

## THE NEW ZEALAND CURRICULUM NATIONAL STANDARDS:

### Relationship between Ministry Classification (Funding Year Level), School Classification (Student Year Level) and National Standard of Reference

In Years 1-8, the *Funding Year Level* (*Ministry Classification* for funding purposes) and the *Student Year Level* (*School Classification* for teaching and learning purposes) may differ for some students. The question has arisen as to which 'year level' is the appropriate 'year level' to use when considering and reporting achievement and progress in relation to National Standards.

#### MINISTRY CLASSIFICATION, SCHOOL CLASSIFICATION and NZC NATIONAL STANDARDS

This potential difference between the *Funding Year Level* (*Ministry Classification* for funding purposes) and the *Student Year Level* (*School Classification* for teaching and learning purposes) for a student stems from a difference in intent of the two types of classification. The *Funding Year Level* must be clearly prescribed by the Ministry to ensure fairness in funding across the system and avoid ambiguity across schools. The *Student Year Level* on the other hand, is decided by schools to ensure each student is in the year level appropriate to their individual social and learning needs.

#### **Ministry Classification - Funding Year Level**

The *Funding Year Level* (previously called MOE Year Level or Year of Schooling) goes from Year 0 to Year 15. This Ministry Classification of year level for funding purposes has been determined by the Ministry as follows:

- New entrants starting before 1 July were in Year 1 and new entrants starting after 1 July were in Year 0.
- Every January the year levels are incremented by 1.
- The year level at the start of intermediate schooling is set to 7.
- The year level at the start of secondary schooling is set to 9.

To ensure fairness and avoid ambiguity in relation to funding entitlements, this classification applies to all students in all schools. It cannot be reset by the school. It applies for funding purposes regardless of the year level at which the school classifies any given student for teaching and learning purposes. For more information, go to:

<http://www.minedu.govt.nz/NZEducation/EducationPolicies/Schools/SchoolOperations/ENROLAndEnrolment/InformationSchoolUsers/SchoolUserFAQs/YearLevelsFAQs.aspx>

#### **School Classification – Year Level for Teaching and Learning Purposes**

School Classification of year level usually relates to a student's year level cohort. This reflects the way in which the student has been grouped within the school, by class, for teaching and learning purposes. For example, if a student is in a Year 5 class at school, that student is considered to be a Year 5 student.

It is generally expected that at age 5, most students will commence in Year 1 and move through to Year 8, one year at a time. This is consistent with the *social promotion* model practiced in many New Zealand schools. However, this is not always the case. For example, because children are eligible to attend school from their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday onwards, school entry can occur at any time during the year. This means that some students spend *less than* 4 terms (1 school year equivalent) in Year 1 while others spend *more than* 4 terms (1 school year equivalent) in Year 1. This influences their *School Classification*.

It is the prerogative of each school to make a decision, on an individual student basis, about whether late entry students (those who turn 5 after the beginning of the school year) should go into Year 2 (with a School Classification of Year 2) in the following year or continue for a further year in Year 1 (with a School Classification of year 1).

Generally speaking, schools make decisions about *School Classification* based on a number of factors including, time since school entry, progress being made in relation to expected performance, and social factors. Sometimes schools have a "cut-off" date similar to, but not necessarily the same as, the 1 July

*Funding Year Level* date but the application of that 'cut-off, in the case of *School Classification* is usually also influenced by a knowledge of the student and what is considered appropriate given other factors.

### **The New Zealand Curriculum (NZC) National Standards**

The *New Zealand Curriculum* National Standards are being implemented as one component of a wider strategy aimed at raising student achievement.

The standards are descriptions of the literacy and numeracy knowledge, skills and understanding needed to access and meet the demands of the NZC across all learning areas. Like the achievement levels of the NZC from which they are derived, they are broad descriptions. Like the corresponding achievement levels, they are a nationally consistent guide to illustrate what all students should be aiming for, or beyond, as they move through years 1-8. However, the standards have more time specificity than the achievement levels having been linked to time at school (up to 3 years) and year level (years 4-8).

At the same time, the implementation of National Standards is underpinned by a strong focus on assessment for learning principles and practice. Consistent with this is an emphasis on: reciprocal learning, the use of professional judgements (informed by a range of evidence drawn from multiple sources) to decide achievement and progress and respond appropriately, and responsiveness to individual student context while mindful of the wider context as illustrated by the NZC National Standards.

### APPROPRIATE YEAR LEVEL - NZC NATIONAL STANDARDS

Given that, in Years 1-8, the *Funding Year Level* (Ministry Classification) and the *Student Year Level* (School Classification) may differ for some students, this raises the question: Which 'year level' is the appropriate 'year level' to use when considering and reporting achievement and progress in relation to the *NZC National Standards*?

Unlike the *Funding Year Levels* (Ministry Classification), both the *Student Year levels* (School Classification) and the *NZC National Standards* are concerned with individual student context for teaching and learning purposes (albeit within a wider national framework guided by the NZC). It follows that, when considering student achievement and progress in relation to the NZC National Standards, schools should use the *Student Year level* (School Classification) to decide the appropriate National Standard.

Illustrated in the two scenarios below are examples of possible situations where:

- *Funding Year Level* (Ministry Classification) and *Student Year Level* (School Classification) differ, and
- what this means for final judgments about achievement and progress in relation to an *appropriate National Standard*.

#### **Scenario 1: Student turns 5 and commences school in June 2010 and remains in Year 1 in 2011**

Calendar Year	Funding Year Level (Ministry Classification)	Student Year level (School Classification)	Appropriate NZC National Standard (final judgment)
<b>2010 (June onwards)</b>	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>New Entrants-Year 1</b>	
<i>After considering relevant factors e.g. time since school entry, progress being made in relation to expected performance, and social factors, school makes decision that student should remain in Year 1 in the following year</i>			
<b>2011</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>'after 1 year' at school</b>
<b>2012</b>	<b>Year 3</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>'after 2 years' at school</b>
<b>2013</b>	<b>Year 4</b>	<b>Year 3</b>	<b>'after 3 years' at school</b>
<b>2014</b>	<b>Year 5</b>	<b>Year 4</b>	<b>'end of year 4'</b>
<b>2015</b>	<b>Year 6</b>	<b>Year 5</b>	<b>'end of year 5'</b>
<b>2016</b>	<b>Year 7</b>	<b>Year 6</b>	<b>'end of year 6'</b>
<b>2017</b>	<b>Year 7</b>	<b>Year 7</b>	<b>'end of year 7'</b>
<b>2018</b>	<b>Year 8</b>	<b>Year 8</b>	<b>'end of year 8'</b>

**Scenario 2: Student turns 5 and commences school in July 2010 and proceeds into Year 2 in 2011**

Calendar Year	Funding Year Level (Ministry Classification)	Student Year level (School Classification)	Appropriate NZC National Standard (final judgement)
2010 (July onwards)	Year 0	New Entrants-Year 1	
<i>After considering relevant factors e.g. time since school entry, progress being made in relation to expected performance, and social factors, school makes decision that student should move to Year 2 in the following year</i>			
2011	Year 1	Year 2	'after 1 year at school'
2012	Year 2	Year 3	'after 2 years at school'
2013	Year 3	Year 4	'after 3 years at school' & 'end of year 4'
2014	Year 4	Year 5	'end of year 5'
2015	Year 5	Year 6	'end of year 6'
2016	Year 7	Year 7	'end of year 7'
2017	Year 8	Year 8	'end of year 8'

In **Scenario 1**, because the student spends more than 4 terms in year 1, a wider than usual gap occurs between the final 'after 3 years at school' OTJ (Overall Teacher Judgment) and the 'end of year 4' OTJ.

In the case of **Scenario 2**, there is a smaller than usual gap between these two final OTJs with both the final 'after 3 years at school' OTJ and final 'end of 4 years' OTJ occurring in the same school year (School Classification, Year 4).

For further guidelines in relation to this 'gap' effect and 'concertina' effect, and how this could work, in practice, so that interim 'progress towards' judgement (s) and final OTJ's occur at an appropriate time (approximately) please see: *The New Zealand Curriculum National Standards:*

*Variation in school entry dates - Implications for timing of overall teacher judgments (OTJs) and reporting.*