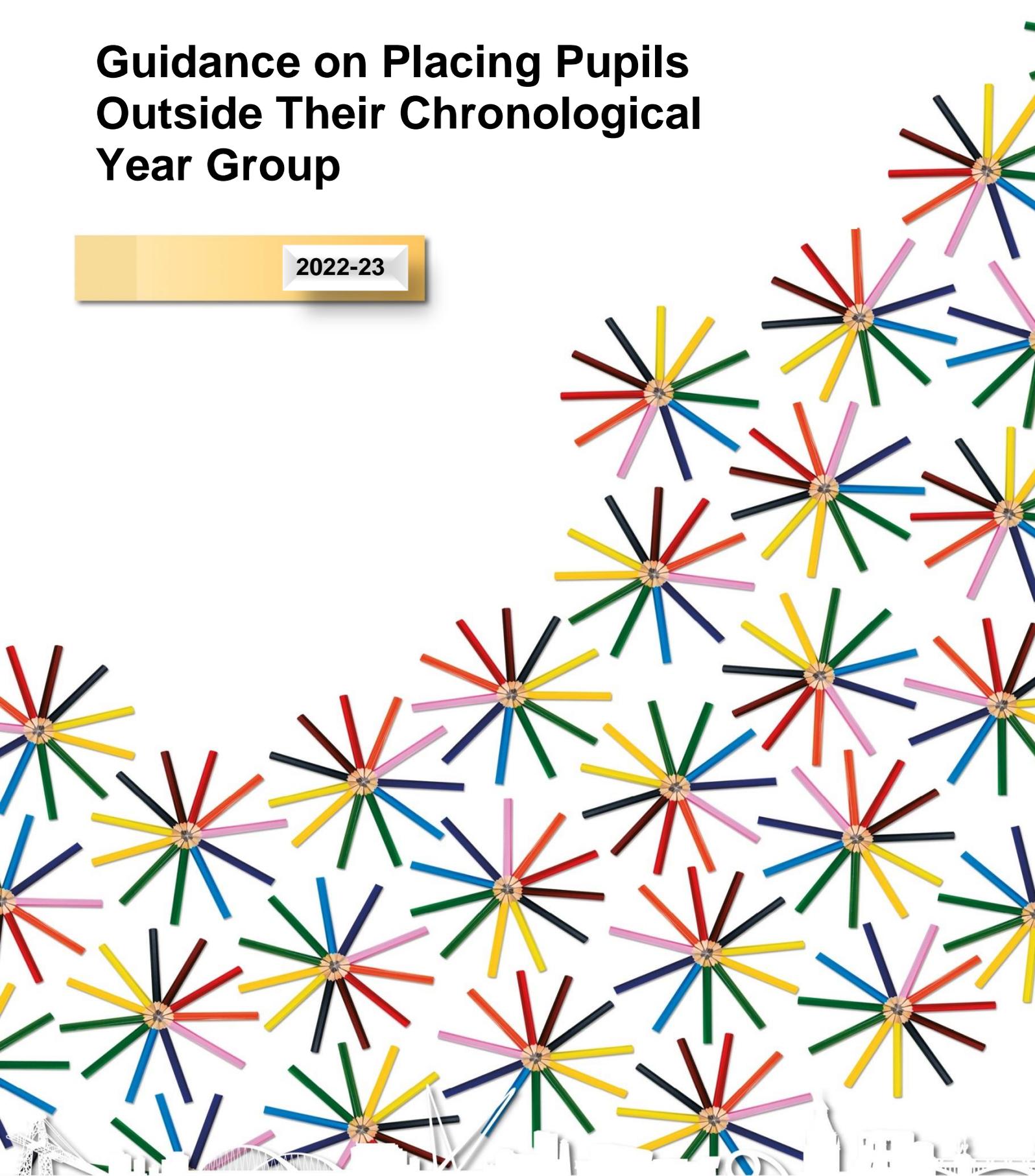


Guidance on Placing Pupils Outside Their Chronological Year Group

2022-23



Guidance on Placing Pupils Outside Their Chronological Year Group

Newport City Council Local Authority's Position Statement

Introduction

In Newport, a decision to place a pupil outside of their same age school year group should only be made following careful consideration and must be agreed by the Out of Chronological Year Group (OCYG) panel which will usually consist of the ALN Manager, School Admissions Officer and Principal Educational Psychologist (EP)/ Lead EP.

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance to schools and parents who are considering placing a pupil in a younger year group than that of their same age peers. For instance, this might involve placing a Year 3 pupil in a Year 2 class. **The view of Newport City Council is that this should be a very rare occurrence as the expectation is that all children with identified learning needs should be provided with a differentiated curriculum within their age-appropriate year group. This is in line with Welsh Government Policy.**

A decision to educate pupils outside of their chronological age should be taken only after school, parents and LA officers have carefully considered the individual pupil's circumstances and agreed what such an arrangement should achieve. The decision should also give appropriate weighting to the pupil's views. All other possible avenues will need to have been explored. The case will be considered on what is in the best interests of the child/young person and after examining all the evidence the decision will need to be approved by the OCYG Panel.

Please note that this guidance is related to individual pupils who are placed with a class of a different age group (i.e., younger) rather than a situation where pupils are placed, alongside their peers in mixed-age classes. Similarly, arranging for an individual pupil or group of pupils to join a younger class for specific activities or subject areas, where that is deemed more suitable on educational grounds, could be considered. Such arrangements are matters for the school to decide, following consultation with the parents, but it must be ensured that the pupil continues to spend the majority of his/her time learning and playing alongside their same-age peers.



The underlying principle for this document is that:

Every school is responsible for meeting the needs of the individual pupils through an appropriately differentiated curriculum. Schools should be ensuring that they are meeting the needs of all their pupils through appropriate differentiation and scaffolding of activities and tasks where this is required within the day-to-day context of their classrooms. This is in line with the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 and Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021.

Furthermore, the section for the Welsh Government's School Admissions Code, Statutory Code (July 2013) which relates to an admission outside the normal age group is reproduced in the Appendix of this guidance. This is pertinent when pupils start or move schools.

Inclusive practice and evidence-based approaches

Inclusive practices ensure a child has experiences where they are able to learn, achieve and participate fully in school life. This approach requires a whole school ethos where all members of the school community have a positive attitude towards children with additional needs and a willingness to adapt approaches to ensure all children are included. As such, an essential feature of our current education system should ensure that pupils experience a challenging, stimulating and varied curriculum that takes into account their individual needs.

Nevertheless, there are occasions where parents and schools think that educating children with younger pupils is helpful, usually because of significant developmental delay and poor academic progress. However, this is not borne out by the research as many studies have shown that despite some short-term positive outcomes, 'retention' has many long term negative outcomes with little or no benefits for academic or social progress or development.

What does the research say?

Most of the work on 'retention' has been carried out in the United States. A wide body of evidence has been published to highlight the impact of retention, examples of which are shown below:

- One study investigated academic and social improvement, but the results indicate that whilst there were some advantages to retention in the area of maths, no positive effects were seen in the areas of behaviour or literacy. Also, it was noted that the improvements in maths did not last and within two years the gains made by the pupils had fallen to the level of the comparison group.
- Another meta-analysis examined 63 studies into grade (i.e., school year) retention and found that 54 highlighted negative impacts on the students' social and academic progress. Whilst there were 9 studies that reported positive, short-term achievement effects, the benefits were shown to diminish over time and disappear in later years.
- Research by the National Association of School Psychologists found that the practice of retaining children had a negative impact on reading, maths and language development.



- Another study analysed the results of over 931 pieces of research which considered influences on achievement. Of 150 factors or strategies considered, retention was ranked as the 148th (above television and mobility) and was considered to have negative effects.
- One study found that children who were held back experienced lower self-esteem, peer ridicule, labelling and held a belief that retention was a form of punishment
- There is evidence to suggest that pupils who have been held back are more at risk of leaving school early and/or having mental health difficulties.
- More boys than girls are retained.

For more detailed information, see full references in appendix.

Possible implications of placing pupils in a younger year group:

- Pupils are not usually delayed in all aspects of their development so that areas of strength may be at risk of not receiving appropriate stimulation.
- As the pupil matures, he or she may realise that the rest of the class are of a different age. This can affect the child emotionally in a negative way.
- The pupil may begin puberty at an earlier time from their classmates. This could be very difficult for young people when the majority of their peers are not going through the same changes.
- The pupil may leave school at 16 without completing the Key Stage 4 curriculum. Pupils in Wales can leave school on the last Friday of June in the year in which they will have reached their 16th birthday by August 31st.
- Future employers may regard this in negative light
- Other interventions may be more appropriate in the long term. Placement outside the chronological year group could simply be delaying a decision to consider alternative strategies or provision.
- Future attempts to re-join an age-appropriate year group would involve the pupil missing a year of study. This would present a particular challenge to a pupil who has developed more slowly than pupils of the same age and could result in damage to self-esteem and confidence.

General Principles for Newport:

- Educating pupils in the year below will be a **very exceptional** occurrence. At present, Newport provides a spectrum of support through advisory services and specialist placements to support pupils who have Additional Learning Needs, which should be considered in the first instance.
- A pupil should **not** be retained by more than one National Curriculum year.
- In no case should pupils be retained in a year group solely to avoid/defer other decisions e.g., about transition to a further key stage, or a special schools or special provision



Possible exceptions that may be considered by the OCYG Panel:

- Where a child is born prematurely and has significant developmental delay, on the first admission to school the OCYG panel could consider admitting the child to the year group where the Expected Due Date (EDD) falls, rather than the chronological age.
- Where a child/young person has been absent from school for a significant amount of time due to physical health needs resulting in missing key educational opportunities.
- Where a child/young person has experienced significant psychological trauma and/or mental health difficulties that has significantly prevented them accessing the curriculum
- Where a child/young person has moved school's mid-way through GCSE syllabus so has missed a substantial part of the curriculum that will be formally examined.

Information required for a Parental request for out of year group placement when child is moving into a Newport School from a different LA or country

Where a child is moving into a Newport school from a different Local Authority or country, and the parents are seeking a placement in a year group one year below their chronological age, the duty is on the parents to request this and provide the documentation to support this request. This may include:

- Perceived benefits for the child/ young person
- Information from previous educational establishments attended and evidence of strategies used including recommendations made by relevant professionals
- All national curriculum assessment results and standardised test results
- Evidence of medical needs (if relevant)
- Reports from any professionals involved
- The pupil's views
- A signed declaration that the parents have read and considered the advice in this position statement



Information required for a Parental request for an out of year group placement when a child attends a Newport School

Where a child is in a Newport school, and the parents are considering requesting that their child repeat a year, it is expected that parents will have worked closely with the child/ young person's current school to discuss their concerns and have thoroughly explored with the school all other avenues to support their child. This should take place over a period of time. The reason for this is to avoid the negative impact of being educated outside their chronological year, as detailed previously. The possible exceptions that may be considered by the OCYG Panel, detailed previously, remain the same.

Flow Chart summarising process:

Parental OOCYG request received by School Admissions (Day 1)

School Admissions to send OOCYG request to Principal EP by Day 3 and request relevant school paperwork from parent requesting that school send any information to LA email address: inclusion.enquiries@newport.gov.uk

Cluster EP to contact parents, discuss request and establish if parent wants to proceed

If parent wants to proceed, EP to identify best way for the pupil to share their views (if appropriate).

Cluster EP to summarise conversation with parent and forward to school admission team.

OCYG Panel Meeting will be convened by Day 11. They will make a decision based on evidence presented and this will be ratified by Assistant Head of Education – Inclusion. Parents will then be informed of this decision.

Parents right to appeal/ make a complaint:

If it is decided that there are grounds to consider an 'out of year application', parents who are refused an application for a place at a school have a statutory right of appeal. However, there is no right of appeal if a place has been offered but not in the desired year group. They may, however, make a complaint, following the Local Authority's published complaints procedure.

References:

Abidin, R.R., Golladay, W.M. and Howerton, A.L. (1971) Elementary school retention: an unjustifiable, discriminatory and noxious education policy. *Journal of School Psychology* 9, pp.410-417

Biegler, C.D. and Green, V.P. (1993) Grade Retention: A current issues. *Early Child Development and Care* 84 pp.117-122

Byrnes D.A. (1980) Attitudes of students, parents and educators, toward repeating a grade, in Dawson, P. (1998) *A Primer of Student Grade Retention: What the research says*. NASP Communique 26 (8)



Caprate, F. Can Retention be Good for a Student?

Eide, E.R, and Showalter, M.H. (2001) The effect of grade retention of educational and labor market outcomes. *Economics of Education Review* 20 pp.563-576

Jimerson, S. (1999) On the failure of Failure: Examining the Association Between early Grade Retention and Educational and Employment Outcomes During Late Adolescence. *Journal of School Psychology* 37 (3) pp. 243-272

Nagin, D.S., Pagani, L., Tremblay, R.E., and Vitarob, F (2003) Life course turning points: the effect of grade retention on physical aggression. *Development and Psychopathology*, 14 343-361

National Association of School Psychologists (2003) Position Statement on Student Grade Retention and Social Promotion.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation – The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Educational Needs Education.

Appendix:

WELSH GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS ADMISSIONS CODE STATUTORY CODE

Statutory code document no 005/2013

Admission outside the normal age group

3.30 Although most children will be admitted to a school with their own chronological age group, from time to time parents seek places outside their normal age group for gifted and talented children, or those who have experienced problems or missed part of a year, often due to ill health. While it would not normally be appropriate for a child to be placed in a year group that is not concurrent with their chronological age, admissions authorities **should** consider these requests carefully and make decisions on the basis on the circumstances of each case and in consultation with the parents and the school, and specifically in relation to what is most beneficial to the child. Due regard **should** also be given to the Educational Psychologist's report where available, and clear reasons ascertainable for such a decision to be made.

3.31 If it is decided that there are grounds to consider an 'out of year' application, parents refused an application for a place at a school have a statutory right of appeal. However, there is no right of appeal if a place has been offered but not in the desired year group.

NB Voluntary Aided schools should also follow the Welsh Government guidance stated above.



Date of issue: January 2022
To be reviewed in: January 2023
To be reviewed by: Principle Educational Psychologist

