

PLACEMENT OF PUPILS OUT OF THEIR CHRONOLOGICAL YEAR GROUP

Parental information

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In September 2015 the DFE published a letter to councils regarding the admission of summer born children offering further interpretation of the admissions code and advising that the admissions code would be updated in future. This document will be updated once further information is received.

Starting School

Introduction

The majority of children start school full-time in the September following their fourth birthday. However, in some cases parents¹ believe that starting part-time or starting later in the school year would be more appropriate for their child. There are a number of options to consider and sources of support and information.

This guidance document for parents aims to provide information to help you with this decision. It is based on the Government's [Admission Code](#) and the Buckinghamshire guidance on pupils being educated in a year group one year below their chronological age.

You may also wish to consult:

your child's **early years or childcare provider**;

- the **headteacher** at the school where your child has been allocated a place or where you are hoping to secure a place;

the **Family Information Service**– If your child has Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND), you may also wish to consult:

- your child's **SEN Coordinator (SENCO)**
- the **SENCO** at the school where your child has been allocated a place or where you are hoping to secure a place;
other professionals supporting your child e.g. paediatrician, educational psychologist, speech and language therapist.
Buckinghamshire **Local Offer**
[Buckinghamshire SEND IAS Service](#) (formerly known as Parent Partnership).

Points to consider:

- schools are committed to ensuring that the reception class meets every child's needs. The Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum is a flexible and responsive play-based curriculum which supports this. This curriculum must be followed in all Ofsted-registered pre-school and reception classes.
- Individual children's needs will usually be met through high quality teaching and, if necessary, special educational needs provision. This means that most children will be well-supported in their age-appropriate reception class.

- The long term impact of the decision as your child moves through their schooling

¹ Any reference to 'parent/s' in this document includes carer/s.

When do children have to start school?

All children are entitled to start school full-time in the September following their fourth birthday. By law, children have to be in full-time education by the start of the term following their fifth birthday – when they reach '**compulsory school age**'.

What are the options?

If you don't want your child to start school full-time in the September following their fourth birthday, it is possible to:

- 1. Request part-time admission during the reception year** to the allocated school from the September following your child's fourth birthday;
- 2. Request to defer** your child's entry for a term or two terms (i.e. until they are of compulsory school age) so that they don't start straight away in the September following their fourth birthday – e.g. they might start in the January following their fourth birthday, in the allocated reception class;
- 3. Request to defer** your child's entry until the September following their fifth birthday if they were born in the summer, **you would need to reapply for a place and they would start in year one**;
- 4. Request to delay** your child's entry into a reception class until the September following their fifth birthday– your child will be educated out of their chronological year group.

Part-time admission is an agreement that your child will attend less than full-time for a short or longer period. Places in reception will be allocated as full-time from the September after your child's fourth birthday. However, you may ask for part-time admission. For example, you may believe that starting full-time school will be too tiring for your child. This may be preferable to deferring your child's entry until later in the school year as this will give them the opportunity to settle in gradually and start to make friends at the same time as other children in the class. However, please note the pattern of part time attendance is for the school to decide and they do not have to agree to a particular pattern to fit in with your preference.

You will need to discuss this with the headteacher so that they can understand your child's experiences, readiness for school and individual needs and plan how they can fit part-time admission into the organisation of the school. You may find however that your child would consistently miss particular aspects of the reception timetable such as music or story time.

You must make your request for part-time admission **by contacting the school** once you have accepted your offer of a school place. Your request must be made as soon as possible before the September which follows your child's fourth birthday.

If you wish to combine a part-time school place with any other childcare provider, your child's free entitlement will be used to pay for the school provision. There may be an additional charge from the provider of any other care should the total equate to more than 15 hours per week.

Deferred entry to school is where a parent decides to request that their child starts school later in the school year that follows their fourth birthday or when the child reaches compulsory school age (the term after the child's fifth birthday). They will then join the correct year group for their age.

If you decide that you want your child to start later in the school year in the spring or summer terms you still need to apply for a school place for the September following your child's fourth birthday – the place can then be held open for him or her.

If you defer entry, your child will continue to have 15 hours free early learning entitlement with an early years provider.

Child with their fifth birthday between 1 September and 31 December	Compulsory school age from the following January.	A school place will be available from the September of, or before, their fifth birthday but you can defer the school place until January – the school place that you have been allocated will be held for you once you let the school know.
Child with their fifth birthday between 1 January and 31 March	Compulsory school age from the following April.	A school place will be available from the September before this but you can defer the school place until January or April – the school place that you have been allocated will be held for you once you let the school know.
Child with their fifth birthday between 1 April and 31 August	Compulsory school age from the following September (which is then year one, not reception).	A school place will be available from the September before this but you can defer the school place until January or April – the school place that you have been allocated will be held for you once you let the school know. You can also legally defer the school place until September BUT the offer of a school place will be withdrawn and you will need to reapply for a place in year one . This will be treated as a new application and there is no guarantee that a place will be available at your preferred school .

Disadvantages of deferred entry- your child may:

- Miss out on a range of reception class activities intended to help children to settle in.
- Join an already-established year group at a later time than most other children. Social groups and friendships may already be taking shape before your child joins the school.
- Miss out on a play-based curriculum in a school setting.
- Have less time to develop physical stamina for the school day and understanding of acceptable behaviour compared to other children.

What if I ask for deferred entry, but later change my mind?

If you decide later in the year that your child is ready for school then you should speak to the headteacher to discuss a start date and inform your early years provider of your decision.

Delayed entry to school is where a parent holds back their child from joining the correct year group for their age so that they start school a year later than they are due to, in the reception class. This can only be agreed by the [admission authority](#) for the school. This decision would usually be made in consultation with the Local Authority and other professionals.

Factors the admission authority will take into account before agreeing to delayed entry to school:

- 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 the admission authority for the school agrees that your child should have delayed entry to reception, you will be asked to sign a document which describes what was discussed, what you were advised and indicates your agreement to the final decision.

NB: If your child has a Statement of Special Educational Needs or Education, Health and Care Plan (or is being considered for one), the appropriateness of whether or not to delay your child's entry to school will be considered through the statutory annual review process which is led by the Local Authority.

While you are considering delayed entry, you are still advised to submit an application for a school place for the September following your child's fourth birthday. You can always withdraw your application or decline the offer of a reception place if it is agreed that your child should be held back a year.

Delayed entry – points to consider.

- Deferred or part-time entry offers flexibility for children who aren't quite ready to start school or need a phased entry to give them time to settle in – have you considered all of these options which might be good alternatives to delayed entry?
- Your child will be in a different year group from the one that they are supposed to be in – what might be the long-term impacts of this? Experience tells us that this can be an issue as your child matures and recognises he is older than anyone else in the year group.
- Delaying entry into reception will usually involve an extra year with an early years provider which may not be full-time but your child may benefit from more co-ordinated educational input as well as the opportunity to play. The Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum in a reception class is able to provide this.
- As the law currently stands, when your child transfers to junior or secondary school, the admission authority for that school will make the decision on whether or not to allow them to continue out of their chronological year group – it may be prudent to 'rehearse' this conversation with them before making your decision.
- **If you think your child has a Special Educational Need** you need to be aware that by deciding to delay your child's entrance into school we do not see this as an educational intervention or strategy to support your child special educational need in its own right.

What do I need to do when I've made my decision?

...if you've decided on part-time entry:

- Once you've been allocated a school place, speak to the headteacher as soon as possible to request part-time admission.

...if you've decided on deferred entry until the spring or summer term:

- You will still need to apply for a school place as if for September entry but this place will be held open for you until the January or April if you request it. Once you've been allocated a place you will need to speak to the headteacher to arrange the deferred admission.

...if you've decided on deferred entry until the following September:

- You will need to apply/reapply for a place in **year one** using the admissions procedure which the School Admissions Team can advise you about.

...if you've decided that you want to request delayed entry:

- You should speak to the headteacher at your preferred school, your early years provider and any other professionals involved and then complete and return an 'Out of year Placement Form', available from here .

Beyond the reception year – educating children in a year group below their chronological age.

The decision to ask a pupil to repeat a year or to admit a pupil (after reception year) to a year group that is behind their chronological year group is one that will normally be requested by the school rather than by the parent. The school applies to the Pupils Out of Their Chronological Year Group Panel. The school would need to provide evidence that:

- 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 decision to admit a pupil to Y10 rather than Y11 is in order to ensure the child can compete two full years of GCSE study
- the parent/s, the school and all professionals involved agree that this is the best provision for the child.

If it is agreed that your child should either join a school out of year group or repeat a year or part of a year and then continue out of year group you may be asked to sign a document which indicates your agreement to the final decision.

NB: If your child has a Statement of Special Educational Needs or Education, Health and Care Plan (or is being considered for one), the appropriateness of whether or not to delay your child's entry to school will be considered through the statutory annual review process which is led by the Local Authority.

Educating out of year group – points to consider

- Your child will be in a different year group from the one that they are supposed to be in – what would be the long-term impacts of this?
- When your child transfers to junior or secondary school, the admission authority for that school will make the decision on whether or not to allow them to continue out of their chronological year group – it may be prudent to 'rehearse' this conversation with them when making your decision. This is particularly an issue for entry to schools that test pupils - this is currently the 13 grammar schools plus Highcrest Academy.
- It is possible that tuition funding could cease partway through a course of further education if a child transitions into adulthood half way through a course due to being placed out of year when they were younger.

Secondary transfer tests – my child is in year 6, but should be in year 7.

Agreement will usually be given by the Buckinghamshire Grammar Schools to test a child who is over the age of 11 on the understanding that the reason the child is out of year group

is because in the past there were educational reasons (which have continued) for that child to be in a lower year group. This might be because the child has missed at least a year of school because they were ill or living abroad in a country with different academic year arrangements. However, simply attending a school in another country at some point, or being born late in the school year, are not, on their own, sufficient reasons for the grammar schools to agree to test your child.

Parents wishing to register an over-age child, need to get prior agreement from the county council (who currently administrate the grammar school admissions process) before the child sits the test. The council will contact the child's current headteacher to seek more information before a decision is made to offer testing. Parents of children attending a Buckinghamshire primary school out of year group should speak to their child's headteacher about this in the summer term of Y5.

The transfer test is standardised according to the child's age in days on the day they sit the test. However this standardisation is only within the normal cohort's date of birth span (ie. 1 September-31 August for the correct chronological year group) and children older than that group will be standardised along with the oldest pupils in the chronological group.

I would like my child to be educated in the year above their chronological year group – would this be possible?

Schools will not request that a child is educated in the year above their chronological year group simply because of his or her outstanding academic ability as the curriculum can be differentiated to meet such a child's needs. However, if a child moves into the county and has a history of being educated in the year above their age then headteachers may continue this process but should refer the case to the panel. Parents should be aware of the following:

Secondary transfer tests – my child is in year 6 but should be in year 5.

Occasionally, the Buckinghamshire grammar schools will agree that a child can take part in the Transfer Tests before the school year in which they turn 11. This can only happen if the child is of outstanding academic ability, is exceptionally mature and has been working well (for a number of years) with other pupils in Year 6. It is not sufficient for the child to have been educated in some classes with older children.

Parents wishing to register an under-age child to be tested need to get prior agreement from the grammar schools before the child sit the test. The testing administrator (currently Buckinghamshire County Council) will contact the child's current headteacher to seek more information before a decision is made to offer testing. In the first instance children attending a Buckinghamshire LA primary school, should speak to their child's headteacher about this during Year 5.

The transfer test is standardised according to the child's age in days on the day they sit the test. However this standardisation is only within the normal cohort's date of birth span (ie. 1

September-31 August for the correct chronological year group) and children younger than that group will be standardised along with the youngest pupils in the chronological group.

If I am not happy with the decision made in my child's case – what can I do next?

If you are not happy with the school place your child has been allocated, you can appeal to an independent admissions panel.

If you have asked to delay your child's admission, and this has been refused, you can make a complaint. Please use the school's published complaints procedure (or the Local Authority's complaints procedure in the case of community and voluntary-controlled schools). If you are unhappy with the way your complaint has been handled, you can contact– the [Local Government Ombudsman](#) in the case of complaints to the LA and the [Secretary of State](#) in the case of complaints to schools.

If your child has a Statement of SEN and a request for placement out of year group via the annual review process has been refused, you will receive a letter giving you a right to appeal to the SEN Tribunal

If your child or young person has an EHC Plan and a request for placement out of year group via the annual review process has been refused, you (or your young person) will receive a letter giving you (or your young person) a right to appeal to the SEN Tribunal.

Where can I get help and advice or find more information?

Admission and Transport Team

Telephone: 01296 383250

Email: admissions@buckscc.gov.uk

Website: www.buckscc.gov.uk/admissions

[Buckinghamshire Family Information Service:](#)

Buckinghamshire Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information, Advice and Support (SEND IAS) Service

Telephone: 01296 383754 Email: sendias@buckscc.gov.uk

Website: www.buckscc.gov.uk/education/bucks-send-ias/

School admissions code:

This is what the school admissions code says about: The Admission **of children outside their normal age group**

2.17 Parents may seek a place for their child outside of their normal age group, for example, if the child is gifted and talented or has experienced problems such as ill health. In addition, the parents of a summer born child * may choose not to send that child to school until the September following their fifth birthday and may request that they are admitted out of their normal age group – to reception rather than year 1. Admission authorities **must** make clear in their admission arrangements the process for requesting admission out of the normal age group.

2.17A Admission authorities **must** make decisions on the basis of the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child concerned. This will include taking account of the parent's views; information about the child's academic, social and emotional development; where relevant, their medical history and the views of a medical professional; whether they have previously been educated out of their normal 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 of the school concerned. When informing a parent of their decision on the year group the child should be admitted to, the admission authority **must** set out clearly the reasons for their decision.

2.17B Where an admission authority agrees to a parent's request for their child to be admitted out of their 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, unless the parental request is made too late for this to be possible, and on the basis of their determined admission arrangements only, including the application of oversubscription criteria where applicable. They **must not** give the application lower priority on the basis that the child is being admitted out of their normal age group. 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 they are offered a place at the school but it is not in their preferred age group.

* The term summer born children relates to all children born from 1 April to 31 August. These children reach compulsory school age on 31 August following their fifth birthday (or on their fifth birthday if it falls on 31 August). It is likely that most requests for summer born children to be admitted out of their normal age group will come from parents of children born in the later summer months or those born prematurely.

Advice on the admission of summer born children

Foundation Years website: www.foundationyears.org.uk

Glossary

Admission authorities:

Type of School	Who is the admission authority?
Academies	Academy Trust
Community Schools	Local Authority
Foundation Schools	Governing body
Voluntary aided schools	Governing body
Voluntary controlled schools	Local Authority

Defer – to put back within the same academic year

Delay – to put back to the next academic year

EHC Plan – Education, Health and Care Plan

Full-time education - attending 5 days a week morning and afternoons

Part-time – attending less than 5 days a week or only mornings or afternoons

Secondary transfer tests – grammar school entry tests children sit

SEN – special educational needs

SEND – Special Educational Needs and Disabilities