

P-05-832 To Amend the School Admissions Code Relating to Summer-Born Children, Correspondence – Swansea Council to Chair, 13.02.19

Dear Mr Rowlands,

Apologies for the delay in sending our reply to your letter dated 4 December 2018. Please find below a response to the questions raised:

The ethos of Swansea Council's is to provide an inclusive education for all children. Although date of birth is used to allocate children to a year group education provision within Swansea schools is designed to accommodate individual children's differentiated needs rather than matching provision to a chronological age. Many Swansea schools have mixed age classes accommodating more than one year group effectively. Curriculum provision is carefully planned and differentiated to provide appropriate opportunities for all children within a class. This does not prevent parents / carers requesting a deferred entry to reception or for placement below their chronological age in any other year group. The process for considering such requests was recently reviewed by the Education Department and, as of April 2018, is as follows:

For a learners to be educated in a year group one below their normal age group, decision makers should satisfy themselves that they have gathered sufficient evidence to show that:

- *the learner shows significant delay, and little progress in their personal and emotional development, and social skills appropriate for a younger peer group;*
- *the learner shows significant delay and little progress, in intellectual development/educational skills across the subject areas, to an extent that it is not reasonable to expect curriculum differentiation within their normal age group to be successful;*
- *the learner's physical maturity does and is likely, in the future, to make them developmentally different from their proposed peer group in such a way as to impact negatively on their self-esteem/self awareness (including consideration of puberty). In either case, schools should satisfy themselves that:*
 - *this is the wish of all those with Parental Responsibility for the child and that they have been adequately advised of the implications of placement outside the normal age;*
 - *there is a clear understanding about why and how the child's needs will be met more effectively out of their normal age group, than would be possible within;*
 - *the child's parents, the school and all involved professionals agree that this is the best provision for the child;*
 - *where appropriate, according to their age and capability, this is also the wish of the child;*
 - *where the learner is approaching transition into Key Stage 3, likely secondary schools have been consulted (or junior schools if relevant for transition into Key Stage 2);*
 - *any implications have been fully discussed with parents;*
 - *full consideration has been given to the likely/possible impact of relevant regulations and local practice as the learner progress outside their normal age group;*
 - *where an EHC Plan or Statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN) is in place, all relevant factors have been considered, with all relevant parties consulted,*

at the Annual Review. The final decision about out of age group placement for these learners lies with the local authority (LA) and will be recorded in the EHC Plan/Statement.

On receipt of a request by a school to educate a pupil outside their chronological age a meeting should be convened by the school concerned.

Attendees should include:

- *the parents/carers;*
- *the headteacher of the school/s concerned;*
- *all professionals involved with the child – eg Education Psychologist, Behaviour Support Teacher etc;*
- *a LA representative*

At the meeting Full Notes of the meeting should be made and agreed by all parties. Minutes of the meeting should include a clear statement as to whether any agreement by the admission authority to place a child out of their normal age group is being made with or without the support of the LA. After the meeting notes of the meeting, together with any written reports considered at the meeting, should be placed permanently on the learner's file and transferred to any new school at each transition. (Date of issue: April 2018)

As this policy applies to all pupils across the statutory age range we do not operate a separate policy in relation to requests for deferrals for summer-born children (those born between 1 April and 31 August). Requests for deferred entry would be considered using the process as outlined. It should also be noted that if it is agreed that entry should be made out of chronological age then usual admission processes apply.

The LA do not hold records of requests separately from other admissions rather, records are held on the pupil's file if entry out of chronological age is agreed. Admission applications are retained with all others in line with the LA retention schedule. For that reason we are unable to provide data in relation to the specific number of requests and refusals however we can provide the following information:

In 2016 and in 2017 across Swansea Council area 21 pupils were educated out of their chronological age group. In 2018 there were 22. These figures are from Year 1 to Year 11. There are more Year 11 age out of year group than any other years.

We do not hold separate data for summer born children for the reasons already outlined.

Cofion / Regards