

# Information for parents about delayed entry to primary school for summer-born children



## Who this information is for

This guidance is for parents or carers in the Lewisham borough who are thinking about delaying entry to primary school for their summer-born child or children.

## Glossary

### Cohort

This is the age range of a group of children. The age range relates to those children born between 1 September in one year and the 31 August the following year. For example, children born between 1 September 2014 and 31 August 2015 are the cohort of children expected to start reception class in September 2019.

### Deceleration

If your child is decelerated, it means they have delayed their admission to school.

### Deferred admission

This is when a parent accepts a school place in the correct cohort and arranges for the child to start reception class later in the academic year.

### Delayed admission

This is when a child is admitted outside their normal cohort and applies for a school place a year later than expected.

### Summer born

A summer-born child is one born between 1 April and 31 August.

## How decisions are made to delay admission to primary school

In December 2014, the Department for Education (DfE) published non-statutory guidance regarding the admission of summer-born children. [Read the DfE's guidance](#). In response to this guidance, and the statutory requirements in the revised School Admissions Code, we updated our admission policy for admission to our community schools to address the options available to parents of summer-born children.

Schools' Minister Nick Gibb announced that the Government planned to amend the School Admissions Code so that summer-born children could begin school after their fifth birthday and be admitted into a reception class (Year R) rather than their normal cohort in Year 1. However, the Government has not yet written this amendment.

This means our arrangements rely on the guidance in the School Admissions Code and the non-statutory guidance on the admission of summer-born children, both published in December 2014.

## How we make our decision

We are generally sympathetic to parental requests for delayed admission to Year R for summer-born children to our community schools, if the parent has provided reasons why they think delayed admission is in their child's best interests.

While there are no legal barriers to a child being admitted to school outside their chronological year group, we are not obliged to agree such a request.

We have no specific criteria for determining if a request will be agreed. We will consider each request on its own merits and based on the information provided with the request and in the best interests of the child. For this reason there is a simple form for applicants to complete.

### When your child will reach statutory school age

Children must be receiving full-time education by the start of the term following their fifth birthday. This is known as compulsory school age. The table below explains:

<b>Month of child's birthday</b>	<b>When they must start school</b>
September October November or December	At the start of the spring term after their fifth birthday (i.e. January)
January February or March	At the start of the summer term after their fifth birthday (i.e. after the Easter holiday in March or April)
April May June July or August	The start of the autumn term after their fifth birthday (i.e. the start of Year 1 in September)

### What admissions arrangements are available

In the Lewisham borough, all schools provide for the admission of all children born between September one year and the end of August the following year. Admission will be in the September following their fourth birthday.

Parents of four-year-old children admitted to the reception class may opt for a pattern of part-time attendance or deferment if that best suits the needs of their child. Parents will be offered the opportunity for their child to:

- start Year R in September on a full-time basis from their first day of attendance, or on a part-time basis up to the point of reaching compulsory school age
- defer the date their child is admitted to the school until later in the school year, but not beyond the point at which they reach compulsory school age, and not beyond the beginning of the summer term of the school year for which the offer of the school place was made.

Parents of summer-born children will also have the option to:

- delay their child's entry to school until they reach compulsory school age and be admitted to Year R rather than Year 1 with their chronological peers. This means that a summer-born child would not start school at all during the academic year after their fourth birthday. See below for how to apply for delayed admission.

For example, a child born on 1 August 2015 is expected to start in the reception class in September 2019, a month after their fourth birthday. The parent must either:

- participate in the September 2019 admissions round and choose to take up the place full-time for the whole of the reception year
- participate in the September 2019 admissions round and choose to take up the place part time for the whole of the reception year (in this case the child will attend school full time in September when they transfer to Year 1)
- participate in the September 2019 admissions round and choose to defer the place until January or April 2020
- participate in the September 2019 round and submit a written request for their child to delay their admission, and apply for a school place to start in the reception class in September 2020.

### About out reception classes

Our schools are nationally recognised for the quality of the provision of the Early Years Foundation Stage and can ably meet the spectrum of needs and abilities of children entering the reception class.

They are expert in ensuring that children's transition into reception class is a smooth and positive experience for all concerned. Each school will have its own way of introducing children into reception class, which will usually include:

- welcome visits
- meetings for new parents
- individual meetings with parents
- home visits
- phased starts in September

These practices are intended to make starting school an exciting experience for both parents and children.

All reception classes follow the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. This places a heavy emphasis on children's emotional wellbeing, responding to individual children's needs and the fact that children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates. Schools make sure that children learn through play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated experiences.

Reception classes will generally look and operate in a very similar way to nurseries and nursery classes, particularly early on in the year, gradually introducing more structured learning when children are ready.

### Before you decide to delay entry

Before deciding to delay your child's admission, you should contact the school(s) you are interested in applying for and discuss your reasons for requesting a delayed admission with the headteacher.

They will be able to explain the provision on offer to children in Year R, how it is tailored to meet the needs of all children, including those born in the summer months, and how those needs will continue to be met as your child moves up through the school. They will be able to discuss any concerns you may have about your child's readiness for school.

You should also discuss your child's progress with their early years provider, if they attend a nursery, playgroup etc.

### Asking for approval

If you still want to delay your child's admission to school, you need to get approval from the admission authority of each school you want to apply for. The admissions authority considering your request will need to be satisfied that delayed admission is in your child's best interest.

Types of admission authority

Type of school	Admission authority
Academy	Academy trust
Community	Local council
Foundation	Governing body
Voluntary-aided	Governing body
Free schools	Governing body

[Find out the type of a school in the borough by visiting its webpage.](#)

### Community schools

We are the admission authority for all community schools in the borough. To request approval to delay admission to any community school in the borough, complete a 'Request for delayed admission to primary school' form.

### Academies, aided, foundation or free schools

To request delayed admission for this type of school, contact the school directly.

### Schools outside of the borough

For schools outside the borough, you need to contact the individual schools or the relevant local council directly to get their approval to consider your application as a delayed entry.

### Applying to start primary school

As well as seeking approval at your preferred schools, you need to go through the admission process for the year group that your child would normally be admitted to school, until a decision on your request for delay has been made.

### How and when we decide

Each child's circumstances are different, so we consider each request on a case-by-case basis and decide what will be in the best interests of the child. The admission authority must seek the views of the headteacher of the school(s) concerned. This means you should meet with the headteacher of the school(s) you want to apply for to discuss your reasons for your request to delay your child's admission. After the admissions deadline (15 January), we will consider your application and we will write to you with our decision before the primary national offer date in April.

### If your request is approved

If your request to delay entry is approved, you should:

- withdraw your application for the normal age group
- make a new paper application as part of the main admission process the following year.

### If your request is denied

If your request to delay entry is refused, we will send you a letter clearly setting out the reason(s) for the decision. You will need to either:

- accept the offer of a place for the normal age group
- refuse the offer and make an in-year application for admission to Year 1 for the September following the child's fifth birthday.

### Providing provide medical evidence or reports from an educational psychologist

Unless you already have them, you do not need to get professional reports from, for example, an independent educational psychologist. However, you should provide information to support your request and demonstrate why it is in your child's best interest to delay their admission to school.

If the child attends an early years provision, such as a nursery, you may want to get a report from them that sets out the child's academic, social and emotional development. If you can't demonstrate that it is in the child's best interest to delay their admission to school, we may not be able to agree your request.

### Delayed entry is not always transferrable between schools

One admission authority cannot be required to honour a decision made by another admission authority. This means you need to get approval to delay your child's admission at all of your preferred schools.

### Does delaying your admission guarantee you a place?

If we agree to delay your child's admission to Year R, this does not guarantee them place at your preferred school, nor does it give you additional priority for a place. Your application to the school will be considered alongside all other applicants in accordance with the school's published admissions criteria.

However, we can guarantee that your child will be given a school place. If we cannot offer any of your preferred schools, and you live in the borough, you will be allocated a place at the nearest school with a vacancy that is willing to accommodate your child's delayed admission.

### Appeal a decision not to offer your child a school place

If you are refused a place at a school you have applied for, you have the right of appeal to an independent appeal panel. [See more information about appealing.](#)

You do not have a right of appeal if you have been offered a place but it is not in the year group you like.

### Complain against a decision not to admit your child outside their normal age group

You can make a complaint about a decision not to admit your child outside their normal age group using our [complaints procedure](#) (for community schools), or the school's complaints procedure (for academies, aided, foundation or free schools). If the school is outside the

borough, you should contact the school directly for information on their complaints procedure.

### What happens when your child transfers to the next level of schooling (from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2, or to secondary school)

Ideally, your child will stay with the cohort they have been taught with, but this is not guaranteed. At each point of transfer, you need to have your request for delaying admission reassessed.

This means when your child's natural cohort are applying to transfer to secondary school, you need to speak to the headteacher of your preferred school(s) to get their agreement to continue your child's deceleration. If agreed, you would then apply the following academic year (when the other children in your child's year group are applying to transfer too).

### The impact delaying your child's admission has on when they will sit tests and exams

Children are assessed when they reach the end of a key stage, not when they reach a particular age, so a child who is educated out of cohort will sit tests and exams along with the year group they are educated with.

### The impact delaying your child's admission has on when they can leave school

Compulsory school age ends on the last Friday in June in the school year they become 16. If your child has been educated outside their normal cohort, they will no longer be of compulsory school age at the end of Year 10, meaning they can legally leave school before completing Year 11.

### Find out more

For more information, speak to:

- your child's nursery or early years provider
- the headteacher(s) of the school(s) you wish to apply for
- our Admissions Team.