

School guidance on how to handle requests for admission out of age

Under the [School Admissions Code 2021](#) parents can ask for permission to apply for a place out of chronological age – this is usually a year ahead or below.

Most of these requests will relate to summer born children. These are children born between 1 April to 31 August and due to the compulsory school age laws, parents can delay their child starting primary school a full year to when their child becomes compulsory school age.

Important: Children who are born between 1 September to 31 March become of compulsory school age within the chronological reception year and so they **cannot** be given permission to start reception a full year later.

Parents need to apply again for permission any time their child changes school

A new request for permission must be made each time a child starts a new school phase, for example when a child starts reception or secondary or alongside an in-year application if a child needs to change school.

If permission is given, it **does not** mean a place at the school will be offered – only that the parent can apply for a place in a non-chronological age admission round.

Practical points

The [DfE guidance](#) states that schools should encourage parents of reception age children who are considering delaying their summer born child's admission to primary school until the child is compulsory school age to

- visit the schools they wish to apply for as teachers will be able to explain the provision on offer in the reception class and how children's individual needs are supported.
- encourage parents who are worried their child may have a learning difficulty or disability that will make school challenging for them to meet the school's special educational needs co-ordinator. They will

be able to explain the school’s approach to supporting children with SEND.

- encourage any parent whose child was born prematurely and is considering delaying their admission, to discuss the options with their child’s specialists.

Who makes the decision

The headteacher **does not** make the decision to give permission. They must provide their views to the school’s admission authority who make the decision. The school’s admission authority is:

Type of school	Admission authority
Community	Leeds City Council is the admissions authority
Voluntary Controlled	Leeds City Council is the admissions authority
Foundation	The school governors are the admissions authority.
Voluntary Aided	The school governors are the admissions authority.
Academy including Free School	The trust board are the admissions authority.

For simplicity, in the rest of this guide we use the term “school” to mean “admission authority”.

How decisions are made

A decision must be made on the basis of the circumstances of each case and the best interests of the child. The decision maker must consider all the factors in paragraph 2.18-2.20 of the [School Admissions Code 2021](#) and the DfE [guidance on handling admission requests for summer born children](#). This is non-statutory guidance that must be followed unless there is good reason not to

Factors the decision maker will need to consider include:

- parents’ views
- information about a child’s academic, social, and emotional development
- where relevant, a child’s medical history and the views of a medical professional

- whether a child would naturally have fallen into a lower age group if they had not been born prematurely
- the potential impact on a child of being admitted to their chronological age group and missing a year of their education as a consequence
- the views of the headteacher
- whether for a child
 - starting primary school, their needs can best be met in reception or year 1
 - transferring to secondary school, their needs can best be met in year 7 or year 8.
- whether a child has already been educated out of their chronological age group already

The means the decision maker takes account of the potential impact on the child of being admitted to year 1 or year 8 without first having completed reception or year 7. The views of the head teacher, and what the child will be doing during the preceding year will be an important part of this consideration.

A school **cannot** have a blanket policy against a child being taught out of age as this would breach both the School Admission Code and DfE guidance on handling admission requests for summer born children.

Some points for decision makers to note:

- a school has no power to decide that a child should start school before compulsory school age - that is the parent's decision.
- there do not need to be exceptional circumstances
- a child does not need to have a medical need or SEND for it to be in their best interests to be admitted out of their chronological age group.
- **it should be rare for any decision maker to refuse a parent's summer born request** as the government believes it is rarely in a child's best interests to miss a year of their education, for example, by beginning primary school in year 1 rather than reception, or secondary school in year 8 rather than year 7.
- if at any time, a child changes school the new school should consider whether there are good educational reasons for a child to join their chronological age group, otherwise the child should remain with their adopted year group.

- unless there are sound educational reasons to do otherwise, the assumption should be that they will remain outside of their chronological year group, as to do otherwise would result in the child missing a year of school

Notification of the decision

The decision maker must set out clearly for the parent the reasons for their decision. If they refuse the request, they will need to explain why they believe it is in the child's best interests to be admitted to their chronological age group, even though this means they will miss a year of their education.

We have set out below a template letter for parents for where the request is agreed to ensure they understand the next steps and long-term consequences.

Template letters

Any text in red needs editing to be specific to your school

Letter for reception summer born applicants

Dear xxx

Application to start reception out of chronological year group for child: xxx DOB: xxx

Your request for your child to start primary school out of chronological year group has been considered by our **Governing Body/Trust Board** who are our school's admission authority. This decision **only** applies to our school.

It does not mean a place will be offered at our school – only that you can apply for a place next year. You should ask permission of any other schools you may want to apply for a place at as they can make a different decision to us.

Our decision

If you do take up your right to delay your child starting school until they are compulsory school age, we have agreed your child can be admitted to Reception instead of Year 1.

In making the decision, we considered your application and your reasons, [the supporting evidence you provided,] the views shared by our school's Headteacher, the School Admissions Code 2021 and the non-statutory Department for Education (DfE) guidance summer born children: advice for admission authorities

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

Our admission authority concluded your child would still thrive if it they were taught with their chronological peers as:

- most summer born children thrive in their age-appropriate cohort and make good progress. Schools often see quite a spread of attainment across the cohort at the beginning of reception class, but by the end of the year all the children are usually ready for year 1.
- starting reception sooner may be beneficial in developing your child's skills as your child will be with children who provide good role modelling.
- your child's areas of strength may not receive appropriate stimulation if they remain placed in a younger year group where they will be assessed against a reduced set of general expectations, particularly as they progress through education.

However, as you had outlined your intention for your child to take up their school place only when they are compulsory school age, it would not be in your child's interests to miss the reception year of school.

We must make you aware of the long-term consequences of this decision, to ensure you are making a fully informed decision on when your child starts school.

We recommend you read the summer born children: advice for parents <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/summer-born-children-school-admission>.

We would draw to your attention the following:

- The law does not provide for a child admitted out of age group to stay with that cohort throughout their education – a decision must be made by the admitting authority each time a child moves to a new school
- If at any time your child needs to change school or when they move to secondary school, you will need to reapply for admission out of chronological age group. A fresh decision will be made by each school. This means your child could end up missing a year if a new school do not agree your child should be admitted out of chronological age
- Headteachers are responsible for deciding how best to educate the children in their school. On occasion, this may include deciding any child should be moved to a different age group. Such decisions should be based on sound educational reasons and made in consultation with the parents.
- There is no expectation that children who were admitted out of their normal age group should be moved to their normal age group. As with other children, they should remain in the age group to which they were admitted unless there are sound educational reasons to do otherwise.
- A child reaches school leaving age on the last Friday of June in the school year they turn 16. A child educated in the age group below their normal age group, will be in year 10 when they reach school leaving age. They are required to continue in education or training until the end of the school year in which they turn 18 but need not attend school to fulfil this requirement. They cannot be obliged to attend school

during year 11 (in the same way that a child educated in their normal age group could not be required to attend school during year 12 or 13) but the school will continue to receive funding for them if they do.

- A local authority's duty to arrange suitable education (for example by arranging alternative provision) for certain children who would otherwise not receive a suitable education does not apply to children who have reached school leaving age.
- Local authorities have a duty to support and encourage young people to participate in education or training and should ensure there is sufficient provision available for all young people aged 16 to 19.
- A local authority's duty to arrange free travel to school for eligible children does not apply to children who have reached school leaving age. Authorities may choose to arrange travel for such children, but they are not required to do so.
- Out of school activities, such as sports teams, may be arranged by age, not by school year group. This may prevent your child being with their school peers in such activities.
- Free Early Education Funding – a child remains entitled to a funded early education place of 15 hours a week for 38 weeks of the year until they are admitted to school or become of compulsory school age. More information about free early education is available on GOV.UK or you can contact Leeds Family Information Service on 0113 378 9700.
- Tests and performance tables - Children are assessed when they reach the end of each key stage, not when they reach a particular age.
- If you would like your child to start school when they reach compulsory school age but join year 1, you should apply for Leeds schools in the summer term before you want them to start. Your application will be an in-year admission to join Year 1. Infant class size legislation rules mean that a year 1 class cannot have more than 30 pupils per single teacher (unless a legal exception applies) so it is possible that year 1 places may not be available at some Leeds schools.

Next steps - You must now tell the Local Authority you applied to how you wish to proceed with your reception school place application:

1) Continue with your reception school place application for this September

You will receive an offer on national offer day (16 April or next working day) and can either decline the place or discuss with the allocated school whether your child could start part time or join the school any time up until the start of the final term of the academic year (after the Easter holidays) alongside their chronological peers.

2) Withdraw your application and apply for a reception place next September

If you choose to do this, please contact your home local authority by email within 7 days so they can withdraw your application. If this is Leeds, email startingprimary@leeds.gov.uk. You will be required to reapply for a school place next year by the national closing date (15 January). You may not be able to use any online portal. You will need to send the Local Authority a copy of this letter, please keep it safe.

Template letter for year 7 summer born applicants

Dear xxx

Application to start year 7 out of chronological year group for child: xxx DOB: xxx

Your request for your child to start secondary school (year 7) out of chronological year group has been considered by our **Governing Body/Trust Board** who are our school's admission authority. This decision **only** applies to our school.

It also does not mean a place will be offered at our school – only that you can apply for a place next year. You should ask permission of any other schools you may want to apply for a place at as they can make a different decision to us.

Our decision - as you took up your right to delay your child starting school until they were compulsory school age and they have continued to be educated out of age, we have agreed your child can be admitted to year 7 instead of Year 8 at our school

In making the decision, we considered your application and your reasons, **[the supporting evidence you provided,]** the views shared by our school's Headteacher, the School Admissions Code 2021 and the non-statutory Department for Education (DfE) guidance summer born children: advice for admission authorities

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

We recommend you read the summer born children: advice for parents <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/summer-born-children-school-admission>.

We would draw to your attention the following:

- The law does not provide for a child admitted out of age group to stay with that cohort throughout their education – a decision must be made by the admitting authority each time a child moves to a new school
- If at any time your child needs to change school, you will need to reapply for admission out of chronological age group. A fresh decision will be made by each school. This means your child could end up missing a year if a new school do not agree your child should be admitted out of chronological age
- Headteachers are responsible for deciding how best to educate the children in their school. On occasion, this may include deciding any child should be moved to a different age group. Such decisions should be based on sound educational reasons and made in consultation with the parents.
- There is no expectation that children who were admitted out of their normal age group should be moved to their normal age group. As with other children, they should remain in the age group to which they were admitted unless there are sound educational reasons to do otherwise.

- A child reaches school leaving age on the last Friday of June in the school year they turn 16. A child educated in the age group below their normal age group, will be in year 10 when they reach school leaving age. They are required to continue in education or training until the end of the school year in which they turn 18, but need not attend school to fulfil this requirement. They cannot be obliged to attend school during year 11 (in the same way that a child educated in their normal age group could not be required to attend school during year 12 or 13) but the school will continue to receive funding for them if they do.
- A local authority's duty to arrange suitable education (for example by arranging alternative provision) for certain children who would otherwise not receive a suitable education does not apply to children who have reached school leaving age.
- Local authorities have a duty to support and encourage young people to participate in education or training and should ensure there is sufficient provision available for all young people aged 16 to 19.
- A local authority's duty to arrange free travel to school for eligible children does not apply to children who have reached school leaving age. Authorities may choose to arrange travel for such children, but they are not required to do so.
- Out of school activities, such as sports teams, may be arranged by age, not by school year group. This may prevent your child being with their school peers in such activities.
- Tests and performance tables - Children are assessed when they reach the end of each key stage, not when they reach a particular age.

Next steps

You will need to withdraw your application and apply for a year 7 place next September. Please contact your home local authority by email within 7 days so they can withdraw your application. If this is Leeds, you can email startingsecondary@leeds.gov.uk.

You will be required to reapply for a year 7 school place next year by the national closing date (31 October). You may not be able to use any online portal. You will need to send the Local Authority a copy of this letter when you apply, please keep it safe.