



**Southern
Education
Trust**

Placement of a pupil outside their chronological age group

Next Review: Sept 2028

1. Glossary

Deceleration/ Back-yearing	The decision to educate a child in the cohort below their chronological peers.
Deferred Entry	To defer participation in the Reception cohort until later in the academic year but not beyond the child's 5th birthday or the start of the last term of the year.
Delayed Entry	To seek a place in a mainstream school after the child's 5th birthday – either as a Reception child (a request by parents) or as a Year 1 child (a choice of parents)

2. Introduction

- 2.1. This policy sets out the Trusts position on Back-yearing. For Deferred Entry or Delayed Entry, please refer to the prospective school's published admissions policy.

3. Principles

- 3.1. Southern Education Trust strongly believes that children should be educated within their chronological age group alongside their peers, except in very exceptional circumstances.
- 3.2. The principles behind educational inclusion stress the importance of all pupils being educated alongside their peers in their local communities. This national perspective is reflected in The Trust's vision for inclusion. The emphasis is on schools meeting individual needs, including those of pupils with special educational needs, through personalised learning.
- 3.3. Expectations of good practice are based upon a child's entitlement to be educated alongside their age equivalent 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 that is made meets the individual pupil's needs.
- 3.4. There are significant and long term issues for the pupil, the school, the trust, and the local authority that arise from a decision to place a pupil outside their normal age group, including, but not limited to the following:
- 3.4.1. If the pupil remains outside of their normal age group, their physical, emotional and social needs may be unmet.
- 3.4.2. At phase transfers, which could mean a change of school and new friendship groups, pupils will be older than the rest of their new peer group.
- 3.4.3. National Curriculum Tests and GCSEs and other accredited courses are completed a year or more late, as assessment takes place at the same time as the rest of the year group in which the pupil has been placed and not in line with their chronological age.
- 3.4.4. A pupil who is outside of their normal age group, and reaches Year 10, may choose to leave school at the official school leaving date for their age group– which is always the last Friday in June at the end of the academic year in which he or she is 16, thereby not completing GCSEs or other accredited courses and

thus damaging their prospects for future employment or further education placement.

- 3.4.5. A pupil who does not remain in their cohort will experience fractured peer relationships; this is likely to be detrimental to well-being.
- 3.4.6. A pupil who is moved to a lower age group may well receive negative messages which will impact adversely on their sense of acceptance, achievement and belonging.

4. The decision-making framework

- 4.1. The following general framework applies to all requests for placing a pupil outside of their normal age group, regardless of specific circumstances.
- 4.2. Head teachers should set out, to the Trust's Director of Education why this course of action is being considered and their recommendation. This recommendation must be based on written advice from members of professional groups who are involved in supporting the child.
- 4.3. In no instance will movement of more than a single National Curriculum year be considered.
- 4.4. Schools should be able to evidence that this is not a response to unmet need and that the pupil's educational, social and emotional well-being would be best met through placement outside of their normal age group. This must be supported by written evidence from members of professional groups who are involved in supporting the child.
- 4.5. For any child with an EHCP, requests must have the agreement of the Local Authority because this is a change to section B (need) and F (provision) of the EHCP. As such these requests need to be made at annual review.
- 4.6. There must be full parental support and agreement.
- 4.7. There must be pupil support and agreement, following explanation at a level the pupil is able to understand.
- 4.8. There must be clear objectives and time scales to the change, with detailed plans in place showing how phase transfers and examinations will be managed.
- 4.9. Recommendations/requests will be considered by the Trust's Director of Education, in consultation with the Trust leadership team. The decision will be based on the circumstances of each case.

5. Medical needs

- 5.1. Some pupils may have significant absence from or intermittent attendance at school due to a medical condition or accident. During the absence from school pupils may have accessed differing amounts of education and as a result will be better or less well-prepared to re-engage with full-time education.
- 5.2. Recommendations in respect of pupils who have missed extensive periods of time from education due to illness or accident should be made through the same process as outlined above.