes associated with his/her grade level or learning. The student’s teacher and planning team determines that it is in the best interest of the student to be retained at the grade level.

**In an effort to continue high levels of communication, this letter is to notify you that your child may be retained rather than promoted to the next grade level. At the present time, your child is at risk of not meeting all the outcomes for their current grade level as required by the Ministry of Education.**

The decision to retain or promote will be determined at the end of the year.

Area(s) of Difficulty: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

We will be attempting to help your child meet the outcomes by:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

You can help your child by: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Head of School Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



**Appendix "B"**

**Retention Notification Letter**

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ School Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

This letter is to inform you that (*student's name and D.O.B.*) has not met the outcomes for his/her grade level. Through the programme planning process, the decision has been made to retain (*student's name*) at grade \_\_\_\_\_.

As per the Alcuin College Grade Level & Promotion Policy: Promotion, Retention & Acceleration, the following Appeal Procedure is in place:

1. Students and their families have three business days from the date of notification of promotion, retention, or acceleration to contact the Head of School to appeal the decision.
2. The decision will be reviewed at the school level and the student and his/her family will be notified, in writing, within three business days of the decision being made.
3. Within three business days of receiving the written notification the family may request a review of the school's decision through an in-person meeting involving the teachers, team members & Head of School.

We appreciate your commitment to your child's education and look forward to working together in the next school year to support your child.

Head of School Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



Appendix "C"

Acceleration Information Template

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ School Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

**Definition:**

Acceleration occurs when a student has progressed beyond age-appropriate course work and/or grade level groupings and is not able to be challenged within their current grade level programme at Alcuin College. The student’s teacher and planning team determines that it is in the best interest of the student for the acceleration to occur.

**In an effort to continue high levels of communication, this letter is to notify you that your child may be accelerated. At the present time, your child is exceeding the outcomes as required by the Ministry of Education in the areas outlined.**

Area(s) of Acceleration: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

You can help your child by: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Head of School Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## Appendix "D"

### Acceleration Notification Letter

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ School Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

This letter is to inform you that (*student's name and D.O.B.*) is exceeding all outcomes for his/her grade level. Through the programme planning process, the decision has been made to accelerate (*student's name*) to grade \_\_\_\_\_.

As per the Alcuin College Grade Level & Promotion Policy: Promotion, Retention & Acceleration, the following Appeal Procedure is in place:

1. Students and their families have three business days from the date of notification of promotion, retention or acceleration to contact the Head of School to appeal the decision.
2. The decision will be reviewed at the school level and the student and his/her family will be notified, in writing, within three business days of the decision being made.
3. Within three business days of receiving the written notification the family may request a review of the school's decision through an in-person meeting involving the teachers, team members & the Head of School.

We appreciate your commitment to your child's education and look forward to working together in the next school year to support your child.

Head of School Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix "E"

### Timelines

These timelines are suggestions and may be adapted to meet the needs of the student.

<b>TIME</b>	<b>ACTION(S)</b>
September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• After review of the academic records of all students, teaching teams meet to develop a Plan Outline, identifying students for whom evidence indicates specific academic needs.</li><li>• Meet with colleagues to identify required curriculum adaptations.</li><li>• Identify team members who will work with the student who has given indication of being unable to meet the expected learning outcomes.</li></ul>
Late September to Mid-October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Planning team to develop a Plan Outline.</li></ul>
End of October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Plans are submitted</li></ul>
October to December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Teachers monitor students' progress and communicate to appropriate staff and family as required.</li></ul>
February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Teachers monitor students' progress, update plan progress and provide information templates at parent conferences.</li></ul>
April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Retention and/or Promotion information to be discussed with families.</li></ul>
May to June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Teacher (team) reviews student progress in the context of the plan.</li><li>• Teacher (team) makes recommendations to the Head of School for the following year.</li><li>• Teachers (team) review progress and recommendations and provide a transition plan for the following school year.</li><li>• Meetings with family.</li></ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Short meetings notifying parents of students that have been identified as having specific academic needs.</li><li>• Plan is forwarded to next year's teacher(s).</li></ul>
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## Appendix “F”

### Retention: Factors to Consider

Here are some questions to answer prior to retaining a student:

#### Academic

- In what area(s) is the student struggling the most – reading, writing, math, science, social studies, social skills, other? Is it just one subject or most of them?
- What have you and the student’s family done this year to help the child develop necessary skills?
- What has worked and helped the student learn this year? What hasn’t worked?
- If the student were to spend another year in the same grade, what type of instruction would he/she receive in the areas he/she finds most difficult? Would a new teaching approach or new materials be used? How do you know that “doing it over again” would make a difference?
- What level of performance would you set for the student to achieve if he/she were retained?
- What changes would you need to see to be satisfied that retention was effective?
- Realistically, will the student be able to meet the required standards to be promoted next year? What kind of change are you expecting in one year? Is that enough to make the retention worthwhile?

#### Social/Emotional

- How will the student feel about being retained? Will he/she be more motivated to learn and try, or will he/she be embarrassed and further withdraw from learning?
- What will happen to the student’s peer supports and friendships? How will they be affected by retention?
- Will the student benefit socially, emotionally, and physically with the gift of time:

## Appendix “H”

### Acceleration: Factors to Consider

Here are some questions to answer prior to accelerating a student:

#### **Academic:**

- In what area(s) is the student excelling the most – reading, writing, math, science, social studies, social skills, other? Is it just one subject or most of them?
- What have you and the family done this year to help the student enhance their skills?
- What has worked and helped the student this year? What hasn’t worked?
- What level of performance would you set for the student to achieve if he/she were accelerated?
- What formal/informal assessments have been completed that would indicate that acceleration is an option?

#### **Social/Emotional:**

- What will happen to the student’s peer supports and friendships? How will they be affected by acceleration?
- Will the student benefit socially and/or emotionally from acceleration?

#### **Types of Acceleration:**

##### **1. Grade-Skipping**

The student is considered to have grade-skipped if he/she is given a grade-level placement ahead of chronological-age peers. Grade-skipping may be done at the beginning of or during the school year.

##### **2. Continuous Progress**

The student is given content progressively as prior content is completed and mastered. The practice is accelerative when the student’s progress exceeds the performance of chronological peers in rate and level. The learning programme at Alcuin allows for continuous progress on an on-going basis.

##### **3. Self-Paced Instruction**

The student proceeds through learning and instructional activities at a self-selected pace. Self-paced instruction is a sub-type of continuous progress acceleration. Self-paced instruction is distinguishable from the more general continuous progress acceleration.

##### **4. Subject-Matter/Partial**

The student is placed in classes with older peers for part of the day in one or more content areas. This may be accomplished by the student either physically moving to a higher-level class for instruction or using materials that are of a higher grade level.