

# Out of Cohort?

Guidance on educating children out of  
their chronological cohort

Last Updated – July 2023

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## Introduction:

- 1 The purpose of this policy paper is to provide best practice guidelines in respect of pupils being educated in a year group different to that of their normal age group – Normal age group means the year group the child would have been in had they entered school in the September following their 4<sup>th</sup> birthday. Expectations of good practice are based upon the belief that it is in the child's best interests to be educated alongside their age equivalent peers with an appropriate level of differentiation. The responsibility for addressing individual needs lies with the school through an appropriate differentiated/enriched curriculum.
- 2 It should only be necessary in very exceptional circumstances for a pupil to be moved from their chronological age group. In no instance should this be more than a single National Curriculum year.
- 3 A child will be placed in their year group accordingly to their date of birth. We do not take into account the varying educational school systems when moving from another country or abroad.
- 4 Within City of York Local Authority, once an out of cohort is agreed with our Admissions Team, this is maintained until the end of Year 11 of the new year group.

## A Principles of Inclusive Practice:

- 1 Inclusion is about the quality of children's experiences; how they are helped to learn, achieve and participate fully in the life of the school. It requires positive attitudes towards children who have difficulties in school, responsiveness to individual needs and a willingness amongst all staff to play their part.

- 2 The placement of a child or young person out of their normal year group should not be viewed as a routinely appropriate strategy for meeting a pupil's needs.
- 3 The principles behind educational inclusion stress the importance of all pupils being educated alongside their peers. The responsibility for addressing individual needs lies with the school through an appropriately differentiated curriculum. Personalised learning is at the heart of ensuring that the provision is appropriate.
- 4 Children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) will require additional support arrangements, which should be described in a My Support Plan, Individual Education Plan or through provision mapping.
- 5 The needs of the child or young person should be viewed holistically. The individual's social and emotional development and well-being should be considered alongside their educational needs.

## **B For the Pupil:**

- 1 Pupils are seldom uniformly delayed in their development. If a pupil is put into a younger age group and a reduced set of general expectations are in place, then areas of strength are at risk of not receiving appropriate stimulation. Similarly, physical, emotional and social expectations are likely to be inappropriate.
- 2 Some summer born children present other challenges. This group may show lower levels of achievement and maturity, but normally this should be addressed within the class group through differentiation of the curriculum.
- 3 The consequences of 'making up' a year, if necessary in the future, can be very negative for the pupil. The alternative – delayed phase transfers, SATs, GCSEs and school-leaving status can also be problematic.

- 4 A pupil's physical maturity may make them conspicuous within a younger peer group, particularly during adolescence.
- 5 Pupils should be active participants in any decision about their education and should receive explanation about the issue at a level that enables them express their own preferences.

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## C For the School:

- 1 The decision to move a pupil out of their normal age group has implications for admissions when the next year is oversubscribed. This can make it difficult for a school to plan pupil numbers for the following year. They may also block places for pupils due to be admitted and for whom placement may be appropriate or necessary.
- 2 In schools where there is a regular practice of moving children out of their normal age group, staff should be alert to the fact that this may reflect issues in the school relating to curriculum differentiation.
- 3 If a SEND pupil is retained a year behind their chronological age the LA's statutory duty does not necessarily end at 19 years of age. Appropriate arrangements would need to be put in place for the pupil in consultation with the SEN Team.

## D Decisions

- 1 In the case of **children with Education, Health Care Plans or a Statement of Special Educational Needs**, the decision to retain a pupil in a year group below their chronological age is made by the school/LA after recommendations through the Annual Review meeting after discussion with appropriate outside agencies. The recommendation needs to be supported with clear evidence of resources used to support the pupil in their chronological year group. The final decision will be made by the LA.
- 2 For children who **do not have an Education Health Care Plan or a statement of Special Educational Needs**, responsibility for deciding whether to retain a child in their normal age group rests with the head teacher and governing body. However, Schools and Governors should be mindful of guidance and advice, and be fully aware of the implications as outlined previously. The decision to take a pupil out of their peer group must never be taken lightly, and must be fully discussed with parents and other services, as appropriate.

3. Where a formal request is received for a child without an Educational Health Care Plan, the Admissions Authority will make a decision about what is best for the child, taking into account any information provided and the view of the school's headteacher and will provide a decision in writing. With regards to reception, the Government believes it is usually not in a child's best interests to miss the teaching that takes place during the reception year. If your request is refused, the admission authority should explain why they think it is in your child's best interests to start school in year 1.
4. If your request is agreed, this means that the admission authority has said your child can go to school out of their normal age group, if they are offered a place at that school.

When this happens you will need to:

- make a new application for a school place for the September after your child's fifth birthday
- withdraw the application you made for a school place for the September after your child's fourth birthday

It is possible the school will not be able to offer your child a place. If there are more applications than places available, places will be allocated in accordance with the oversubscription criteria for the school. This is why it is important to request admission out of the normal age group at all the schools you plan to apply for.

5. If your request is refused, you can either:
  - accept a school place you are offered for the September after your child's fourth birthday - your child will be admitted to the reception class
  - make an in-year application for your child to start school in year 1 in the September after their fifth birthday however we cannot guarantee that a place will be available

6. If you decide to accept the reception place following your child's fourth birthday, you can:
- request that your child attend part-time for part or all of the school year
  - delay your child's school start until later in the school year (but not later than the beginning of the summer term)

Any school place you were offered for the September after your child's fourth birthday will be lost if they do not take it up by the start of the summer term or the child's statutory school age.

If you decide to have your child start school in year 1 following their fifth birthday, it is important you make an in-year application. It is possible that the year 1 class will be full so you may need to think about making an application to more than one school.

7. If you transfer to another school or another Local Authority, you will need to ask an admission authority to admit your child out of their normal age group again if your child needs to transfer to another school.

This applies if your child is moving, or going to move:

- from an infant to a junior school
- from a primary to secondary school
- to a new area and is changing schools

You should make this request alongside an application for a school place.

If applying to secondary school, you will need to ask the admission authority of your preferred schools to agree for your child to continue being educated outside of their normal age group. Within City of York Local Authority, once an out of cohort is agreed, this is maintained until the end of Year 11 of the out of cohort year group.

If you need to make an out of cohort request, you should do this before the normal admissions round closes for your child's normal age group. This will be on 31 October of the year your child starts year 5, rather than year 6. This is so you know the outcome of the decision in time to submit an application for your child's normal age group, should your request be turned down.

In deciding what is best for your child, the admission authority will take into account that your child is currently being educated outside of their normal age group.

## E. Appeals

- 1 If your request for delayed entry is refused, you have no statutory right to appeal this decision. The statutory admission appeals process does not cover a decision to refuse delayed entry to school.

## F Contact details for correspondence

City of York Council Education Support Services  
West Offices,  
Station Rise,  
York YO1 6GA  
01904 551554  
[education@york.gov.uk](mailto:education@york.gov.uk)

## G City of York Community and Voluntary Controlled

Carr Infant (Community, 5-7)  
Clifton Green Primary (Community, 5-11)  
Copmanthorpe Primary (Community, 5-11)  
Dringhouses Primary (Community, 5-11)



Elvington CE Primary (Voluntary Controlled, 5-11)  
Fishergate Primary (Community, 5-11)  
Headlands Primary (Community, 5-11)  
Huntington School (Community, 11-18)  
Joseph Rowntree School (Voluntary Controlled, 11-18)  
Lord Deramore's Primary (Voluntary Controlled, 5-11)  
Naburn Primary School (Voluntary Controlled, 5-11)  
Ralph Butterfield Primary (Community, 5-11)  
St Barnabas' CE Primary (Voluntary Controlled, 5-11)  
St Mary's CE Primary (Voluntary Controlled, 5-11)  
St Oswald's CE Primary (Voluntary Controlled, 5-11)  
St Paul's CE Primary (Voluntary Controlled, 5-11)  
Stockton on the Forest Primary (Community, 5-11)  
Westfield Primary Community (Community, 5-11)  
Wigginton Primary (Community, 5-11)  
Yearsley Grove Primary (Community, 5-11)

[View school contact details](#)

School details correct at the time of update

## H Other admission authorities who have adopted this

Academy Trust of Ebor Academy Trust, York  
Academy Trust of Hope Sentumu Learning Trust, York  
Academy Trust of Pathfinder Multi Academy Trust  
Academy Trust of South Bank Academy Trust  
Academy Trust of South York Multi Academy Trust  
Academy Trust of Nicholas Postgate Catholic Multi Academy Trust  
Academy Trust of TEAL