

Dear Colleague

Re: Requests to defer entry of ‘summer born’ children to the Reception Year

As you know most children join Reception at the beginning of Term 1 (September). However, children do not have to start full-time education at school until the term after their fifth birthday.

If a parent wishes to defer their child’s admission to Reception at a primary or infants’ school, they should discuss the implications with the school concerned but the legal position is that a parent may defer their child’s entry to school until the beginning of the term after they are 5. Most children born between 1 September 2014 and 31 December 2014 will start school at the beginning of September 2019 but their parents may decide to start them at school at the beginning of Term 2 (January 2019) of the 2019/20 academic year. Similarly, most children born between 1 January and 31 March 2015 will start school at the beginning of Term 1 but their parents may decide to start them at school at the beginning of Term 3 (April 2019) of the 2019/20 academic year. However, in all cases the parents of children born between 1 September 2014 and 31 March 2015 cannot defer entry to full time education until September 2020.

Summer born children are defined as those born from the beginning of April to the end of August and for entry in September 2019 they are children who reach their fifth birthday no later than 31 August 2020. The parent of a summer born child may decide that their child should not start school until they are chronologically of Year 1 age. However, any place offered for entry in 2019/20 cannot be deferred until September 2020. The parent concerned would need to apply for a place for their child for entry in September 2020 and unless the parent would like their child to enter Year 1 they need to request an admission authority’s permission for their child to be considered for a place in Reception. It is worth noting in this context that it would be unlawful for an admission authority to have a blanket policy which simply states that summer born children who start school in the September after their fifth birthday will be admitted to Year 1.

In Oxfordshire, the parent of a child who is eligible for admission to school in September 2019 but whose child does not have to start full time education until September 2020, and who wants them to start Reception in 2020 rather than Year 1, should make their request as early as possible in the academic year 2018/19. Requests should be made to Oxfordshire County Council’s Admissions Team using the form “Request for the admission of summer born children outside their normal age group” and attaching any evidence that they believe will be helpful. This form is available on Oxfordshire County Council’s public website <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/schools/starting-school/defer-reception-application>

Once the relevant form has been received by the Admissions Team the admission authority for each of the school(s) listed will be contacted to ask whether they are willing to accept an out of year group application in the next academic year. Any admission authority for a requested school must consider such a request and the parent must be

informed of the outcome of their request. In all cases, the admissions authority must take in to account the views of the Headteacher of the school concerned.

Factors that may be considered by an admission authority are:

- the views of the parent;
- the needs of the child and the possible impact of entering Year 1 without having first attended the Reception class;
- if a child has been born prematurely, the fact that they may have naturally fallen into the lower age group if they had been born on their expected date of birth;
- the extent to which a child's delayed social, emotional or physical development is adversely affecting their readiness for school;
- any relevant research into the outcomes of summer born and premature children;
- where relevant, the child's medical history and the views of a medical professional.

If it is agreed that an application can be processed for Reception for the September following a child's fifth birthday, no weight may be added to the application owing to the application being deferred. Similarly, no admissions authority will give a lower priority for admission on the basis that the child is not of the correct age.

If an admission authority refuses a parent's request for a child to be considered for admission to Reception a year later than is usual it is open to the parent to make a complaint using the admission authority's formal complaints procedure. All schools have a duty to consider complaints about the school and must have a published complaints procedure in place. Local authorities also have a complaints procedure which can be used if the school concerned is a community or voluntary controlled school.

If a child is already of statutory school age and the child's parent requests that the child is admitted to Reception rather than Year 1 there is no right of appeal if a place has been offered in Year 1. If a place is not available in either year group there would be a right of appeal. However, the appeal would be for the year group that the admission authority had decided was the appropriate year group for the child.

If a child is educated outside of the normal age group whilst in primary school on applying for a secondary school place, it will be for the admission authority of the secondary school to decide whether to admit the child outside of their normal age group. When making this decision the admission authority for the secondary school must make the decisions based on the circumstances of each case.

A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday of June in the school year they become 16. If a child is educated outside of their normal age group (i.e. is in Year 10 when this date is reached) the school will continue to receive funding for that child but the child will no longer be of compulsory school age during the school year in which most children take their GCSE examinations. This means that a child educated in Year 10 but who is of Year 11 age could leave school at the end of Year 10 although the child concerned would still need to continue their education in an alternative setting or would have to undergo training.

I hope this information is helpful.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Neil Darlington', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Neil Darlington
Service Manager (School Admissions)
Admissions & Transport

January 2019