

Policy for Delayed Entry to Reception in a Telford and Wrekin School.

Background

While most parents are happy for their child to start school in the September following their fourth birthday, some parents will have concerns about whether their child will be ready for school at this point, and will consider delaying their entry until compulsory school age. It is important that parents know all the options available to them and are able to make an informed decision.

Before deciding to delay their child's entry to school, we would recommend that parents visit the schools they are thinking of applying for. The teachers will be able to explain the provision on offer to children in the reception class, how it is tailored to meet the needs of the youngest pupils and how the needs of these pupils will continue to be met as they move up through the school. They may also be able to allay any concerns the parent may have about their child's readiness for school.

It is also important to note that, whether a child attends a primary school or an early years setting during the academic year following their fourth birthday, they will receive the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum which is largely based around learning through play. Further information for parents about the early years foundation stage is available on the Foundation Years website.

<https://www.foundationyears.org.uk/>

Additionally, children born in the summer term (between the 1st April and 31st August), 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. Should the parent wish their child to be admitted to reception, rather than year one, at this point, they may request that they are admitted out of their normal age group. Paragraph 2.17A of the code requires that, in any circumstance where a parent requests their child is admitted out of their normal age group, the admission authority must make a decision on the basis of the circumstances of the case and in the best interests of the child concerned.

Parents make their applications for a school place in the Autumn term, and early in the Spring term of the year before their child is due to start school. Applications close on January 15th. The Local Authority then allocate school places in accordance with parental preferences and schools oversubscription criteria.

Once a place has been allocated through the usual admissions round, parents who wish to defer entry into school until later in that academic year or until the

child is 5 must discuss this with the Headteacher of the school where they have been allocated a school place.

It is for the school to agree this with the parents.

If the school agrees this with the parents, the school must hold the allocated place open until the child starts school. The school is not able to include the child in the school's census if the child has not started at the school at the point of the census. Children must attend school full time once they become of statutory school age which is the beginning of the term following their fifth birthday.

Decisions to delay admissions for Summer born children until compulsory school age.

A revised School Admissions Code came into force in December 2014. The relevant paragraphs (2.17, 2.17A and 2.17B) relate to any circumstance in which a parent requests their child is admitted out of their normal age group. Parents/carers occasionally request that the admission of their summer born child is delayed for an academic year due to developmental or emotional issues. The Local Authority accepts that there may be exceptional, individual circumstances, which may for this very small group of children, necessitate a child starting school outside of their chronological age group. Particular consideration will be given to children who have been born so prematurely that it places them into an earlier academic year group than they would have been had they been born on or nearer to the due date.

The Local Authority would not support a delayed entry of more than one year.

Where a delayed entry to school for a child is agreed, the parents **MUST** submit a new application in the following year's round. Parents should note that there is not a guarantee that the child will gain a place at one of the preferred schools, even if they would have been allocated a place there within the normal admission round in the usual year of entry. Where a child has an agreed delayed entry and the parents do not submit an application for a school place the Local Authority will allocate a place in line with the procedures for allocating places for children where it is not possible to allocate a place as a preferred school.

It is the Admission Authority which is responsible for making the decision on which year group a child is admitted to. This policy refers to Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools. Please refer to the appendix for a list of schools where this policy applies.

Process for managing parental requests

Parents/carers of a child eligible to be admitted into reception but wishing consideration to be made for a delayed entry **MUST** apply for a school place through the normal admission procedures and must submit an application form by January 15th when the admission round closes for applications for reception places.

Any request to delay entry should be made by the parent in writing to the School Admissions Team, using the form in the appendix **no later than the 31 December in the preceding year of the child's scheduled entry to reception class.**

In order for a decision to be made in the child's best interests parents will be expected to provide information in support of their request. This information should demonstrate why it would be in the child's interests to be admitted to reception rather than year one. The supporting information should include a report from the Early Years setting regarding the child's current level of functioning with evidence of the child's attainments against the early learning goals, the child's social functioning with the peer group and the Early Year's providers views on the request; where applicable, reports from other professionals involved e.g. health professionals, education psychologist, specialist early years teacher. The request should also include evidence that the parent has discussed the possibility with all the schools indicated as a preference on their application and that those schools have been able to indicate on the form whether they would be happy in principle should the child be allocated a place at that school.

Reaching a Decision

The decision for a child to have a delayed entry to school will be made by a panel comprising representative headteachers, and Local Authority officers who will consider the particular circumstances for each child. The panel will take account of the child's individual needs and abilities and consider whether these will be best met in year R or Y1. Where the Local Authority is not the admission authority for a school the panel will make a recommendation to that admission authority.

The panel has a dual role to consider delayed entry requests and requests on exceptional medical grounds for primary and secondary places and will sit three times a year. It will ordinarily consider delayed entry cases at the January meeting.

Requests for consideration will have been made to the Local Authority by 31st December in the year prior to the date when the child should enter Reception.

The panel will be convened by The School Admissions Team Leader to consider such requests.

Composition and Role of Panel:-

- SEND officer for Early Years
- Representative SEND officer for the cases to consider regarding medical requests.
- School Admissions Team leader
- Group Manager Access and Inclusion
- Early Years and Childcare Consultant
- Headteacher representatives from the Local Admissions Forum

The panel would be advised by the designated Clinical officer
Meetings are scheduled for January, May and November to coincide with both the admissions processes for primary and secondary and also the SEND cycle for completion of EHCP's.

The School Admissions Team will co-ordinate the work of the panel. Decisions will be made considering all the information available. It will take into account the parent's views, and all aspects of the pupil's social, emotional, academic development/progress in order to reach a decision which is in the best interests of the child.

Where a parent is requesting that a child has delayed entry into another school year, the panel must first decide on the age group the child should be admitted into. The panel will also involve taking account of the potential impact on the child of being admitted to Year one without first having completed the Reception year. The views of the headteacher will be an important part of this consideration.

In accordance with The School Admissions Code 2014, all the schools indicated as a preference by the parents will be informed and their general views will be sought and considered by the panel. One admission authority cannot be required to honour a decision made by another admission authority on admission out of the normal age group. Parents are therefore asked to request admission out of the normal year group at all their preference schools, rather than just their first preference school.

The panel will undertake to:

- Resolve cases in a fair and consistent manner, taking into account the impact any decision will have on the pupil, parents/carers and the school;
- Seek the views of relevant professionals where necessary
- Set out clearly for the parents the reasons for their decision in each case.
- Reach a decision prior to the allocation of school places (16 April) and communicate this with parents

Where it is agreed that the child should start school outside of their chronological age group, the parents/carers **MUST** apply for a school place again through the normal admission procedures the following year. It should be noted that there is no guarantee of gaining a place at the school they would have been allocated through the usual admissions round appropriate to their cohort.

Parental appeals and complaints

Parents who are refused a place at a school for which they have applied have the right of appeal to an independent admission appeal panel. The purpose of the appeals process is to consider whether a child should be admitted to a particular school, not a particular year group. 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. However, they may make a complaint about an admission authority's decision not to admit their child outside their normal age group.

They may also make such a complaint if they have not made, or do not yet know the outcome of, their formal application for a school place. All schools have a duty to consider complaints about the school and must have a published complaints procedure in place. Local authorities will also have a complaints procedure.

In the case of foundation and voluntary aided schools, academies and free schools, parents may make a complaint using the school's complaints procedure – because the governing body or academy trust is the admission authority. In the case of community and voluntary controlled schools, they may complain to the local authority – because they are the admission authority.

If a parent is unhappy with the way a local authority or maintained school has handled their complaint, the parent may then refer their complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman.

If they are unhappy with the way an academy has handled their complaint they may complain to the Education Funding Agency who will consider the complaint on behalf of the Secretary of State for Education. More information is available on www.gov.uk.

Attendance at an early years setting

If it is decided that it is in the best interests of the child to delay entry to school, the child will continue to be entitled to a 15 hours funded placement (or up to 30 hours if the child's parents meet the 'working' eligibility criteria and if the setting is able from September 2017) at an early years setting until they commence full time school.

If the child is in a Specialist Early Years Setting, they will be eligible to transfer to another setting but will not be able to remain at the Specialist Early Years Setting.

Review

Once placed out of cohort, it is expected that the child will stay out of cohort throughout their schooling, **unless** parents and the school both agree that it is in the best interests of the child to return to their chronological year group. Any decision to

move a child to a different age group should be based on sound educational reasons and made by the headteacher in consultation with the parents.

Transfer to junior and secondary school

Where a child has been educated out of their normal age group, parents may again request admission out of the normal age group when they transfer to junior or secondary school. It will be for the admission authority of that school to decide whether to admit the child out of their normal age group. They must make a decision on the basis of the circumstances of each case and in the child's best interests, and will need to bear in mind the age group the child has been educated in up to that point.

Tests and performance tables

Children are assessed when they reach the end of each key stage, not when they reach a particular age. There are no age requirements as to when children must take their GCSEs or other assessments. The department for Education reports on pupils' performance when they reach the end of a key stage – regardless of age.

School leaving age

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 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 and cannot, therefore, be obliged to attend. The government has changed the law so that all young people are required to continue in education or training until their 18th birthday. Young people will have a choice about how they do this. It could be through full time education in school or college, an apprenticeship or full time employment combined with part time education. However, the date on which they cease to be of compulsory school age will remain unchanged.

Pupils with an Education Health Care Plan

The policy for delayed entry does not apply to children who have an Education Health Care Plan, the decision to delay entry into school will be made as a part of the Education and Health Care Needs Assessment prior to the issuing of an Education and Health Care Plan.

Checklist for Local Authority Use

Panel members, parents, and involved professionals all feel that the decision to delay entry would substantially increase the probability of the child's successful inclusion in mainstream school.	
This decision is not being made in order to delay other interventions, such as placement at a different school.	
This decision is not being made due to difficulties in making appropriately differentiated provision in the class to which the child should normally be admitted.	
The placement would not breach infant class size legislation.	
Consideration has been given to the rights of other children who might otherwise take that place.	
Consideration has been given to the likely future placements for the child, e.g. returning to their own year group or remaining with the new year group.	
There has been a discussion with the parents/carers about the likely future issues, e.g. leaving school without completing KS 4.	
All involved feel that the child will be able to learn more from the children in the proposed year group than by being around children in their own age group.	
The child will have a peer group in their new class, which is likely to continue to be somewhere that the child can 'fit in' as the cohort matures.	