

## **Nottinghamshire County Council**

### **Guidance for requests for admission of children outside their normal age group, including summer born children**

This document outlines the process for requests for education outside the normal age group and sets out the factors that will be considered. This does not apply to children with education, health and care plans (EHCP).

It is the responsibility of the relevant admission authority to consider any request, make a decision and communicate this to the parent. There is no 'blanket policy' and each request is considered on the basis of the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child concerned.

The year group a child is educated in has implications for a child's social and educational development as well as:

- the point at which a child starts primary education, transfers to junior, secondary, post 16 and higher education;
- the timing of public examinations;
- the point in the child's education where they reach the end of compulsory school age;
- assistance with transport;
- funding for further education.

Each child is different, and it is normal for teachers to adapt teaching methods to meet the needs of individual children. Nottinghamshire County Council (NCC) consider that in almost all cases schools can meet the curricular needs of children without accelerated or delayed admission to another year group or phase of education. Each case will be looked at on an individual basis, taking account of:

- the child's educational and social development
- teaching and learning reasons that are in the best educational, social and emotional interest of the child
- long term implications for transition to next phase of education

#### **Legal framework**

The School Admissions Code 2021 sets out the statutory basis for requests outside the normal age group.

2.18 Parents may seek a place for their child outside of their normal age group, for example, if the child is gifted and talented or has experienced problems such as ill health. In addition, the parents of a summer born child may choose not to send that child to school until the September following their fifth birthday and may request that they are admitted out of their normal age group – to reception rather than year 1. Admission authorities must make clear in their admission arrangements the process for requesting admission out of the normal age group.

2.19 Admission authorities must make decisions on the basis of the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child concerned. This will include taking account of the parent's views; information about the child's academic, social, and emotional development; where relevant, their medical history and the views of a medical professional; whether they have previously been educated out of their normal age group; and whether they may naturally have fallen into a lower age group if it were not for being born prematurely. They must also take into account the views of the head teacher of the school concerned. When informing a parent of their decision on the year group the child should be admitted to, the admission authority must set out clearly the reasons for their decision.

2.20 Where an admission authority agrees to a parent's request for their child to be admitted out of their normal age group and, as a consequence of that decision, the child will be admitted to a relevant age group (i.e. the age group to which pupils are normally admitted to the school) the local authority and admission authority must process the application as part of the main admissions round, unless the parental request is made too late for this to be possible, and on the basis of their determined admission arrangements only, including the application of oversubscription criteria where applicable. They must not give the application lower priority on the basis that the child is being admitted out of their normal age group. Parents have a statutory right to appeal against the refusal of a place at a school for which they have applied. This right does not apply if they are offered a place at the school, but it is not in their preferred age group.

### Starting school in reception

All children can start school full time in reception in the September following their fourth birthday and most parents are happy for their child to start school at this point. Parents can request to defer taking up the place until later in the school year but you cannot defer beyond the point at which your child reaches compulsory school age or beyond the start of the final term of that school year.

Child's 5 <sup>th</sup> birthday	Latest starting date in reception
1 September – 31 December	Spring term
1 January – 31 March	Summer term
1 April – 31 August	Start of summer term

Parents may wish to consider their child attending school part-time until they reach compulsory school age. All requests to defer admission must be discussed with the allocated school.

Whatever the school starting age, there will always be children who are the youngest in their age group, and most children thrive when admitted to school age 4. Evidence shows that the youngest children make the fastest progress and that the majority meet the required standard.

### Summer born children

Children are not required to start school until compulsory school age. If your child was born between 1 April and 31 August, you may choose not to send them to school until the September following their fifth birthday (the point at which other children in their age range are beginning year 1). You should think very carefully before deciding what would be best for your child and be open-minded to the views of the school and the headteacher.

Remember, each school is different, the teaching in our schools ensures that the needs and capabilities of all students are met through differentiation of curriculum. All schools are equipped to admit summer born children, or children with developmental delays, that may impact on their overall school readiness such as anxiety, toileting issue or speech and language delays. The decision to delay a child's admission to school will affect them for the remainder of their education and it is important that parents consider the point at which the child could leave school before the normal point of GCSEs or the completion of sixth form/further education. The Department for Education (DfE) supports the rights of parents to make this decision but does not believe it should become the norm for summer born children to begin reception at age 5.

Delaying starting school until the September that your child reaches compulsory school age means you will need to consider carefully whether you want your child to miss reception completely and start in year 1 or start in reception the following year.

## Things for parents to consider

It is important to consider carefully the emotional and social impact of transfer out of year. Successful learning and achievement are underpinned by feelings of emotional security and social wellbeing including:

- The resilience of the child
- The arrangements that will need to be made to support the child socially
- The extent to which the new arrangements are perceived by the child as improving their social and emotional wellbeing.
- The adjustment to a new class or setting.

NCC encourages parents who are considering delaying their summer born child's admission until compulsory school age to visit the schools they wish to apply for. The school teaching and support staff will be able to explain the provision on offer in the class and how children's individual needs are supported. For children who have a learning difficulty or disability that will make school challenging for them, parents should speak to the school's special educational needs coordinator who will be able to explain the school's approach to supporting children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

## Making a request for admission out of normal age group

Parents of summer born children can request admission outside of normal age group. It is also possible for parents to seek a place for their child outside of the normal age group, for example, if the child is gifted and talented or has experienced problems such as ill health. **The request for admission out of normal age group is separate from an application for a school place.** Admission authorities need to make the decision about the age group to which a child should be admitted before it can decide whether a place can be offered in that age group.

NCC coordinates all applications for the normal admissions round for all schools in its area. If you are considering delaying your child's admission you should speak to your preferred schools. Admission authorities are responsible for making the decision about which year group a child should be admitted to. If you want your child to be admitted to the reception year group, outside their normal age group, you must make your application for a school place in the normal admission round. You should submit your request to delay admission alongside the formal application for a school place. Applications for school places must be made to your home local authority before the national closing date (31 October for applications for primary to secondary transfer; 15 January for applications for reception and transfer to junior school). NCC will share information about your delay request with all your preferred schools. Your request to delay admission will then be considered by the admission authority for your preferred schools. You should be aware that different admission authorities and schools may make different decisions on the request to delay admission.

Admission authorities will consider the circumstances of each case, the best interests of the child concerned and take account of the views of the headteacher. You will be notified of the admission authority's decision **before** National Offer Day (1 March for secondary school places, 16 April for reception and junior school places). Requests will still be considered if they are made outside of these timescales.

If a child is moving house, a request for admission out of normal age group should be submitted alongside an in-year application.

If your child has been previously educated outside of their normal age group, it will be your responsibility to request admission out of the normal age group again when the child transfers to junior or secondary school. This request should be submitted in writing at the point where the transfer round opens for your child's normal age group.

## Providing information for the admission authority to consider

When submitting a request parents should include as much information as possible to help the admission authority in reaching a best interest decision. It is not necessary to provide professional reports but any information about the child's progress or needs that is available should be provided.

It is useful to include information from the child's current pre-school provider/headteacher or other professionals giving information on the child's abilities and development and how the child is performing against recognised expected levels for their age group, including social and emotional development.

## Making a decision about a request to delay admission

Admission authorities need to decide which age group the child should be admitted to.

Type of school	Admission authority
Academies	Academy Trust
Community schools	Local authority
Foundation schools	Governing body
Voluntary aided schools	Governing body
Voluntary controlled schools	Local authority

For a child starting primary school, the admission authority will need to decide whether the child's needs can be best met in reception or year 1. For a child transferring to secondary school, the admission authority will need to decide whether the needs can be best met in year 7 or year 8.

Key factors for consideration include:

- parents' views
- the child's development and abilities against the recognised expected levels for their age range (e.g. measured by Early Years Foundation Assessment or Standard Assessment Tests (SATs))
- information about the child's academic, social and emotional development
- where relevant, the child's medical history and the views of a medical professional and/or specialist services
- whether the 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 normal age group and missing a year of their education as a consequence
- whether the child has already been educated out of their normal age group
- views of professionals in each individual school and in each individual case.

In some cases, it may be necessary for the request for admission outside the normal age group to be considered by a panel made up of representatives from:

- school admissions
- inclusion and specialist services
- special educational needs and disabilities
- early years
- the headteachers

In some cases, parents may also be invited to attend panel meetings.

The panel will consider both the potential advantages and potential disadvantages of education outside the normal age group.

If any of the preferred schools are own admission authority schools, NCC will share information with those schools and request that they confirm their decision about the year group the child should be admitted to. NCC, as the admission authority for community and voluntary controlled schools, will communicate the decision to parents within 30 school days.

Once a child is on roll at a school it is for the headteacher to decide whether a child should be placed in a year group different from that of their chronological age. In each case the decision should follow detailed discussions with parents and relevant professionals. The school should inform NCC to ensure parents are informed of the process for requesting admission out of normal age group at key transition points.

### **Making a decision about a request to accelerate admission**

The majority of children, including those who are deemed gifted or talented, or born early in the school year, are best placed within the year group indicated by their date of birth. Accelerated admission should only take place when it is agreed the needs of the child cannot be met within their year group and the benefits of moving out of group outweigh any social or emotional disadvantage.

Admission authorities need to decide which age group the child should be admitted to.

Type of school	Admission authority
Academies	Academy Trust
Community schools	Local authority
Foundation schools	Governing body
Voluntary aided schools	Governing body
Voluntary controlled schools	Local authority

Key factors for consideration include:

- demonstration of exceptional intellectual ability, mature language, physical and emotional maturity, well developed social relationship
- evidence of exceptional ability in all areas of development
- the child's development and abilities exceed the expectation of recognised levels (e.g. exceeded Early Years Foundation Stage and met all Early Years Goals, or achieved exceptional levels in all areas of National Curriculum measured by Standard Assessment Tests (SATS))

In some cases, it may be necessary for the request for admission outside the normal age group to be considered by a panel made up of representatives from:

- school admissions
- inclusion and specialist services
- early years
- the headteachers

In some cases parents may also be invited to attend panel meetings.

The panel will consider both the potential advantages and potential disadvantages of education outside the normal age group.

If any of the preferred schools are own admission authority schools, NCC will share information with those schools and request that they confirm their decision about the year group the child should be admitted to. NCC, as the admission authority for community and voluntary controlled schools, will communicate the decision to parents within 30 school days.

Once a child is on roll at a school it is for the headteacher to decide whether a child should be placed in a year group different from that of their chronological age. In each case the decision should follow detailed discussions with parents and relevant professions. The school should inform the NCC to ensure parents are informed of the process for requesting admission out of normal age group at key transition points.

### **Notification of the decision**

For applications made in the intake round (for reception or transfer to junior/secondary school), NCC will communicate the decision on behalf of all admission authorities within 30 school days of the request being received.

**If the 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.** Parents will be provided with information about next steps. This will mean the application for the normal age group can be withdrawn before a place is offered. Parents will need to submit a new application as part of the main admissions round the following year. There is no guarantee that a preference will be met, and the application will be considered alongside all other applications for that year. Places will be allocated according to the school's published admission criteria.

Considerations should be given to potential impact on:

- early years education
- funding for children out of normal age group
- tests and performance tables
- school leaving age
- school transport

Remember, the decision of one admission authority does not need to be honoured by another admission authority.

**If the request is refused,** the admission authority will provide information about the decision along with the reasons for that decision. The parent must then decide whether to accept any offer made for the normal age group or refuse it and make an in-year application for a place in the normal chronological age group at the relevant time.

If the request is refused, you will need to decide whether you wish to continue with your decision to start your child at compulsory school age. In that case, you would need to withdraw your application and apply for a place in year 1. Alternatively, you can accept the allocated place and defer admission until later in the school year, upto the start of the summer term. If you decide to apply for a year 1 place when your child reaches compulsory school age remember there may not be places available at your preferred schools, as these may have already been offered to children who applied for a reception place.

### **Complaints and appeals**

There is no statutory right to appeal if the request to delay admission is refused.

Parents can submit a complaint for own admission authority schools using the schools complaints procedure or in the case of community and voluntary controlled schools in Nottinghamshire, parents can raise a complaint [here](#)