



Aletheia
Academies Trust

Defer Admission to a Primary School

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Introduction and the Law

This policy has been produced to help parents with requests for deferred entry, part-time attendance and admission outside the normal age group.

This policy and procedure is based on the School Admissions Code (SAC) 2021 and current guidance available from the Department for Education¹.

Compulsory school age is set out in section 8 of the Education Act 1996 and The Education (Start of Compulsory School Age) Order 1998. A child reaches compulsory school age on the prescribed day following his or her fifth birthday (or on his or her fifth birthday if it falls on a prescribed day). The prescribed days are 31 December, 31 March and 31 August.

The Governors note that parents² also have the right to Home Educate their child, but this must be agreed with their Home Local Authority in writing.

Parents may defer the date their child is admitted to school until later in the school year following their fourth birthday, providing they do not defer beyond the point at which they reach compulsory school age, or beyond the start of the final term of that school year. Alternatively, their child may attend school part-time until they reach compulsory school age.³

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/summer-born-children-school-admission/summer-born-children-starting-school-advice-for-parents>

² For parent read parent(s), guardian(s) or carer(s)

³ For Medway Council summer Born admissions protocol see: [Summer born children admissions protocol | Medway Council](#)

For Kent County Council summer born admissions protocol see: [Summer born children - Kent County Council](#)

A parent may also request for a summer born child's education to be deferred by one year. Parents have the right to apply for a deferment and each application will be considered on a case-by-case basis. The Governors note that the SAC and Government Guidance does not direct that each application should automatically result in a child being taught out of their chronological age. That would require primary legislation for which the Government dropped such plans in July 2022.⁴

The current SAC (September 2021) updated the section on school deferment. This requires Admission Authorities (Governors) to 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 normal age group.

Paragraph 2.17 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.

Part-time attendance

Parents may request that their child attend part-time until they reach legal school age. Parents must discuss this option with the Headteacher of the offered school. The school is not required to offer flexible part-time hours but can inform parents of the part-time arrangements available at the school. This will usually be morning or

⁴ <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-7272/CBP-7272.pdf>

afternoon sessions. It will be for the Headteacher to 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 years setting as well as a part-time Reception place.

Deferred (delayed) entry

Parents may request to delay their child's start date but must still apply for a Reception place in the normal admissions round. School websites list the date of birth ranges of children in the relevant normal admissions round.

Before places have been offered, parents must contact the Headteacher to request a preferred start date.

If you delay your start date, your child's nursery place (if applicable) cannot continue unless there are nursery spaces available after the correct aged children have been offered a place.

The options for deferred entry, dependent on your Home Local Authority, **may** be:

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 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.

If you wish your child to start in the September following their 5th birthday in year Reception and not year 1, you must make a formal application to the Governors via the Local Authority.

In all cases parents should discuss any request with the Headteacher of the school before completing a 'Defer to Reception Class Request form' available from the Home Local Authority.

Deferred (delay) admission by one year. Parents must apply for a place at the school during the normal admission round for the chronological age AND must complete a 'Defer to Reception Class Request form' available from your Home Local Authority. In addition, before completing the form to defer admission by one year, you should discuss your request with the Headteacher. Parents are advised to attach any supporting information from education or medical professionals to support their application. This will enable to Governors and the Headteacher to make an informed decision.

The form **MUST** be fully completed to include the parent's reasons for the deferment and a copy of any evidence **MUST** be supplied at the same time.

Parents applying for a place outside the normal admission round will be considered as an in-year application. This section will also apply to all parents applying for places who live outside the Borough.

The Process by the Academy

Once the 'Deferment Admission Form' has been lodged with the Local Authority, this will be sent to the School's Admissions Officer (or other officer), who will arrange for the Governors to give it due consideration. Prior to the Governors making their decision, the Governors MUST consult with the Headteacher and take their views into account. The views will usually be in writing. The Governors may wish to clarify matters with both the parent or the Headteacher. However, this policy does not allow for a formal hearing of parties.

All applications for a deferred place will be considered on a case-by-case basis. The policy does **not** allow for an automatic refusal or agreement. The meeting will be clerked, and minutes must be produced.

The Headteacher must consider:

- a) the parents' views;
- b) the available evidence;
- c) information about the child's academic, social, SEN and emotional development;
- d) any medical history together with the views of any medical or other professional practitioners;
- e) whether they have previously been educated out of their normal age group;
- f) the needs of the child surrounding his or her admission to school.

Parents are required to give the reasons why they wish their child to be educated out of their chronological age. Any supporting material needs to be evidence based.

These will include, but is not limited to:

- a) the child has a birth date in June - August;
- b) the child was born prematurely;
- c) there have been significant social or medical developmental issues;
- d) parents moving from another country where education starts later;
- e) the child is gifted and exceptionally able;
- f) the child has missed a significant portion of a particular year's study through illness or other unavoidable absence;

- g) the application is supported by professionals who give significant and compelling reasons for the deferment.

Parents should note that listing one or all of the above reasons will not necessarily result in the application to be educated out of the chronological age group being granted. Every case is considered on its own merit.

For those applying in the normal admission round, in order for the Governors to consider your reasons and the individual circumstances of your child the 'Defer to Reception Class Request form' must be submitted before 15 January in the year that they would normally commence school (the normal date for starting school is in the September following the child's 4th birthday).

Parents should note that the Local Authority application form (known as the Common Application Form) expressing a preference for schools, including this school MUST also be completed. Failure to submit the Common Application Form could leave your child without a school place.

Parents applying for an in-year admission need to complete both the In-Year application form (CAF) and then defer to the school, at the same time the In-Year application (CAF) is submitted to the local authority.

In some cases, the school may contact the parents for any clarifications.

A school will assume that a child will start Reception Year in September unless a parent contacts the Headteacher to discuss other options or completes 'Defer to Reception Class Request form'

As a general principle, the Governors believe that children should be educated within their chronological peer group, but every case is considered on its own merit. 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 normal year group. However, Paragraph 2.19 of the School Admissions Code makes it clear that it is the Governors of a school, after consulting the Headteacher, who are responsible for making the decision as to which year group a child should be admitted.

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

- a) There is strong evidence to show the child's readiness and well-being for school is **significantly** below that expected of their peers.
- b) There is informed parental support and agreement
- c) The parent agrees with the potential implications.

For main round admissions, the Governors will inform the parents of their decision and reasons in writing before national offer day.

For in-year applications, Governors will endeavour to inform the parents of their decision within 15 school days of the parents lodging their 'Defer to Reception Class Request form' with the home local authority.

The letter will contain such details to allow all parties to understand how and why the decision was reached.

Appeals

There is no appeal against the decision of the Governors not to place a child in a non-chronological year group.

Parents have a right to appeal to an independent appeal panel if declined an application for a school place.

If the Academy does not offer your child a place at the school, there is the right to appeal to an Independent Appeal Panel as laid out in the School Admission Appeal Code, but you cannot appeal against the decision not to offer a place in a non-chronological year group.