

Guidance on Starting School – deferring or delaying admission

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**’.

Child with their fifth birthday between 1 September and 31 December (Autumn Born)	<p>Compulsory school age from the following January.</p> <p>A school place will be available from the September of, or before their fifth birthday but can be deferred until January – the school place that has been allocated will be held once the parent lets the school know</p>
Child with their fifth birthday between 1 January and 31 March (Spring Born)	<p>Compulsory school age from the following April:</p> <p>A school place will be available from the September before this but can be deferred until January or April – the school place that has been allocated will be held once the parent lets the school know.</p>
Child with their fifth birthday between 1 April and 31 August (Summer Born)	<p>Compulsory school age from the following September (which is then year 1 not reception):</p> <p>A school place will be available from the September before this but can be deferred until January or April – the school place that has been allocated will be held once the parent lets the school know.</p> <p>Parents can also legally defer the school place until September BUT the offer of a school place will be withdrawn and they will need to reapply for a place in year one.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 their preferred school.</p> <p>However if a parent decides to request a place in a reception class rather than year one in September, having deferred the place for a year, this would be called delayed admission. This can only be agreed by the admission authority for the school.</p>

What are the options?

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

1. **Opt for part time admission** to the allocated school from the September following their child's fourth birthday (but not beyond the point at which they reach compulsory school age);
2. **Opt to defer** their 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 ;
3. **Opt to defer** their child's entry until the September following their fifth birthday, if they were born in the summer – **but they would need to reapply for a place and the child would start in year one;**
4. **Request to delay** their child's entry, holding them back from joining the correct year group for their age and starting school in the reception a year later

What is the difference between deferred and delayed entry?

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.

How to request deferred entry until the spring or summer term

Parents will still need to apply for a school place as if for September entry but this place will be held open for them until the January or April if they request it. Once they've been allocated a place they will need to write to the Headteacher to arrange the deferred admission.

How to request deferred entry until the following September

Parents who decide that they want to take up the opportunity to defer their entry to school until the September after their fifth birthday, should write to the admission authority and should be aware that **the school place would not be held open for them** for a whole year (ie until the September in which they reach compulsory school age). They would need to **reapply for a school place and this would be for year one**, because their child would have missed the reception year.

If parents believe that their child should start in reception instead, a year later than they are due to start, this is called **delayed entry**.

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.

How to request delayed entry (starting a year late in the reception)

Parents should still submit an application for a school place for the September following their child's fourth birthday. They can always withdraw their application or decline the offer of a reception place if it is agreed that their child should be held back a year.

Should the parent wish their child to be admitted to reception rather than year one, at this point, they **may request in writing** to the admission authority that the child is admitted outside their normal age group ie start in reception a year later than normal. **Parents do not have the right to insist** that their child is admitted to school a year late but they may make a request for this to happen and each case will be looked at on each individual set of circumstances.

The LA expects all admissions authorities and schools, when considering the admission or placement of a pupil outside their normal age group, to enable the LA to discharge its statutory duties with regard to the provision and organisation of school places. The following procedures are required for community schools, but it is recommended as good practice for Academies, trust, voluntary aided and free schools:

- Meeting convened by admission authority to allow for full consideration of the case;
- Record of the meeting and written reports should be placed on the pupil's file and transferred to any new school at each transition;
- Letter sent to parents confirming the outcome of the meeting

Parents do not have a right of appeal if they have been offered a place and it is not in the year group they would like.

Part time admission

Places in reception will be allocated as full time from the September after a child's fourth birthday. However, parents may choose part time admission. This may be preferable to deferring the 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. Parents will need to discuss this with the Headteacher so that the child's experiences, readiness for school and individual needs can be understood and the Headteacher can plan how they can fit part-time admission into the organisation of the school.

What to do when parents have chosen part-time admissions

Parents must make their choice of part-time admission clear to the school as soon as possible after receiving the notification of a place and before September **by contacting the school.**