



Department for Children, Adults and Health

1. It is the general view of South Gloucestershire Council that all children and young people will complete their primary and secondary education in school year groups according to their chronological age. It is also the view of the Local Authority that moving pupils into older or younger year groups is generally not in their best educational, social or emotional interests. This includes either early or late admission to primary school or early or late transfer to secondary school.
2. The National Curriculum sets out a clear, full and statutory entitlement to learning for all pupils. In addition, schools in South Gloucestershire deliver a local offer which supports access to high quality differentiated education. This should ensure that a pupil's curricular needs are met without either early or delayed transfer to the next phase of schooling other than in exceptional circumstances.
3. It is for individual admission authorities to consider requests for placement out of the chronological age group. South Gloucestershire Council is the admission authority for community and voluntary controlled schools. The governing body is the admission authority for foundation and voluntary aided schools and the academy trust is the admission authority for academies and free schools.

Delayed Admission for a Child without an Education Health and Care Plan (formerly a Statement of Special Educational Needs)

1. Children are able to attend school from the beginning of the school year in which they become five but they do not have to be in full time education until the term following their fifth birthday. Parents and carers wishing to defer their child's admission to a South Gloucestershire school to the term following the child's fifth birthday are required to indicate at the time they accept a school place. Offered places will not be reserved beyond the term after the child's fifth birthday nor beyond the academic year for which the original application was accepted.
2. Summer born children (children born from the beginning of April to the end of August) reach compulsory school age in the September following their fifth birthday. If a parents/carer wishes for their summer born child(ren) to start school in the reception year group in the September following their fifth birthday, the relevant admission authority will make a decision based on the circumstance of the individual case. In considering the individual case, the factors considered may include:-
 - in the case of children born prematurely, the fact that they may have naturally fallen into the lower age group if they had been born on their expected date of birth;
 - whether delayed social, emotional, cognitive or physical development is adversely affecting their readiness for school;
 - whether they have previously been educated outside their normal age group.

In addition, South Gloucestershire Council will consider the views of the Head Teacher of the school(s) concerned to ensure that any decision made will take account of the views of an education professional who will be involved in educating the child. South Gloucestershire Council may also take advice from any other relevant professional(s), for example, the views of staff in an early years setting.

3. For other applications for a delayed entry, for example a child arriving in South Gloucestershire from overseas who has not experienced formal education, a placement out of year will be considered on an individual basis together with any supporting documentation.
4. It is **essential** to note that, for a child without an Education Health and Care Plan (formerly a Statement of Special Educational Needs) that placement out of year will have to be considered afresh at each stage of transfer of school as the decision on the appropriateness of the transfer/placement rests with the receiving admission authority. Admission authorities will make decisions on the basis of the circumstances of each case. Parents/carers need to fully understand that this will mean that re-consideration will not only have to take place at the normal transfer time, for example transfer to secondary school, but also at any stage where a change of school is sought, for example, due to a house move.
5. Children placed in secondary school in a year group below their chronological age will reach statutory school leaving age before completing Key Stage 4 courses. Parents and carers would generally be expected to support their child's continuing school attendance beyond the statutory school leaving date in order to ensure completion of Key Stage 4.

Parents and carers need to fully understand that, where an individual admission authority has indicated their willingness to accept a child placed out of year group, this will not guarantee a place at the preferred school as any application will be considered against the published admission criteria.

Accelerated Admission for a Child

1. In exceptional circumstances, a child may be accelerated by a year if there is an expressed and identified educational need. Applications for acceleration will be considered against the following criteria:-
 - the parent (and child) request the change;
 - the views of the Head Teacher of the school(s) concerned to ensure that any decision made will take account of an education professional who will be involved in educating the child;
 - educational reports indicate that the pupil is working at a level equal to that of the most able pupils in the year ahead, and is physically and socially mature for his/her age.

South Gloucestershire Council may also take advice from any other relevant professional(s), for example, the views of staff in an early years setting.

2. Placement out of year will have to be considered afresh at each stage of transfer of school. However, once accelerated by a year, it can be difficult for a child to return to their chronological age group. As a child is not legally able to leave school until sixteen years of age, it will be necessary to undertake further studies in school after completing Key Stage 4 education.

Requests to Repeat a Year of Education

Requests to repeat a year of education will be considered by the relevant admission authority for the school. South Gloucestershire Council is the admission authority for community and voluntary controlled schools. The governing body is the admission authority for foundation and voluntary aided schools and the academy trust is the admission authority for academies and free schools.

It is the general view that all children and young people should be educated with children and young people of the same chronological age.

International and UK based research in this area has shown that, although short term academic gains can be noted, in the longer term, retained children generally continue to struggle academically. Additionally, retention has shown to have a negative impact on social and emotional development due to issues associated with feelings of failure, disaffection, early school drop out, social isolation and teasing from peers. Therefore, retention is an ineffective intervention in ameliorating Special Educational Needs.

There may however, be instances where a request is made for a child to repeat a year at the same school, for example, where a child or young person has had a period of illness leading to a significant absence from school and it is felt that a repeat of the curriculum at that stage would be beneficial.

If, at a later stage, the child or young person transfers to another school, the year group in which the child or young person is to be placed will be considered afresh by the relevant admission authority.

(Advice and guidance notes for schools considering requests for retention are attached at **Appendix A**)

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RETENTION - ADVICE AND GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOLS

The implications for a pupil should be considered in full when considering retention. These are as follows:-

- Pupils are rarely uniformly delayed in their intellectual development. Therefore, areas of strength are at risk of not receiving sufficient stimulation as a result of retention.
- Physical, emotional and social expectations are likely to be inappropriate.
- Delayed transfer does not guarantee an appropriate curriculum experience. Issues of differentiation, challenge, level and pace still need to be addressed.
- In cases where pupils have significant learning difficulties (such as Down Syndrome or other congenital conditions), retention will not have the effect of providing an environment where the pupil's special needs will be less. Issues of differentiation and support will remain paramount.
- Delaying a pupil's admission to school until statutory school age may mean that the pupil would start in Year 1 and not Reception. A child of statutory school age would be of an age where he or she should be starting the National Curriculum.
- Places which are allocated for admission in September are not held open beyond the academic year for which the original application was accepted or beyond the term after the child's fifth birthday. Therefore, it is possible that the retained pupil may not gain a place in Reception or Year 1 the following year, especially in very popular schools which are often oversubscribed.
- Summer born pupils tend to show lower levels of achievement and maturity, which should be addressed within the class group through normal curriculum differentiation.
- Phase transfers, SATs, GCSEs and school leaving are reached a year or more late.
- The consequences of attempting to "make up" a year are invariably very negative for the pupil. This also makes the retained pupil vulnerable to missing a statutory right of a national curriculum year programme of work.
- Some secondary schools may insist that retained pupils are placed back into their chronological year group, placing pupils in Year 8 rather than Year 7 on entry to the school.
- As the pupil matures, he or she may realise that the rest of the class is of a different age, causing emotional impact.
- The pupil may begin puberty at a different time to their classmates, which could be confusing for the retained pupil.
- The retained pupil is eligible to leave school a year early, without having completed the course they were working towards.

The implications for a school when considering retention are as follows:-

- There can be implications for admissions when the next year is oversubscribed. This can present challenges to schools when planning numbers for the following academic year.
- In cases when a pupil is retained in Key Stage 1, class sizes are restricted to 30 pupils with one teacher. Exceeding this number may necessitate the school taking relevant measures to comply with infant class size legislation, for example, the school may need to employ an additional teacher.
- Retained pupils, especially in KS1 may “block” the admission of a pupil due to be admitted and for whom placement may be appropriate or necessary.
- There is also a difficulty about the legal requirement of a Published Admission Number (PAN) which in law reflects the minimum number of pupils that should enter into school or transfer to schools within the relevant age range. The PAN is cohort related. If a reception class has a PAN of 30 and can only admit 29 because a pupil is retained in Year R, this in effect reduces the number of places available for new applicants. The maximum class size of 30 for KS1 prevents a class of 31 being created (other than for permitted exceptions to infant class size regulations).
- In schools where there has been a practice of retention, staff should be alert to the fact that this may reflect issues in the school around curriculum differentiation or extension/enrichment.
- In the case of pupils with Education Health and Care Plans (formerly Statements of Special Educational Needs), schools are unable to unilaterally change the provision as determined by the Local Authority. Therefore, it would be the Local Authority and not the school that takes the decision to retain a pupil.

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