



MANCHESTER
CITY COUNCIL

Summer Born Policy

Context

The School Admissions Code 2014 requires school admission authorities to provide for the admission of all children in the September following their fourth birthday. However, a child is not required to start school until they have reached compulsory school age following their fifth birthday.

There is flexibility for parents who do not feel their child is ready to start school before compulsory school age. They may defer the date their child is admitted to school following an offer of a place 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 the school year for which the offer is made. Alternatively, their child may attend school part-time until they reach compulsory school age.

For summer born children (children born from the beginning of April to the end of August) this is almost a full school year after the point at which they could first be admitted. Summer born children reach compulsory school age in the September following their fifth birthday. If parents wish to defer their child starting school until this point, the year group of children into which their child falls would by then be starting year one. This policy sets out the Council's position in response to requests from parents to defer their summer-born child starting school until the September following their fifth birthday and for their child to enter the reception year group (the year group that is a year younger than the child's chronological year group) rather than year one at this stage. This is referred to as a 'summer born request to offset admission'.

Admission authorities are responsible for setting and applying school admission arrangements. For community and voluntary controlled schools, the body is the Local Authority. For Voluntary aided and foundation schools this is the governing body. For academy and free schools this is the academy trust.

For parents of summer born children, who are considering delaying their child's entry to primary school until they reach compulsory school age, it is important to note that there is not a statutory right to offset admission, and that it is the relevant admission authority that will make decisions on the basis of the circumstances of each case.

Applications for admission outside the normal age group - 'Offset Admissions'

The Department for Education has produced recent updated Guidance - Advice on the Admission of Summer Born Children (December 2014) - which replaces previous guidance released in July 2013. The guidance is non-statutory, and has been produced to help local authorities, admission authorities and parents understand the framework within which admission authorities must operate, and to dispel some of the myths that appear to have arisen around the admission of summer born children.

It should be read in conjunction with the 'School Admissions Code 2014'.

Where parents are of the view, that their summer born child's needs are such that they would benefit from starting school at the start of the term following their fifth birthday in a reception year group, and therefore be admitted outside of their usual year of entry, they may submit their request to the Local Authority within the application period for the normal year of entry to reception class. Such applications will be referred to as requests to offset admission which is a request for the child to be educated outside of their usual year group. Applications which are made before the normal application period will not normally be considered.

Application forms for all reception places should be completed and submitted for the year in which the child is eligible for a school place e.g. those children born between 1 September 2010 and 31 August 2011 should apply for a reception place for the 2015/2016 school year.

Timescales and deadlines should be followed in accordance with the published admission arrangements, which are available on the Council website. Every year, applicants submit their applications by the 15th January and parents are informed of their allocated school on 16th April.

All summer born requests for offset admission will be considered by the individual admissions authority of each preferred school. Some admission authorities may have their own policies in respect of requests for summer born children and parents should check this with the schools directly.

Procedure for community and voluntary controlled schools

All requests must be received in writing to the LA as admission authority by the specified national closing date for reception applications.

The request should demonstrate why it would be in the child's interests to be admitted to reception following their fifth birthday, rather than year one. It is recommended that parents provide a statement detailing their reasons and this may also be accompanied by supporting letters and evidence from any relevant professionals involved with the family (for example, when a child receives support from a speech and language or other therapist).

When considering a request to offset admission, for a community or voluntary controlled school the following factors will be considered:

- the parents' individual circumstances and the needs of the child;
- any delayed, social emotional or physical development which may be adversely affecting the child's readiness for school (supported by a relevant professional);
- any significant learning or special educational needs (supported by a relevant professional (see appendix 1));
- The views of the headteacher of the preferred school (s)
- effective use of resources and public funds

In addition the factors set out in the DfE Guidance '*Advice on the admission of summer born children*' will also be considered:

- the needs of the child and the possible impact on them of entering year 1 without having first attended the reception class;
- in the case of children 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;
- whether delayed social, emotional or physical development is adversely affecting their readiness for school;
- relevant research into the outcomes of summer born and premature children – some links are provided at the end of this document (appendix 2).

Each case will be considered by a panel of Local Authority officers on behalf of the Director of Children's Services.

If the decision is that the child's admission may be offset, the parent will need to apply for a Reception place the following year, however, there is no guarantee that a place will be offered at the preferred school.

In cases where the preferred school cannot be offered to a child who has been agreed an offset admission, the local authority will identify an alternative school place.

Decisions will be made within 20 days upon receipt of such requests up to the national closing date of 15th January. Requests made after this date will be reviewed as soon as possible.

Parents should be aware that:

- The child's admission may only be offset with the agreement of the panel

A child born prematurely is defined as a baby born before 37 weeks of pregnancy are completed.

Once a child has been admitted to a school it is for the headteacher to decide how best to educate them. In some cases it may be appropriate for a child who has been admitted out of their normal age group to be moved to their normal age group, but in others it will not. 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

- Should agreement not be given and the parent still chooses to defer entry to the start of the school year after the child's fifth birthday, the parent will need to apply for a place in Year 1 which will be dependent upon a place being available at the time.
- Any child not being educated in the year group in which their chronological age falls is regarded as "an offset admission". This may raise complications if the child transfers to another school or another local authority mid year: it will be for the admission authority of the receiving school to decide whether to admit the child out of their normal age group.

Procedure for own admission authority schools

Where an application is for an own admission authority school the request can be sent to the individual school for consideration. The school must notify the parent and the LA with its decision.

Where requests are made for differing admission authorities, the request must be sent to the local authority that will co ordinate the request and the decisions made. If a joint agreement cannot be reached then the decision to off set will only stand for any named school that agreed the request. If a place cannot be offered at this school when offers are made the LA will identify an alternative place in a reception class in the normal year of entry unless the LA has already agreed to offset admission.

Attending part time or deferred entry to the same academic year

Parents can request that their child attends part-time until they reach compulsory school age, or that the date their child is admitted is deferred until later in the same academic year. In such circumstances, an agreement can be made between parents and the head teacher of the allocated school without involvement of any other relevant professional

Review of the decision made

There is no formal right to appeal a decision made by the admission authority, however for schools where the LA is admission authority, a parent may request a review of the decision made. This review will consist of the initial documentation submitted by the parent, the panel notes and panel decision being considered by the Director of Education and Skills who will make the final decision on whether to agree the summer born request

Parents will need to request in writing that they wish the decision to be reviewed. The review and final decision will be made within 20 school days.

No Formal Right of Appeal

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. They 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. 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 should make a complaint under 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 should complain to the local authority, as the admission authority for the school.

Appendix one

Supporting Documents when considering deferred admissions

Where requests for a deferred admission into Reception for a child with significant special educational needs are made the LA would expect parents to provide any relevant professional reports as part of their request. If a parent is of the opinion that their child has significant SEN, then the LA would expect the parents to have referred the child to the Local Authority and to have obtained a report from an educational psychologist. Where this is the case the LA would also ask for this evidence to be provided.

Requests for any other reasons (e.g. for a child born prematurely or based on other personal circumstances) will require a written submission of the reasons and any other relevant information/evidence that parents/carers may wish the panel to take into account.

Appendix two

Further sources of information

Associated resources

The DfE's School Admissions Code 2014 and Advice on the Admission of Summer Born Children

The department has published a topic note which draws together the available statistical and research evidence on the month of birth effect in education.

The Institute of Fiscal Studies has published research on the impact of month of birth on children's outcomes.

Warwick University has published research on academic attainment and special educational needs in extremely premature children.

Children in all early years settings and in school reception classes receive the early years foundation stage curriculum which has a strong focus on meeting the individual needs of all children, whatever their stage of development. Further information for parents about the early years foundation stage is available.

Where a parent chooses to offset their child's admission to school, the child remains entitled to a funded early education place of 15 hours a week for 38 weeks of the year at another provider until they are admitted to school.