

Requesting your child is admitted to school early or late.

This document is intended to provide useful information and guidance for parents considering requesting delayed admission to reception for their summer born child (starting school a year late) or for their child to be admitted to school a year early (starting school a year early) and also for schools when considering these requests.

Applications will only be considered for starting school or a transfer to the next stage of education. If a child is already on roll at a school, the expectation is that the school and parent/carers discuss the child's needs and appropriate provision is made including if necessary, placing the child in a class appropriate to their ability.

Department for Education guidance states that: 'The government would agree that, in general, children should be educated in their normal age group, with the curriculum differentiated as appropriate and that they should only be educated out of their normal age group in very limited circumstances'.

The guidance in this document is written in accordance with the current School Admissions Code 2014. However, the Government is currently considering the impact of this Code in relation to summer-born children and this information will be updated if any changes are implemented.

What do I need to consider?

It is important that parents and schools consider the following points very carefully.

- A school should be able to meet an individual pupil's needs including Special Educational Needs. In Somerset, children and young people in mainstream schools get intensive support early, through support service involvement and if necessary, individually targeted resources. It may be deemed necessary for a pupil to have an Individual Educational Plan (IEP).
- Similarly a school should be able to meet the needs of gifted and talented children and each school has a Gifted and Talented co-ordinator / Leading Teacher, who is a teacher with particular expertise in dealing with the most able children.
- Schools have to work within the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework and are therefore very aware of the needs of young children, especially those starting school very soon after their

- fourth birthday. They are committed to ensuring that the reception class meets every child's needs and the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum – which is also a requirement of pre-school provision – is a flexible and responsive play-based curriculum which supports this. Individual children's needs will usually be met through the different approaches that teachers should identify and use and with these appropriate levels of support, very few children need to be admitted late to a reception class.
- The responsibility for addressing individual needs lies with the school through an appropriately differentiated curriculum and personalised learning.
- A holistic view needs to be used, taking into account the pupil's social, emotional and physical development and needs and whether this may cause them to be at a different level from their peer group.
- Pupils are seldom uniformly delayed in their intellectual development. If a pupil is put into a younger age group and a reduced set of general expectations are in place, then areas of strength are at risk of not receiving appropriate stimulation.
- It is very important to consider the possible negative impact on a pupil of being placed in a year group below that of his/her chronological age. As he or she matures the child may realise that the rest of the class/group are of a different age, causing adverse emotional impact.
- A pupil arriving from outside of the United Kingdom with little or poor English would not normally be sufficient reason for them to be educated outside of the normal age group. However, it may be appropriate to take into account if a pupil is in a certain year group (eg Year 11).

What might be the long term implications?

There can be long term implications for the child. Parent/Carers and Admission Authorities should consider the following;

- If admission outside the normal age group is agreed there is no guarantee that the school the pupil transfers to (or moves to in the case of an in year admission) will also agree to this. The pupil could then be placed back in the normal age group causing them to miss or repeat a year. There is a possibility that the pupil would not have the opportunity to sit their Key Stage 2 SAT's.
- It would be difficult for a pupil to be put back in their chronological age group due to having to catch up on work, make new friends etc but if a

pupil continues to be educated outside of their normal year group their physical, social and emotional needs may not be fully met.

- A pupil could choose to leave school at the end of year 10 and not complete his/her GCSE's.
- If a pupil is delayed, there is no entitlement to school transport when they enter into Year 11, as they are no longer of statutory school age.
- Some pupils who move on to a college of further education may lose a year of their 16-19 entitlement if they enrol at college a year later than their peers.

How do I apply?

You can apply for delayed admission or for your child to start school early by filling out an application form which can be found in the information and resources section on the page 'Starting or transferring school early or late.'

You **must** still make an on-time school place application at the same time.

If your request is agreed this will only apply specifically to that school. Therefore we recommend that you make the request to all your preferred schools, not just your first preference school. We would also recommend that you include your catchment school as one of your preferences. This does not guarantee a place but does provide a priority in most cases.

Your school place application will be considered against the Published Admission Number for each school and the over-subscription criteria will be applied should the school have more applicants than there are places available. Should we be unable to offer a place at any of your preferences there is no guarantee that the request for your child to be admitted to school early or late would be agreed at an alternative school.

Who makes the decision?

All applications will be considered on a case by case basis and decisions made in the best interests of the child.

The Admissions Authority in conjunction with the Headteacher is responsible for making the final decision. For Voluntary Controlled and Community Schools this is the Local Authority, for Voluntary Aided and Foundation Schools this is the Governing Body and for Academies and Free Schools this is the Academy Trust.

Factors that influence decision making may include;

- Information about the pupil's academic, social, physical and emotional development.
- Whether they have previously been educated outside of their normal age group.
- In the case of children born prematurely, it will include taking account of whether they would naturally have fallen into the lower age group if born at the expected time.
- Whether the pupil has a medical need that has caused them to miss a large amount of school.
- The Admissions Authority will take account of the views of the headteacher/pre-school provider and other staff members (eg class teacher, Senco) of the school or pre-school concerned and where relevant the views of other professionals involved with the pupil.

How will I be notified?

The admissions authority must clearly set out the reasons for the decision in writing.

As long as you have made an on-time school place application we will ensure you receive an outcome to your request for your child to start school early or late before the primary or secondary national offer date.

What happens next?

If your request for delayed admission is agreed, your school place application will be withdrawn before a place is offered and you will then need to make a new school place application for the following year.

If your request for your child to be admitted to school a year early is agreed, your school place application will be processed and you will receive an outcome on the National Offer Day.

If your request for delayed admission is refused, you must decide whether to accept the offer of a school place for the normal age group, or to refuse it and make an in year application for admission to year one for the September following the child's fifth birthday.

If your request for your child to be admitted to school a year early is refused, your school place application will not be processed and you will need to make a new school place application for the following year.

There is no right of appeal against the decision not to allow your child to be admitted outside of their normal age group.

Further information and advice

Some useful information regarding the Early Years Foundation Stage can be found on the Foundation Years Website;

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

The most recent guidance from the Department for Education can be found here;

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/summer-born-children-school-admission>

You may also wish to discuss your application with your child's G.P if there is a medical condition, your child's pre-school or current school, or contact the Head teacher of the school you wish your child to attend.

If you wish to contact Somerset Local Authority please email schooladmissions@somerset.gov.uk or phone Somerset Direct on 0300 123 2224.