



Policy Directive, Procedures and Guidelines

OUT OF YEAR GROUP PLACEMENT

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1.0 Introduction

1.1. Policy Statement

This policy sets out a framework to identify and manage the very exceptional circumstances in which a child may be placed out of chronological year group.

Education Services are responsible for making the decision on which year group a child should be admitted to. Where an out of year group place is requested they are required to make a decision based on the circumstances of the individual case. An Educational Placement Panel is formed to consider all relevant information and make a decision about an out of year group placement.

Children should be educated with their chronological year group and are only allocated out of year group school places in very exceptional circumstances. The maximum that a child can be delayed or advanced is one year.

There are very few situations where the 'solution' of a child being placed out of year cannot in fact be addressed by a different action, for example:

- The curriculum content and delivery being adjusted for the child
- Special Educational Needs interventions
- Remaining in the year group and accessing some learning with other year groups

Research evidence¹ shows that placing children with classes of younger or older children at best makes no difference to their long-term outcomes, and at worst can lead to poorer emotional health, leaving school early, lower attainments and poorer employment prospects. No research evidence has yet been found which identifies any groups or circumstances in which it is helpful to place the child outside their normal year group. A review of academic literature indicates that 'It is rare in educational research to find so many studies with a similar conclusion: retention is not a successful intervention to assist students either academically or personally'.

Standard admissions procedures can be found in the Education Services' [Admissions Policy](#) which specifically addresses Year 1 entry of summer born children who miss the Reception Year but who start school with their correct chronological cohort.

1.2 Policy Objectives

This policy directive sets out to:

- Explain the procedures to be followed consistently for any request for out of year group placements

¹ See Appendix 2

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- Identify the membership and procedure of the Education Placement Panel
- Explain the process to be followed where parents are dissatisfied with the decision of the Education Placement Panel
- Outline the accountabilities and responsibilities within the procedure
- Explain the further management of the child's placement as s/he progresses through school

1.3 Policy Application

This policy applies to:

- Schools and educational establishments maintained by the States of Guernsey and voluntary schools in the Bailiwick of Guernsey
- Independent and grant-aided schools/colleges which must have regard to this policy when making decisions about the placement of learners

1.4 Accountabilities

Headteachers are responsible for:

- Making the formal request for an out of year group placement to Education Services, as set out in this policy where the child is currently attending States maintained or voluntary school in the Bailiwick of Guernsey
- Where the child is of pre-school age or moving to the Bailiwick, and therefore not yet registered at a school, advising the parents to make a written request to Education Services for an out of year group placement. The request should be emailed to: schooladmissions@gov.gg

The school's Physical Education lead teacher for:

- Assessing with what group(s) the child can safely participate in sporting activities and, where this would result in a child participating outside of their chronological age group, to obtain informed parental consent

Education Services are responsible for:

- Making the decision based on the circumstances of the individual case, on which year group a child should be admitted to as outlined in this Policy Directive

1.5 Associated Documents

[School Admissions https://www.gov.gg/schooladmissions](https://www.gov.gg/schooladmissions)

[School Admissions on ConnectED](#)

[11+ https://www.gov.gg/elevenplus](https://www.gov.gg/elevenplus)

[11+ on ConnectED](#)

[SEN https://www.gov.gg/SEN](https://www.gov.gg/SEN)

[SEN Code of Practice on ConnectED](#)

1.6 Key Words

Academic Year	1st September – 31st August
Chronological Age	The age a child actually is at any given time
Correct cohort	The year group a child would be in according to their date of birth
Actual date of birth	The date a child is born (and the date used by schools and Education Services when placing children in their school year group)
Corrected date of birth for very premature children	The date their birth was expected to be

2.0 Exceptional Circumstances

It is recognised that there may be some very exceptional situations in which being placed out-of-year group could be considered as an appropriate intervention. For example:

- Children who have missed a lot of schooling through illness, being abroad, or not attending school
- Children with summer birthdays who are born very prematurely

Possible time points at which a child in a very exceptional situation might be considered for an Out of Year Group placement:

- Starting reception a year 'early' or a year 'late'
- Moving to Guernsey during a school year
- Repeating a year or skipping a year once already attending school
- Key Stage 4, after a prolonged absence due to medical or other reasons, when it may be preferable for the student to have the opportunity to study a 2 year examination course

Summer born children who start school in Year 1 are not out of year group children.

3.0 Procedure for Considering Requests for a Child to be Placed Out of Year Group

3.1 Parental Request for an Out of Year Group Placement for a child attending a States maintained school

Parents should discuss their views with the Headteacher of the relevant school. The child may be in any year group or of pre-school age.

The Headteacher will:

- Listen to parents' views

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- Inform parents of Education Services' policy regarding children being placed out of year group, including the factors that need to be taken into account when such a request is made²

Where it is helpful to do so, the Headteacher will also:

- Make parents aware of the impact of being out of year group on taking the 11+ and possibilities for leaving school at 16 years
- Discuss possible alternative strategies that could be put in place in school to address parental concerns

If parents continue to hold the view that they would like their child to be placed out of year group, the Headteacher will:

- Consult the school Educational Psychologist and Education Development Officer for their views
- Hold further discussions with parents, as appropriate
- Provide a written summary of the reasons for the request and whether they are in support of it to the Education Development Officer (SEN and Inclusion) for consideration at the Education Placement Panel

The Educational Psychologist will:

- Look at relevant and available information and use their professional judgement about any further assessment to make or discussions to have
- Form an opinion as to whether the out of year group placement is in the child's best interests
- Provide a written summary report, which may include recommendations about how best to meet the child's needs, copied to parents, the Headteacher and the Education Development Officer (SEN and Inclusion)

3.1.1 Parental Request for Out of Year Group Placement for a child who has not yet started school

The request should be made in writing to schooladmissions@gov.gg with the following information:

- Child's date of birth
- Home address and the name of the school parents wish the child to attend
- Information about the 'difficulty' that it is believed might be solved by placing the child out of year group
- Child's profile of strengths and difficulties, including whether delayed social, emotional or physical development is adversely affecting their readiness for school and any identified special educational needs

² See Appendix 1

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- Any medical condition. This includes extreme prematurity at birth (must be more than 6 weeks)
- The context of any extreme social needs that has impacted on the child's development
- Written information from medical or social care professionals about the child's developmental profile

This information will be considered by the Educational Psychology Service and may in due course include the Educational Psychologist meeting the child and parent.

The Educational Psychologist will make a written recommendation for consideration by the Placement Panel.

3.1.2 Parental Request for Out of Year Group Placement for Parents Moving to the Island

The process as outlined in Section 3.1 will be followed.

All children must remain, or be placed if the child is new to the Island, in their chronological year group until an assessment by the Educational Psychologist has been undertaken and a decision by the Education Placement Panel has been made.

3.2 Consideration of the Request by the Education Placement Panel

The Headteacher will initially discuss the matter with the Education Development Officer (SEN and Inclusion) and will attend the Education Placement Panel.

The Education Placement Panel comprises:

- Education Development Officer SEN, Inclusion and Intervention (Chair)
- Principal Educational Psychologist
- Headteacher, Le Rondin School
- Headteacher, Le Murier School
- Headteacher, Les Voies School

The Panel will:

- Consider all relevant information³, and may consult with other educational professionals who know the child, prior to making any decision
- Inform the Headteacher orally
- Inform parents in writing of the outcome of the Panel on behalf of Education Services

³ See Appendix 4

3.3 Parental Dissatisfaction with the Outcome

Parents have a right to make a complaint to the Director of Education against the decision made by the Education Placement Panel where they feel that one or more of the following circumstances apply:

- Failure to provide a service at the right time or to the right standard expected of the service
- Dissatisfaction in answering a query or responding to a request
- Failure to follow our agreed Education Services' policy or procedures
- Failure to take proper account of relevant matters in coming to a decision
- Discourteous or improper behaviour by a member of staff

The complaint will be dealt with in accordance with the Education Services' [Complaints Policy](#).

4.0 Implications of Out of Year Group Placement

The following implications must be explained carefully to parents at the time of first requesting an out of year group placement.

4.1 Returning to Correct Age Year Group

It is possible for a child placed out of year group to return to their correct cohort at any time during their school life, provided that this is carefully planned for and managed by the school in consultation with parents and any other education professionals involved.

The school is required to inform the Admissions Officer schooladmissions@gov.gg that the child has returned to their correct year group. The school must amend the School Information Management System (SIMS) record accordingly.

4.2 Selection at 11 (11+)

In Guernsey, children take the 11+ in the academic year in which they have their 11th birthday. It is not a question of whether or not a child is actually 11 years old. All test scores are age-weighted to ensure that children of different ages are treated fairly and equitably when calculating their final scores. This process is known as standardisation. The age of the child on the day they sit the test is the age used for the standardisation process.

A child is only able to be entered for the 11+ selection process **on one occasion**, therefore, those children who are placed out of year with younger children and whose parents wish them to take the 11+ will take the 11+ in the year which they have their 11th birthday. This will be alongside Year 6 pupils during their Year 5.

However, in order to assist in the decision making process about where a child will be placed on completing Year 6, it is expected that those children who are placed out of year with older children, and whose parents wish them to take the 11+, will take the 11+ at the same time as the year group they are placed in, i.e. along with their fellow year 6 pupils. For the purposes of calculating their standardised test score, in such cases the child will be assigned the same date of birth as the youngest pupil within Year 6 who is in the correct age cohort.

4.3 Special Educational Needs and Possible Transfer to Special School or Base

Any out of year group learner who presents with Special Educational Needs (SEN) will have their needs considered within the framework of the Code of Practice for SEN. Within this framework, assessments of the child will compare their progress with that of children of the same chronological age.

Where SEN Code of Practice assessments and procedures recommend that a child is offered a place at Special School or a Communication Base, consideration must be given to the child joining their correct age group when they transfer to their new school. It is likely that it will be appropriate for the child to return to their chronological year group when moving to a special school.

4.4 Participation in Sport

There is no automatic presumption regarding the group with which out of year children should participate in sporting activities (the academic group or the correct (chronological) cohort).

Factors for consideration should include:

- The social and personal development of the child
- The physical development of the child in relation to the other young people
- The activity (careful group management is essential where physical contact (contact sports), accelerating projectiles (where a hard ball is thrown or bowled at an opponent) or weight bearing (such as counterbalancing in gymnastics) are involved)
- The skill level of the child
- The impact that inclusion would have on other children (in the group/team, and opponents)
- Implications for age-rated team opportunities

An assessment should be undertaken by the **school's physical education lead teacher** to determine what is appropriate for any individual situation. This assessment should include reference to current guidance from the Association for Physical Education ('Safe Practice in

Physical Education and Sport'). Where a specific sport is involved, additional guidance should be sought as some sports have highly developed regulations to safeguard participants from harm. Guidance may be obtainable locally, from sport development officers or the sport's safeguarding/welfare officer, or from the national governing body of that sport.

Where a student would be participating in sporting activities out of their correct chronological age group, informed parental consent should be obtained. (Appendix 5: Parental consent form).

4.5 Leaving School

Those children who are placed out of year **with younger children** may, if they and their parents wish it, leave school at the end of the academic year in which they have their 16th birthday, at the end of year 10. This will mean that they have not experienced the Year 11 curriculum. The Year 11 curriculum includes opportunities to take external examinations (for example GCSEs); receive careers guidance; access an alternative curriculum where appropriate; undertake work experience.

Education Services are not obliged to provide a Year 11 education for out of year group children who are 16 years or older; nor does the law require school attendance for the academic year after a child has reached their 16th birthday. However, where it is agreed by all parties that it is in the best interests of the pupil to complete Year 11, this will be provided for.

Those children placed out of year group with **older children** will be required to remain at school until the end of the academic year in which they have their 16th birthday, in accordance with the Education Law. If they have transferred to Post 16 education within the Sixth Form Centre at the Grammar School or the College of Further Education, this should not in itself be problematical, provided it was agreed by all parties that this transition was in their best interests, and Education Services has given approval. If they and their parents do not wish to pursue post 16 education, an alternative curriculum for the final year of schooling must be arranged by the school.

Appendix 1: Factors to take into Account when Considering an Out of Year Group Placement

The following factors must be taken into account:

- The child's profile of strengths and difficulties in all aspects of the Guernsey Curriculum, including whether delayed social, emotional or physical development is adversely affecting their readiness for school and any identified special educational needs
- Information about the 'problem' that it is believed might be solved by placing the child out of year group
- Information about other possible strategies that could be put in place
 - The curriculum content and delivery being adjusted for the child
 - SEN processes and interventions
 - Remaining in year group and accessing some lessons with other year groups
- Information about the amount of schooling missed and the reasons for this for children who have missed a lot of schooling through illness, being abroad, or not attending school
- Any medical condition or evidence why the child may not be able to access the curriculum for their year group, including extreme prematurity at birth (must be more than 6 weeks)
- Parental wishes
- Child's wishes
- Headteacher views
- Views of other professionals to whom the child is known
- Number of children in the relevant classes in the school

In addition, when the request is made about delayed entry to school for summer born children:

- The needs of the child and possible impact on them entering Year 1 without having first attended the reception class
- For very premature children, actual date of birth and corrected date of birth, plus information about developmental progress

In addition, when the request is made for advancement into the year above:

- Evidence of thinking and reasoning skills above the high average range
- Evidence of learning or achievement above the range schools are expected to provide for the year group
- Evidence of previous year advancement in another school or jurisdiction
- The social and emotional impact of year advancement

Appendix 2: Research

The current research base comes largely from the USA and Canada, where 'grade retention' has been used widely as a matter of course. This was reviewed by Blackburn LA in 2006 and was supplemented by searches of 3 principal on-line databases in February 2008. Only peer-reviewed papers were sought. That review is summarised here.

No published papers were found by Blackburn LA which showed positive outcomes following a repeated year at school, or which evaluated the effects of placing a child with an older year group.

Relevant conclusions from the research about children placed in a younger year group indicate that:

- Children held back a year continue to struggle academically
- Children in schools with a policy of moving them up with their peers learned more in terms of reading and mathematics than those who were in schools where some children repeated a year
- Looking at developmentally delayed children, those who moved up with their peers did about the same as those who repeated a year, in terms of achievement and teacher ratings
- Children who started school a year late tended to show the same problems as they had in the first place
- Children who have been held back a year often feel anxious about their status with their peers. They tend to see it as a negative and confusing experience
- As they move up through school, children who continue to work in a younger class show poorer emotional health and many report being bullied because they are not with their age-matched peers
- Problems with attention were not improved by having the child repeat a year
- Even with "remedial teaching", no difference in self-concept or classroom behaviour was seen between students who repeated a year and those who moved up
- Employment chances are negatively affected by repeating a year at school, especially for people from ethnic minorities

Comments from the literature include:

- 'Grade retention was ineffective for improving achievement and ability'
- 'It is rare in educational research to find so many studies with a similar conclusion: retention is not a successful intervention to assist students either academically or personally'
- 'While delayed entry and readiness classes may not hurt children in the short run, there is no evidence of a positive effect on either long-term school achievement or adjustment. Furthermore, by adolescence, these early retention practices are

predictive of numerous health and emotional risk factors, and associated deleterious outcomes'

Appendix 3: Checklist for Headteachers and Professionals – Implications of Out of Year Group Placement

Issue	Date of Discussion with Parents	Parental Views/Comments	Action Agreed
Returning to correct age year group			
Selection at 11 (11+)			
Special Educational Needs and possible transfer to Special School or Base			
Participation in sporting activities			
Leaving school			

Appendix 4: Checklist for Education Placement Panel (and any professionals involved in the process)

Child's profile of strengths and difficulties in all aspects of the Guernsey Curriculum, including whether delayed social, emotional or physical development is adversely affecting their readiness for school and any identified special educational needs	
Information about the 'problem' that it is believed might be solved by placing the child out of year group	
Information about other possible strategies that could be put in place	
The curriculum content and delivery being adjusted for the child	
SEN processes and interventions	
Remaining in year group and accessing some lessons with other year groups	
Information about the amount of schooling missed and the reasons for this for children who have missed a lot of schooling through illness, being abroad, or not attending school	
Any medical condition or evidence why the child may not be able to access the curriculum for their year group, including extreme prematurity at birth (must be more than 6 weeks)	
Parental wishes	
Child's wishes	
Headteacher views	
Views of other professionals to whom the child is known	
Number of children in the relevant classes in the school	

Summer born children

The needs of the child and possible impact on them entering Year 1 without having first attended the reception class	
For very premature children, actual date of birth and corrected date of birth, plus information about developmental progress	

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Advancement

Evidence of thinking and reasoning skills above the high average range	
Evidence of learning or achievement above the range schools are expected to provide for the year group	
Evidence of previous year advancement in another school or jurisdiction	
The social and emotional impact of year advancement	

Appendix 5: Parental Consent Form for Participation in Sporting Activities Outside of the Correct Cohort

PLAYING OUT OF AGE GRADE CONSENT FORM

Before completing the form below please read the relevant section in the Out of Year Group Placement Policy and the accompanying advice on this form⁴.

Full name:	
School:	

Age:		Date of birth:	___/___/___
Chronological age grade:		Proposed age grade:	

Sport:	
---------------	--

Period of permission, including dates (e.g. a series of matches, the season): NB: Maximum period is 1 season	
Reason to play the player out of age grade:	
Proposed by:	

Role in relation to the player: (PE Lead Teacher)	
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Signed Declaration:

We certify that all the information on this form is correct, that a risk assessment has been carried out and hereby consent to the above player playing out of age grade in accordance with appropriate sport governing bodies and AfPE advice.

Signature of proposer _____ Print name _____ Date _____	Signature of parent/guardian/carer _____ Print name _____ Date _____
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⁴ In the case of rugby, please also read RFU Regulation 15 and the Guidance accompanying that Regulation.

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Advice

Notwithstanding anything contained or referred to in this document, it is the responsibility of the School to ensure that it complies with the policy of Education Services.

Risk Assessments

The key points to consider are:

- The ultimate consideration must be for the welfare and safety of the player and those with whom the player will be playing.
- There has and will be clear communication with all those involved in and affected by the decision including the opposition team.
- The following aspects must be taken into consideration when making the decision:
 1. The physical development and mental well-being of the individual and the player's playing colleagues
 2. The skill level and experience of the individual
 3. The individual's playing position in the team
 4. The competitive standard of the particular match and playing conditions.

Specific Advice for Rugby

Playing Up

<i>Guidance</i>	<i>Consents required</i>	<i>Assessment required</i>	<i>This form appropriate</i>
U12s to U15s can train and play up one age grade if recommended by the player's Club or School.	<i>PE Lead Teacher and Parent</i>	Yes	Yes
U16s & U17s can train and play up one age grade (including on front row of scrum) or two age grades (not in front row if an U16 playing 15 a-side) if recommended by the player's School. The parent must be informed that it is possible that this dispensation may result in playing with and/or against one or more U19 players.	<i>PE Lead Teacher and Parent</i>	Yes	Yes

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Playing Down

<i>Guidance</i>	<i>Consents required</i>	<i>Assessment required</i>	<i>This form appropriate</i>
U9s to U19s (inclusive) can only train and play down one age grade (subject to competition rules) if: (a) the player is in a younger academic year at school than the player's academic birth year; or (b) the player's safety may be compromised due to small stature or a developmental or behavioural issue.	U12 and below: <i>PE Lead Teacher and Parent</i>	Yes	Yes
U9s to U19s can only train and play down two or more age grades in exceptional circumstances.	Seek guidance from sport's governing body	Yes	No