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Department
for Education

Guidance

Making a request for admission out of the normal age group

Updated 27 April 2023

Applies to England

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Overview

After reading [summer born children starting school: advice for parents](#), you may decide you want your child to start school in a reception class in the September after their fifth birthday.

If you want to do this, you will need to ask the school's admission authority to admit them out of their normal age group.

We use the phrase 'normal age group' to mean the year group a child would have been in had they entered school in the September following their fourth birthday.

The admission authority must consider your request and make a decision in your

child's best interests. Depending on the type of school, the admission authority will be one of:

- the local authority
- the school's governing body
- the academy trust

It is important you request admission out of the normal age group at all the schools you plan to apply for, in case your preferred school is unable to offer your child a place.

The admission authority's process for requesting admission out of the normal age group should be on the school's website as part of their admission arrangements.

If your summer born child has an education, health and care (EHC) plan and you would like to request admission out of their normal age group so they join reception at age 5, you will need to discuss this with your local authority.

Making a request

You should make your request in writing. You should provide information about your child and why you think they should be admitted to reception when they are 5, not year 1.

This will help the admission authority to make a decision in their best interests.

You will normally be expected to make your request alongside an application for your child to be admitted to reception at age 4. This is so you can keep open the option of sending your child to school at age 4 in case your request is refused.

You can support your request with information from any professionals involved in your child's care or treatment, such as:

- a speech and language therapist
- an occupational therapist
- a social worker
- a paediatrician
- your child's nursery or childminder

You are not expected to get evidence you do not already have.

If your child was born prematurely, you can explain whether this caused health problems or developmental delays, and whether, as a result of being born before their due date, your child would have fallen into a different age group than if they had been born at full term.

Informing you of the decision

The admission authority will make a decision about what is best for your child by taking account of the information you have provided and the view of the school's headteacher. They will give you their decision in writing.

The government believes it is usually not in a child's best interests to miss the teaching that takes place during the reception year. If your request is refused, the admission authority should explain why they think it is in your child's best interests to

start school in year 1.

When a request is agreed

If your request is agreed, this means that the admission authority has said your child can go to school out of their normal age group, if they are offered a place at that school.

When this happens you will need to:

- make a new application for a school place for the September after your child's fifth birthday
- withdraw the application you made for a school place for the September after your child's fourth birthday

It is possible the school will not be able to offer your child a place. If there are more applications than places available, places will be allocated in accordance with the oversubscription criteria for the school. This is why it is important to request admission out of the normal age group at all the schools you plan to apply for.

When a request is refused

If your request is refused, you can either:

- accept a school place you are offered for the September after your child's fourth birthday - your child will be admitted to the reception class
- [make an in-year application](#) for your child to start school in year 1 in the September after their fifth birthday

If you decide to accept the reception place following your child's fourth birthday, you can:

- request that your child attend part-time for part or all of the school year
- delay your child's school start until later in the school year (but not later than the beginning of the summer term)

Any school place you were offered for the September after your child's fourth birthday will be lost if they do not take it up by the start of the summer term.

If you decide to have your child start school in year 1 following their fifth birthday, it is important you make an in-year application. It is possible that the year 1 class will be full so you may need to think about making an application to more than one school.

Transfer to other schools

You will need to ask an admission authority to admit your child out of their normal age group again if your child needs to transfer to another school.

This applies if your child is moving, or going to move:

- from an infant to a junior school
- from a primary to secondary school
- to a new area and is changing schools

You should make this request alongside an application for a school place.

If applying to secondary school, you will need to ask the admission authority of your preferred schools to agree for your child to continue being educated outside of their normal age group.

You should do this before the normal admissions round closes for your child's normal age group. This will be on 31 October of the year your child starts year 5, rather than year 6. This is so you know the outcome of the decision in time to submit an application for your child's normal age group, should your request be turned down.

In deciding what is best for your child, the admission authority will take into account that your child is currently being educated outside of their normal age group.

Complaints

You can complain to the admission authority if you are unhappy with their decision to refuse your request for admission out of the normal age group.

If you remain unhappy once you have exhausted that complaints process, you may be able to complain to:

- the [Department for Education](#) if the school is an academy
- the [Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman](#) if the school is not an academy

Appeals

If your request for delayed entry is refused, you have no statutory right to appeal this decision. The statutory admission appeals process does not cover a decision to refuse delayed entry to school.

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