

Deferred and part-time entry and Admission of children outside their usual age group

The purpose of this guidance is to provide parents, schools and London borough of Barking and Dagenham school admission team officers with information and advice in respect of requests for children to be educated in either a younger or older year group than that of their chronological age.

Our procedure is based on the School Admissions Code 2021 and current guidance available from the Department for Education. The Minister of State for Schools announced in September 2015 that consultation on the School Admissions Code in relation to this issue would be conducted in future. This Policy will be reviewed after the outcome of this consultation and any upcoming changes to the School Admissions Code and/or Statutory Guidance. This guidance is not intended or considered for children who have a final EHC plan. If your child has a Final EHC plan you will need to contact the EHC team directly on 020 8227 2400 or email ehcenquiries@lbdd.gov.uk

Whilst there is no statutory barrier to children being educated out of their chronological year group, there is no duty to agree such a request and a parent cannot insist their child is educated out of their normal year group.

In general, it is the view of the Department for Education and the local authority that most children should be educated in their chronological year group, with the curriculum differentiated as appropriate, and that they should only be educated out of their chronological year group in very limited circumstances.

This guidance covers out of year group requests for children of all ages, whether they are due to start school or are already on roll at a school. It also includes guidance for children with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), although the process for these is different and it is important that parents liaise with their child's EHC Case Officer and do not make an application via this medium.

This guidance includes information on:

- The reasons why a request might be made.
- Starting school in Reception and summer born children.
- Who is responsible for making the decision.
- Factors for parents to consider when making a request.
- When to make an out of year group request.
- Factors that will be taken into account when making a decision.
- The outcome of the request.
- Important factors to consider following a decision.
- Whether a child will be expected to remain out of year group.

- Appeals and complaints.

This guidance reflects the requirements of the School Admissions Code 2021 and the Department for Education's non-statutory advice to local authorities and school admission authorities on the admission of summer born children.

In conjunction with this guidance, parents are also advised to read the Department for Education's advice for parents on summer born children and starting school
Summer born children: school admission.

Background

It is a requirement of the School Admissions Code that admission authorities publish their arrangements for deferred entry and part-time attendance for those parents who request it for children below compulsory school age (reception classes).

In addition, admission authorities must also make clear the process for requesting admission outside the usual age group. In all cases parents should discuss any request with the relevant admission authorities (local authority or school).

Summer Born Children

In December 2014, the DfE published its revised non-statutory advice to help admission authorities comply with the admission requirements of summer-born children. This is available at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/summerborn-children-school-admission>

Overview of admissions for summer-born children

Paragraph 2.17 of the School Admissions Code 2021, requires admission authorities to provide for the admission of all children in the September following their fourth birthday.

Most parents are happy for their child to start school at this point. Children are not required to attend school until they reach compulsory school age. Children born from 1 April to 31 August – known as summer-born children – do not need to start school until the September after their fifth birthday, a year after they could first have started school.

A parent may request their summer-born child is admitted out of their normal age group at this point – to reception rather than year 1.

If a child is admitted to primary school out of their normal age group, the parent may make further requests, for example, when they transfer from primary to secondary school. The admission authority of each school must make a decision based on the circumstances of the case and in the child's best interests. It should be rare for an authority to refuse a parent's request.

An admission authority may not decide that a child should start school before compulsory school age - that is the parent's decision.

The government believes it is rarely in a child's best interests to miss a year of their education, for example, by beginning primary school in year 1 rather than reception, or secondary school in year 8 rather than year 7.

Supporting parents' decision making

DfE supports the right of parents to decide their child will not start school until compulsory school age but does not believe it should become the norm for summer-born children to begin reception at age 5.

Most summer-born children will thrive if they are admitted to reception aged 4.

Some parents will be concerned that their child is not ready for school at age 4 and may need support to decide what is right for their child.

Government have published advice for parents of summer-born children, to help them make an informed decision. This can be read on the following link <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/summer-born-children-school-admission>

Admission authorities should encourage parents who are considering delaying their summer-born child's admission until compulsory school age to visit the schools they wish to apply for.

Teachers at the school(s) will be able to explain the provision on offer in the reception class and how children's individual needs are supported.

Local Authorities will be able to encourage parents who are worried their child may have a learning difficulty or disability that will make school challenging for them to meet the school's special educational needs co-ordinator. They will be able to explain the school's approach to supporting children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) but without an EHC plan.

Some children born prematurely (before 37 weeks' gestation) have social, emotional, physical and intellectual development behind that of their peers. Some may have health problems associated with their prematurity. The more prematurely a child was born, the more likely it is they will have developmental or health concerns.

If a parent of a child born prematurely is considering delaying their admission, you should encourage them to discuss the options with their child's specialists.

Handling requests for admission out of normal age group

A request for admission out of the normal age group is separate from an application for a school place. An admission authority needs to make a decision about the age group to which a child should be admitted before it can decide whether a place can be offered in that age group.

Admission authorities should ensure parents:

- are aware of when and how they can make requests
- know what information they need to provide
- know the outcome of their request in time to make an informed decision about whether their child will start school before compulsory school age

Paragraph 2.18 of the school admission code is available on the following link [School admissions code - GOV.UK](#) requires authorities to make clear the process for requesting admission outside of the normal age group in their admission arrangements. This applies in relation to all mainstream schools, including secondary schools.

It is for local authorities and admission authorities to decide what their process should be.

The school admission team at London Borough of Barking and Dagenham request that parents submit an application for a school placement in the cohort round on e-admissions before they make an application for a deferral to be considered.

Cohort applications – for children starting school in the following September.

For **primary school admissions**, recommend that the process:

- expects parents to make an application for a school place in their child's normal age group at the usual time.
- enables parents to submit a request for admission outside the normal age group at the same time.
- ensures parents receive the response to their request before primary national offer day.

Secondary schools might adopt a similar process. For example, they might:

- expect parents to secure agreement from the admission authority of their preferred schools for their child to continue to be educated out of their normal age group when their child begins year 5 (before the normal admissions round closes on 31 October).
- ensure parents receive the response to their request before secondary national offer day (not when the normal admissions round closes).

Admission authorities must still consider requests that are made outside the timescales set out in the process.

If a child is moving house, a request may be submitted alongside an in-year admission application.

Authorities should consider whether there are good educational reasons for a child to join their normal age group, otherwise the child should remain with their adopted year group.

If a parent's request is agreed, they may withdraw their application for the normal age group before a place is offered. They will need to make a new application for a school place during the following admissions round.

If a request for admission out of the normal age group at a primary school is refused, the parent will have to decide between 2 options:

- accept the offer of a place in a reception class in the school year following their child's fourth birthday.
- refuse the offer of a place in reception class and make an in-year application for their child to be admitted to year 1 in the September following their fifth birthday.

It is rarely in the best interests of a child to miss a year of school. If, however, a request for admission out of the normal age group at a secondary school is refused, the parent will have to decide between 2 options:

- accept the offer of a place in year 7 in the school year following their child's 11th birthday (meaning they would progress from year 5 to year 7).
- refuse that offer and make an in-year application for their child to be admitted to year 8 in the September following their 12th birthday (meaning they will progress from year 6 to year 8).

This means the child will have no option but to miss either year 6 or year 7. Authorities should encourage parents to make a request for admission outside the normal age group at each school they wish to apply for, in case their preferred school is unable to offer their child a place.

Evidence provided by parents

Admission authorities can reasonably expect parents to provide information about why they think their child should be admitted out of their normal age group, to enable them to make a decision in the child's best interests.

In some cases, parents may have evidence from professionals involved in their child's care or treatment that it would be appropriate for them to submit, for example:

- a speech and language therapist
- an occupational therapist
- a social worker
- a paediatrician
- the child's nursery or childminder

Admission authorities should not expect parents to get evidence they do not already have and must still consider requests that are not accompanied by evidence from professionals.

Authorities should not refuse a request solely because it is not accompanied by professional evidence.

Making a decision

Paragraph 2.19 of Schools Admission Code requires an admission authority to decide which age group the child should be admitted to. They must make this decision on the basis of the circumstances of the case and in the child's best interests. They must also take account of the views of the school's headteacher. London borough of Barking and Dagenham will seek the views from the current education placement of the child when receiving an application.

An admission authority will need to decide whether a child's needs can best be met in reception or year 1, for a child starting primary school. For a child transferring to secondary school, an authority will need to decide whether their needs can best be met in year 7 or year 8.

Factors an admission authority will need to consider include:

- parents' views
- information about a child's academic, social, and emotional development
- where relevant, a child's medical history and the views of a medical professional
- whether a child would naturally have fallen into a lower age group if they had not been born prematurely
- the potential impact on a child of being admitted to their normal age group and missing a year of their education as a consequence.
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An authority should take into account if a child has already been educated out of their normal age group and is transferring to a new school.

Unless there are sound educational reasons to do otherwise, the assumption should be that they will remain outside of their normal year group, as to do otherwise would result in the child missing a year of school.

There do not need to be exceptional circumstances, and a child does not need to have a medical need or SEND for it to be in their best interests to be admitted out of their normal age group.

Decision-making panels

Some admission authorities have found it useful to convene panels to make decisions, but they are not mandatory.

London borough of Barking and Dagenham hold panels for individual cases to be considered. The panel professionals help in reaching a balanced decision. Panel members may include a

- the school's headteacher
- an early year professional (where the child is starting primary school)
- a health care professional
- an educational psychologist
- an admissions officer

Notification of the decision

Paragraph 2.19 of School Admissions Code requires the admission authority to set out clearly for the parent the reasons for their decision.

If an authority refuses the request, they will need to explain why they believe it is in the child's best interests to be admitted to their normal age group, even though this means they will miss a year of their education.

If the authority does not agree to the request, we will inform parents what they need to do next. For example, where a request is agreed, the parent needs to withdraw their application for a place in their child's normal age group and make a new application in the following admissions round.

Complaints and appeals

Parents who wish to challenge a decision to refuse their request for admission out of the normal age group may submit a complaint using the local authority's complaints procedure in the case of community and voluntary controlled schools.

The link to the local authority complaints procedure is
<https://www.lbbd.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/complaints-and-compliments>

If a parent is unhappy with the way a local authority has handled their complaint, once they have exhausted the local complaints process, they may complain to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.

Parents whose request for delayed entry is refused have no statutory right to appeal this decision. The statutory admission appeals process does not cover a decision to refuse delayed entry to school.

Once a request is agreed

Once they have made the decision to admit a child out of their normal age group, there are things admission authorities should be aware of across the rest of the child's time in education.

Early education

All 3- and 4-year-olds, and the most disadvantaged 2-year-olds, are entitled to 15 hours of early education a week for 38 weeks of the year. This rises to 30 hours a week for 3- and 4-year-olds with eligible working parents.

When a parent chooses to delay their child's admission to school, the child remains entitled to receive early education until they reach compulsory school age.

Moving children to their normal age group

Headteachers are responsible for deciding how best to educate the children in their school. On occasion, this may include deciding any child should be moved to a

different age group. Such decisions should be based on sound educational reasons and made in consultation with the parents.

There is no expectation that children who were admitted out of their normal age group should be moved to their normal age group. As with other children, they should remain in the age group to which they were admitted unless there are sound educational reasons to do otherwise.

Funding for children out of normal age group

The school funding formula for pupils in reception up to year 11 is based on the number of pupils in each key stage, not on the age of pupils. Schools are funded for the number of pupils they have on roll in each key stage, regardless of their age. A 16- to 18-year-old student is defined as a student who is aged 16, 17 or 18 on 31 August at the start of the funding year when they begin a learning programme. Such students are normally eligible for the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) young people's funding, subject to the 16 to 19 funding regulations.

A student who was aged 16, 17 or 18 on 31 August at the start of the funding year when they began a learning programme, as recorded on their learning agreement, continues to be funded under the 16 to 19 funding regulations. Students who become 19 years old or over during their learning programme are funded under the 16 to 19 funding regulations to complete their learning programmes.

Tests and performance tables

Children are usually assessed when they reach the appropriate point in their education, not when they reach a particular age. There are no age requirements as to when children must take GCSEs or other assessments.

The exception is the phonics screening check, which should be taken in the year the child turns 6, but only if they have completed the year 1 programme of study. Schools should report the results of children educated out of their normal age group to DfE in the same way as any other child in that age group. A school is required to report on pupils' performance when they reach the end of key stages 1 and 2 – regardless of their age.

Admissions register

Regulations require schools to include a child's date of birth and the date they were admitted to the school on the admissions register.

The regulations do not require them to record the year group in which a child is being educated, but schools will need to record this for their own administrative purposes. Where a child is being educated out of their normal age group, they should be recorded as such.

School leaving age

A child reaches school leaving age on the last Friday of June in the school year they turn 16. A child educated in the age group below their normal age group, will be in year 10 when they reach school leaving age.

They are required to continue in education or training until the end of the school year in which they turn 18 but need not attend school to fulfil this requirement. They cannot be obliged to attend school during year 11 (in the same way that a child educated in their normal age group could not be required to attend school during year 12 or 13) but the school will continue to receive funding for them if they do. A local authority's duty to arrange suitable education (for example by arranging alternative provision) for certain children who would otherwise not receive a suitable education does not apply to children who have reached school leaving age. Local authorities have a duty to support and encourage young people to participate in education or training and should ensure there is sufficient provision available for all young people aged 16 to 19.

A local authority's duty to arrange free travel to school for eligible children does not apply to children who have reached school leaving age. Authorities may choose to arrange travel for such children, but they are not required to do so.

Deferred and part-time entry for Reception places

The above only applies for reception classes. Paragraph 2.16 of the School Admissions Code states that admission authorities must provide for the admission of all children in the September following their fourth birthday. Places must be offered on a full-time basis, but where parents wish, children may attend part-time until later in the school year but not beyond the point at which they reach compulsory school age. Please see part-time attendance section for more details.

Parents may also request that their child's entry be delayed until later in the school year following their fourth birthday, providing they do not delay beyond the point at which they reach compulsory school age. Children born in the summer term are not required to start school until a full year after the point at which they could first have been admitted – the point at which other children in their age range are beginning Year 1. Please see delayed entry section on the next page for more details.

Part-time attendance

- Parents may request that their child attend part-time until they reach legal school age. Parents should discuss this option with the head teacher at the offered school.
- The school is not required to offer flexible part-time hours. Instead, staff will confirm the part-time arrangements available at the school. It is recommended that the funded part-time options will be 15 hours per week, the same as the early-years settings. Schools will decide if the part-time offer is for morning or afternoon sessions.
- Children must be collected at the end of their morning or afternoon session and therefore lunch will not be available for children attending part-time.

- Children cannot take up a funded part-time place at an early year's setting as well as a part-time Reception place.

Deferred (delayed) entry

Parents may ask to delay their child's start date but must still apply for a reception school place in the normal admissions round. Our website will always list the date of birth range of children in the relevant normal admissions round. After places have been 'offered' parents must write to the School Admissions Team to let us know their child's preferred start date and the options are below for reference. If you delay your start date, your child's nursery place cannot continue unless there are nursery spaces available after the correct aged children have been offered a place.

- **January Start:** Children whose fifth birthday is on or between 1 September and 31 December may delay their Reception place until the start of the spring term.
- **April Start:** Children whose fifth birthday is on or between 1 January and 31 March may delay their Reception place until the start of the summer term.
- **April or Year 1 Start:** Children with a fifth birthday on or between 1 April and 31 August may delay their Reception place until the start of summer term (April) or the September in the following autumn term when they will start as a Year 1 pupil.

Things to consider

1. The process in this document is for Barking and Dagenham schools only. If you have been offered a place outside the borough, you must check the policy of the relevant admission authority (School or LA) and follow their process.
2. The best interests and needs of the child should be the focus of any discussions surrounding his or her admission to school. As a result, parents may be asked to consider whether part-time attendance or delaying the reception start date, is beneficial to their child's long-term educational and social development.
3. The requirements of the Infant Class Size legislation will apply to all children admitted within the Reception Year, irrespective of the child's start date.
4. Where deferred admission has been agreed. The child's place will be held open and will not be available to be offered to another child during the academic year.
5. When deferred admission has been agreed, schools will make available an integrating programme for the pupil to ensure they settle into that year group appropriately.
6. Schools can obtain advice on the funding implications from the Finance Section.

Admission of children outside their usual age group

Reception places

If your child was born between 1 April to 31 August (Summer born children) and you wish him or her to start their Reception class a year later than their usual start date, please complete the 'Application out of usual year group' form. You may wish to attach any supporting information from education or medical professionals to support your application.

For us to consider your application and the individual circumstances of your child we need to have this form submitted before **15th January** in the year that they would usually commence school (the usual date for starting school is in the September following the child's 4th birthday). Parents should complete the common application form (CAF) Admission Form (online) so that a place in reception may be issued, should the application to be educated out of cohort be refused. Failure to submit a common application form could leave your child without a school place.

In all cases parents will be advised to discuss any request with all relevant parties.

Advice for Schools

1. The best interests and needs of the child should be the focus of any discussions surrounding his or her admission to school, therefore, parents may be asked to consider whether part-time attendance or deferring the start date is better for the child's long-term educational development.
2. Infant Class Size legislation applies to all children admitted within the Reception Year, despite the child's start date. Therefore, if deferred admission is agreed, that child's place will be held open and will not be available to be offered to another child during the academic year.
3. Schools can obtain advice on the funding implications from the Finance Section.

Advice for Parents

1. A school will assume that a child will start Reception Year in September unless a parent contacts the head teacher to discuss other options. Please see previous page about part-time and delayed admission.
2. Parents should discuss with the head teacher whether starting school outside the usual admission group is in the best interests of the child.
3. Parents who are considering educating their child outside the usual admission group must still apply for a place in Reception Year in the normal admissions round.
4. Parents who defer entry to Reception Year while the child is below statutory school age still receive free early education entitlement funding.

Other year groups

As a general principle, the Local Authority believes that children should be educated within their chronological peer group. The National Curriculum allows schools to change both the curriculum offered and the assessment procedures in order to meet individual needs. Inclusion is therefore promoted through altering the curriculum within the classroom to the child's ability, rather than by moving the child into another year group.

There is no legal barrier to educating a child outside their usual year group. Paragraph 2.17A of the School Admissions Code makes it clear that it is school admission authorities who are responsible for making the decision on which year group a child should be admitted to, but they should make decisions on the basis of the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child concerned.

This includes taking account of:

- Parents' views.
- Information about the child's academic, social and emotional development from the child's current education placement.
- Where relevant, their medical history and the views of a medical professional.
- Whether they have previously been educated out of their usual age group; and
- Whether they may naturally have fallen into a lower age group if it were not for being born prematurely.
- They must also take into account the views of the head teacher at the school concerned.

Common reasons for parental requests for educating outside the usual chronological age group

- The pupil has a birth date in July or August or they were born prematurely
- Parents moving in from another country where education starts later.
- The pupil is gifted and exceptionally able.
- The pupil has missed a significant portion of a particular year's study through
- Illness or other unavoidable absence.

Advice to Schools

Pupils placed and taught out of their age group, will be suitable in very limited circumstances. Such placement will only be considered as appropriate after full consultation and agreement has taken place with all parties and (where applicable) in accordance with the requirements of the School Admissions Code.

Where pupils are placed in a younger age group, it is expected that:

- There is strong evidence to show the child's readiness and well-being for school is significantly below that expected of their peers.
- There is informed parental support and agreement
- Both parents and pupil agree with the potential implications e.g. statutory school leaving age of 16 and the requirement to be in education and training until their 18th birthday.

Advice to Parents

- Where a parent wishes their child to be admitted outside their usual age group, they should discuss this with the school or local authority they will be applying to in order that the relevant admission authority can decide whether this can be agreed.
- They should then complete the attached 'Application out of usual year group' form by the relevant cohort admission closing dates listed below. The Local Authority will then make arrangements to include the child's application in the relevant admissions round.

Starting school Reception application deadline	15 January
Moving to Junior school application deadline	15 January
Moving to secondary school application deadline	31 October

The above closing dates do not apply for the 'In Year' admissions process. Instead, the 'Application out of usual year group' form must be submitted with the ICAF (In-Year application form).

- Each case is considered on the child's application and information that has been submitted to the Local Authority.
- Parents should be aware that where an admission authority agrees to admission outside of usual age group, it does not guarantee a place in the relevant class at their preferred school. Places will be allocated based on the schools published admission criteria.
- The decision on the application will need to be made through the normal admission round on the home local authority's application form. In other words, an application for an oversubscribed school could be unsuccessful, even though the parental request for admission out of their usual age group has been agreed by the relevant admission authority.
- Parents have a right to appeal to an independent appeal panel if decline an application for a school place. This right does not apply if we offer a place at the school but not in the preferred year group.