

Deferring or Delaying Entry to School

Compulsory school age is the start of the first school term after a child's fifth birthday

For those children starting school for the first time the local authority will offer all children a full time school place from the September following their fourth birthday.

Deferred Entry

Parents may then if they wish defer their child's admission to the school where a place has been offered until later in the school year either part-time or full time but only until the child reaches compulsory school age in that school year.

Where parents choose to defer their child's admission, or take up the place part-time but later wish to increase it to fulltime, before their child has reached statutory school age, this must be discussed with the Headteacher to agree the effective date.

Where parents of summer born children¹ do not wish to take up the allocated place until the next school year, the place will not be held. A fresh application would have to be made and there would be no guarantee that a place would be available at the school.

Request to Delay Entry when starting school for the first time for Summer Born Children

Children are normally allocated to their chronological year group. Where a parent considers that their summer-born child will not be ready and would like their child to *work a year behind*; the admissions authority would consider such requests in accordance with their policy relating to admission outside the normal age group.

Things to consider before requesting Delayed entry for summer born children

Parents should consider that their child will be in a different year group from the one that they are supposed to be in and the long-term impacts of this.

Deferred or part-time entry (as above) offers flexibility for children who aren't quite ready to start school or need a phased entry to give them time to settle in. Parents should consider these options which might be good alternatives to delayed entry.

Delaying entry into reception will usually involve an extra year with an early year's provider which may not be full-time. The Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum in a reception class in school is able to provide a co-ordinated education approach as well as the opportunity to play.

Where a parent's request is agreed, they must make a new application as part of the main admissions round the following year. Parents should be aware that when making an application the following year the request for a place out of a chronological year group may not be to the same admission authority that agreed their original request, and as such may not have the same outcome.

¹ The term summer born relates to all children born from 1 April to 31 August. These children reach compulsory school age on 31 August following their fifth birthday.

Parents have a statutory right to appeal against the refusal of a place at a school for which they have applied. This right does not apply if you are offered a place at the school but it is not in your child's preferred age group.

There are additional things to consider as your child gets older in relation to transferring to secondary school (see below).

How requests to Delay Entry for Summer Born Children are processed:

The local authority will make decisions for community and voluntary controlled schools based on the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child concerned. Where preferences are expressed for own admission authority schools, the local authority will pass the request and supporting information to these schools.

Consideration will include taking account of the parents' views; information about the child's academic, social and emotional development; where relevant, the child's medical history and the views of a medical professional; whether they may naturally have fallen into a lower age group if it were not for being born prematurely. The views of the headteacher of the school concerned and the child's early years setting will also be taken into account.

In order that such requests (supported by evidence*) can be fully considered, the parent will be asked to submit their request together **with an application for the normal age group by the deadline**. This ensures that if the request is refused, the child's application for preferred schools will not be disadvantaged and the request can be considered appropriately including the views of the preferred schools either prior to the offer date or after. The parent will be informed of the implications of making such a request.

-  If their request is refused, the parent must decide whether to accept the offer of a place for the normal age group, or to refuse it and make an in-year application for admission to year one for the September following the child's fifth birthday.
-  If the request is agreed, their application for the normal age group may be withdrawn before a place is offered.

Parents must make a new application as part of each **main** admissions round (see transfer to secondary below). Requests to continue working out of normal age group would need to be made whenever the child moves schools.

When informing a parent of the decision on the year group to which the child should be admitted, the parent will be notified of the reasons for the decision and where possible, the decision will be made prior to the offer date for the child's chronological year group.

Where it is agreed that a child will be admitted out of the normal age group and, as a consequence of that decision, the child will be admitted to a relevant age group (i.e. the age group to which pupils are normally admitted to the school) the local authority and admission authority must process the application as part of the main admissions round on the basis of their determined admission arrangements only, including the application of oversubscription criteria where applicable.

Things to consider as the child get older

When a child transfers from primary to secondary school (or an infant to junior school) the parent must make a new application as part of each main admissions round (see transfer from primary to secondary below).

Requests to continue working out of normal age group would need to be made at the chronological age at the transfer process time. If the child is working in year 5 (but the chronological year group would be year 6) the parent must make an application in year 5 at the published time with a request to delay entry to secondary school. This will again be assessed as above.

The admission authority, in consultation with the Headteacher for that school, will make the decision on whether to accept an application for a child to continue out of their chronological year group. This could mean missing a year either in secondary or primary school.

The admission authority and the Headteacher are not required to agree to this request. Many secondary school headteachers indicate their reluctance to accept children out of year as it becomes very obvious when children mature earlier than those in their year group

If this request is refused then a parent may need to secure an age appropriate school place for their child or consider another secondary school place.

If the request is agreed the secondary school at which the child is then offered a place may not be the same admission authority who agreed to the request as the application may not be ranked high enough against the allocation criteria for that secondary school.

Children will be able to leave school before completing examination courses. Statutory school age ends on the last Friday in June in the school year when they becomes 16. For a delayed entry child this will be in year 10 before the GCSEs have been completed.

Requests for delayed entry when transferring from primary to secondary school

Where a child has had a delayed entry start to school and has not escalated into the age appropriate year group or wishes to repeat a year within their primary school they will need to request a delayed entry into secondary school. In order that such requests (supported by evidence*) can be fully considered, the parent will be asked to submit their request together **with an application for the normal age group by the deadline**. This ensures that if the request is refused, the child's application for preferred schools will not be disadvantaged and the request can be considered appropriately including the views of the preferred schools either prior to the offer date or after. The parent will be informed of the implications of making such a request.

- ✚ If the request is agreed, their application for the normal age group may be withdrawn before a place is offered and required to apply again the following year group.
- ✚ If their request is refused, the parent must decide whether to continue to move the child from year 5 to year 7 or to apply to a different admission authority or to apply for a year 8 place.

In Year request to delay entry (not summer born)

The local authority believes that children can be accommodated in their chronological year group and the teachers will differentiate the teaching within the classes. When receiving a request for a delayed entry into an already formed year group for a child the admission authority would need to satisfy itself that among other things:

- The child shows a significant delay and little progress in their personal and emotional development and social skills appropriate for a younger peer group;

- The child 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 correct year group to be successful;
- The child's physical maturity is unlikely 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
- There is a clear understanding about why the child's needs will be met more effectively out of their chronological year group than would be possible within the parent/s, the school and all professionals involved agree that this is the best provision for the child.

If a parent requests a delayed entry into an already formed year group the local authority will make decisions for community and voluntary controlled schools based on the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child concerned. Where preferences are expressed for own admission authority schools, the local authority will pass this request to them.

***Evidence Required**

Consideration of these requests will include taking account of the parents' views; information about the child's academic, social and emotional development; whether they have previously been educated out of their normal age group; where relevant, the child's medical history and the views of a medical professional; whether they may naturally have fallen into a lower age group if it were not for being born prematurely. The views of the headteacher of the school concerned and the child's current school will also be taken into account. The Principal Educational Psychologist will make a final decision for Bracknell Forest maintained schools.

When informing a parent of the decision on the year group to which the child will be admitted, the parent will be notified of the reasons for the decision.

The parent has a statutory right to appeal against the refusal of a place at a school for which they have applied. This right does not apply if they are offered a place at the school but it is not in their preferred age group.