



Child repeating a year policy

Date effective from From 12th February 2025

Signed, Head Teacher Gary Price

Signed, Chair of Governors David Savage

Date approved by Governing Body 11th February 2025

Date of next review 11th February 2030

Child repeating a year guidelines

Introduction

Since repeating a year rarely happens in the UK, there is not a set national process, therefore the criteria and guidelines for this are decided locally at school. However, there is some broad DfE guidance to consider.

Things to consider when making a decision:

Exceptional circumstances that might determine placement out of year

Placement outside the child's chronological year group should be highly exceptional - exceptional circumstances must prevail and these might include:

- Complex medical conditions that have impacted on the pupil's access to education.
- Other circumstances, such as multiple changes in placements or travel that have impacted on the pupil's access to education.
- Pupils who have experienced trauma e.g. refugees.
- Pupils with special educational needs.
- Children/young people in care or on the edge of care.

If the child has an Education, Health and Care Plan, the decision to place a child outside their chronological year group lies with the Local Authority.

General principles to be followed

No single criterion will determine the decision on placement out of year as all circumstances need to be taken into account. In particular, the following points should be considered:

- Any request will be considered on an individual basis
- A person-centred approach will be adopted when making decisions to ensure the pupil's and parents' voice is heard. No decision should be taken unless parents/carers give their informed consent to it.
- The Ashton Checklist** Appendix 1 below will be used to inform any decision.
- The Headteacher should seek the views of any professionals involved (e.g. Educational Psychologist, Educational Welfare Officer, Social Worker) before coming to any decision.
- The potential difficulties (listed below) must also be discussed and considered by all parties involved before a decision is reached.
- In any decision the local secondary school would need to be consulted regarding any deferred entry to ensure this was possible.
- In all cases the decision must be in the long-term interests of the pupil.
- In any decision there would need to be agreement by all parties - the parents, the child, the

current class teacher, any outside professionals involved and the Headteacher. The decision to place a pupil outside their chronological year group would then need school governing body approval. Any decision must be approved by at least two school governors.

- This would be reviewed at least annually to ensure the retention is still appropriate.

Potential difficulties to be considered

This general advice is offered against the background of potential difficulties, which are associated with placing a pupil out of year.

- The school may not have space in another year group without breaching infant class-size regulations.
- Placing the pupil in another year group may deny some other child a place at that school.
- As he or she matures, the pupil may realise that the rest of the class are of a different age, causing adverse emotional impact.
- The pupil may begin puberty at a different time from their classmates, which could be confusing for him or her.
- The pupil is eligible to leave school at 16, and, therefore, if he or she has been held back a year, may leave without completing external examinations.
- Other interventions may be more appropriate in the long-term: placement outside the chronological year group could simply be delaying that provision.
- The evidence suggests that placing pupils in a different year group rarely makes a positive difference and can have negative long-term effects.
- As UNESCO notes*** pupils have a right to be educated with their peers.

Some relevant research

Research indicates placing a child outside their chronological year group is not usually beneficial to the individual child. Because of this, differentiation of the curriculum should normally be used rather than placing the child with a younger cohort.

Some extracts to be noted from a variety of research found in:

The Evidence Base - Evidence from a recent Literature Review by Trainee Educational Psychologist September 2016 gives clarity in terms of the evidence. The UNESCO document also provides an evidence base.

‘Back-classed!’ – by Amalia Dirnu Trainee EP, Literature Review Sep 2016

- Main conclusion: Retention does not serve to improve academic achievement
- Main conclusion: Retention does lead to a higher school dropout rate

A review study of the research literature

In 2009, Allan, Chen, Willson and Hughes carried out a review of the research literature found in USA by

critically evaluating the quality of the research available on grade retention. The most relevant conclusions to the issue presently addressed are summarised below:

- Over the years, the effects become more negative. The idea that retained children experience a short-term boost to their achievement, relative to their younger, same-age classmates, an advantage which is lost over the ensuing years, is reinforced.
- The children repeating a year most often do not receive further educational support, back-classing being considered the intervention, which leads to a repeat of the prior years' experience (Picklo and Christenson, 2005). This conclusion is also supported by research carried out by Schnurr, Kundert and Nickerson, 2009, and Peterson and Hughes, 2011).
- Also very important is the study looking at the level of educational support offered to pupils before and after being held back a year which found that those pupils that were retained receive less help during their pre-retention year, & that this did not increase in the repeat year.
- If children are reported by parent, peer or teacher of conduct problems then less of a positive effect of retention (Wu, W. et al. 2008). If children are retained because of their weak social and behaviour skills then retention does not help with this (Leckrone and Griffith, 2006).
- Where there are positive relationships between teachers and children, and the child is resilient, then positive effects of retention are observed (Wu, W. et al. 2008)

This has been taken from Shropshire Council 'General advice for mainstream schools to support decision making when considering teaching pupils outside their natural cohort'. Draft document prepared for CPG 08/03/2017- consultation. Authors - Poppy Chandler, Julia Dean, Carol Sneddon.

***<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0009/000984/098427eo.pdf>

APPENDIX 1

Ashton Checklist**

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All these criteria should be satisfied before placing a child outside their chronological year group:

Child/ YP _____ Today's Date _____

Checklist filled in by _____

School, parents, child and involved professionals all feel that this placement would substantially increase the probability of the child's successful inclusion in mainstream school.	
This decision is not being made in order to delay other interventions, such as placement into a different school.	
This decision is not being made due to difficulties in making appropriately differentiated provision in the class to which the child should normally transfer.	
The placement would not breach infant class size regulations.	

Consideration has been given to the rights of other children who might otherwise take that place.	
Consideration has been given to the long-term emotional and social impact of this placement.	
Consideration has been given to the likely future placements for the child, e.g. returning to their own year group or remaining with the new year group.	
There has been a discussion with parents about likely future issues, e.g. leaving school without completing Key Stage 4.	
All involved feel that the child will be able to learn more from the children in the proposed year group than by being around children of their own age group.	
The child will have a peer group in their new class, which is likely to continue to be somewhere that the child can 'fit in' as the cohort matures.	
The plan for the child includes interventions to address their particular needs, in addition to placement with a different year group.	

About this Checklist Rebecca Ashton and Colleagues in Blackburn LA evolved this checklist. It is being increasingly used by other Local Authorities who report that it is extremely useful. It comes with a warning.

Ticking all the boxes is NOT an indication that a child should be placed out of year. It is merely an indication that such a course should be considered.

Placement outside the child's chronological year group should be highly exceptional.