POLICY SECTION: Students

SUB-SECTION: Programs

POLICY NAME: Age-Appropriate Placement: Curriculum/Program Supports

POLICY NO: S.P. 03

Date Approved:	**Date of Next Review:**	**Dates of Amendments:**

Cross References:

A Guide for Effective Assessment and Instruction for All Students, Kindergarten to Grade 12
Education Act, 265 (g): Duties of a Principal
Effective Educational Practices for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders, 2007
Growing Success, 2010: Assessment, Evaluation, and Reporting in Ontario Schools,
Growing Success - The Kindergarten Addendum, 2016
Learning For All, 2013
Ontario Equity and Inclusion Strategy, 2009
Ontario Schools K-12 Policy and Program Requirements, 2016
Ontario Regulation (O Reg.) 181/98: Identification and Placement, Exceptional Pupils
PPM 156: Supporting Transitions for Students with Special Education Needs, 2013
Policy on Accessible Education for Students with Disabilities, 2018, Ontario Human Rights Commission
Special Education in Ontario Kindergarten to Grade12, Policy and Resource Guide, 2017
Supporting English Language Learners: A Practical Guide for Ontario Educators, Grades 1 to 8, 2008
Toronto Catholic District School Board Equity Action Plan, 2018-2021

Appendix: TCDSB Operational Procedures - Age-Appropriate Placement: Curriculum/Program Supports

Purpose:

This policy and the appended Operational Procedures for Age-Appropriate Placement and Curriculum/Program Supports have been developed in accordance with the following:

a) key regulations such as: the Education Act and PPM 156: Supporting Transitions for Students with Special Education Needs;
b) key policy documents such as: the Policy on Accessible Education for Students with Disabilities, 2018; and

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c) other Ontario Ministry of Education resource documents that inform the principles of:
   i) Differentiated Instruction (DI),
   ii) Universal Design for Learning (UDL), and
   iii) assessment, evaluation, and reporting for student success.

Scope and Responsibility:
This policy applies to all Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB) elementary and secondary schools. The Director of Education and the Superintendent of Special Services are responsible for the oversight and implementation of this policy.

Alignment with MYSP:
Living Our Catholic values
Enhancing Public Confidence
Fostering Student Achievement and Well-Being

Policy:
The Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB) is committed to the learning of all students and provides a range of differentiated placements, programs, and interventions to support student success. While the TCDSB adopts the Ministry of Education mandate of placing students in age-appropriate settings (*Ontario Schools, Kindergarten to Grade 12, p.52*), it also commits to providing individualized accommodations to students with abilities/disabilities in order to enable them to have meaningful access to education services.

The accompanying operational procedures identify curriculum and programming considerations that address individualized learning needs. They provide information also regarding the steps to be taken in response to parental requests for the placement of their child in settings that are not age-appropriate.

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Regulations:

1. All accommodation requests pertaining to the grade-level acceleration or retention of students shall be directed to the Principal of the school where the student attends.

2. The operational procedures will outline consistent and transparent processes for:
   i. the consideration of grade-level acceleration and retention requests;
   ii. the communication of the approval or denial of the request to affected parties;
   iii. the implementation of the grade-level acceleration or retention accommodation;
   iv. the roles and responsibilities of the involved parties; and
   v. approaches to student academic and social-emotional development and well-being.

3. In circumstances where a parent requests to have the student grade-level accelerated or retained, each such request shall be reviewed individually by the TCDSB giving consideration to the student's dignity, integration, independence and learning abilities/needs, and other types of accommodations available to enable meaningful access to education.

Definitions:

Acceleration: The term *acceleration* refers to a variety of practices that increase the rate or level of learning for students who learn more quickly or who have more advanced levels of understanding than those expected for students in their grade. Grade-level acceleration involves the placement of a pupil in the grade beyond an age-appropriate placement.

Accommodations: The term *accommodations* refers to the special teaching and assessment strategies, human supports, and/or individualized equipment that are deemed to be necessary for students with Special Education needs to enable them to learn and demonstrate learning. The provision of accommodations in no way alters the curriculum expectations for the grade-level or course.

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Assessment: This refers to the process of gathering information that accurately reflects how well a student is achieving the curriculum expectations in a subject or course. The primary purpose of assessment is to improve student learning. Assessment for the purpose of improving student learning is seen as both "assessment *for* learning" and "assessment *as* learning." Evaluation of student learning is based on "assessment *of* learning" that provides evidence of student achievement at strategic times throughout the grade/course and often at the end of a period of learning.

Differentiated Instruction (DI): An approach to instruction designed to maximize growth by considering the needs of each student at his or her current stage of development and offering that student a learning experience that responds to his or her individual needs.

Equity: A condition or state of fair, inclusive, and respectful treatment of all people. Equity does not mean treating people the same without regard for individual differences (*Ontario Equity and Inclusion Strategy, 2009*).

Individual Education Plan (IEP): A written plan describing the Special Education program and/or services required by a particular student, including a record of the particular accommodations needed to help the student achieve his/her learning expectations. An IEP must be developed for a student who has been identified as exceptional by an Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC), and may also be developed for a student who has Special Education needs but has not been identified as exceptional. An IEP is a working document that identifies learning expectations that may be modified from or alternative to the expectations given in the curriculum policy document for the appropriate grade and subject or course. It outlines the specific knowledge and skills to be assessed and evaluated for the purpose of reporting student achievement. (*Learning for All, 2013, p.64-65*).

Inquiry-Based Learning: The inquiry process involves open-ended learning experiences that are inclusive of all students and offer students real choices and opportunities to develop their own voice. Educators design the inquiry process to respond closely and accurately to individual students' learning needs.

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Modifications: The term *modifications* refers to changes made in the grade-level expectations for a subject or course in order to meet a student's learning needs. These changes may involve developing expectations that reflect knowledge and skills required in the curriculum for a different grade level and/or increasing or decreasing the number and/or complexity of the regular grade-level curriculum expectations.

Readiness: This does *not* refer to the student's general ability level, but to the current knowledge, understanding, and skill level a student has in relation to a particular sequence of learning. Some students may require remediation or modified expectations; others may need learning concept extensions or opportunities for independent study.

Retention: This refers to withholding the advancement of a pupil to the next age-appropriate grade-level; the repeat of the current grade placement; or to the placement of a pupil in a grade below an age-appropriate placement.

Tiered Approach: The "tiered" approach to prevention and intervention is a systematic approach to providing high-quality, evidence-based assessment and instruction and appropriate interventions that respond to students' individual needs.

Universal Design for Learning (UDL): Is an approach utilized by educators to ensure that teaching strategies, pedagogical materials and tools appropriately respond to the special needs of a specific student or group of students, and can also be useful for *all* students. Examples include, but are not limited to, various types of assistive technology, such as speech-to-text software, organizational software, and interactive whiteboards, enable students who have special education needs to access the curriculum. (*Learning for All, 2013, p.13).*

Evaluation and Metrics:
The effectiveness of the policy will be determined by measuring the following:

1. Data will be gathered annually regarding the number of requests for students to be grade-level accelerated or retained; as well as approvals, and denials.

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2. This policy shall be reviewed on a regular basis (as needed), but no less than every five years.