

Setting back advice from SENDLine

Setting back/offsetting/repeating a year/educating out of age cohort – information for schools

National Guidance: related to delaying starting school

[Guidance on handling admission requests for summer born children - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[Summer born children starting school: advice for parents - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Ealing guidance

[Guidance for schools: Education of children outside of their normal age group | Ealing Grid for Learning \(egfl.org.uk\)](#)

SENDline advice

There is quite a lot of evidence that it has a negative impact on attainment and progress.

[Repeating a year | EEF \(educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk\)](#)

There are also impacts such as:

- immunisation schedules (ensure immunisations are done at the recommended age)
- school leaving age – a child may choose to leave school before they have completed exams
- changing schools – any arrangement to set back is between an individual school and a parent, so another school may not agree, and a child may have to move from Y5-Y7 or Y6-Y8. In Ealing, if a child has been offset from nursery or reception they usually stay with that cohort for the rest of their compulsory education.

If child has an EHCP the LA should also be consulted re setting back/offsetting due to placement and funding implications.

Any child who moves into specialist is very likely to move into their age cohort, so if they had been attending a reception class in mainstream but were year 1 age, they would go into the Y1 cohort in the specialist setting, although this may not be the case if they are summer born and started school aged 5 (as above).

The key impact though tends to be on their confidence and self-esteem, difficulties finding their feet in a new social group, or making sense of why they are older than the rest of their class as they grow up – this could happen some years after the decision has been made.

Sometimes a request to holding back a year is part of a parent's journey - hoping that they will 'catch up' with more of the same or wanting to make up for education missed due to illness or circumstances. However 'additional to and different from' is what usually helps pupils to attain their potential. Setting back is not a substitute for SEN provision.

There will be some occasions where it does work, and parents do have rights to request a later school starting date for summer born children. It can also benefit children born prematurely.

The decision must be tailored to the individual pupil.

A delayed start to reception is a different experience to staying back a year in Y3 or Y6, or repeating a year in secondary school. It also depends on the reason for the proposed setting back. Reasons parents may have might be lack of availability of spaces in special school or any specific school; illness resulting in having missed the curriculum (more common in secondary). The former is not usually considered an appropriate reason but illness and having missed curriculum eg for GCSEs could be, especially if changing school and the arrangement is with the young person's agreement.

There are a lot of ways schools can and should adapt ie reasonable adjustments, before deciding that education out of cohort is the best option. It might also depend on the cohort at the school there are at.

Use the Ashton Checklist when considering an out of cohort admission or change.

Info updated: 18/6/24

Sam Campbell-Jones, Ealing SENDLine, the consultation line for SENCOs sendline@ealing.gov.uk



image not found or type unknown

[Ashton checklist when considering to place children outside their normal year group.docx \(docx\)](#)

Contact:

- **SEND consultation line:** sendline@ealing.gov.uk

Was this page useful?

- [Yes](#)
- [Neutral](#)
- [No](#)

Last updated: 01 May 2025