

Admission of children outside their normal age group including summer born children

Parents/carers of children born in the summer term, i.e. between 1 April until 31 August, may request that they are admitted outside of their normal age group and start the Reception class a year later.

While the majority of parents/carers are happy for their child to start school in the September following their 4th birthday, some parents/carers will have concerns about whether their child will be ready to start school at this point.

Before deciding to delay a child's entry to school, the Local Authority (LA) would recommend that parents/carers visit the schools they are thinking of applying for. The staff will be able to explain the provision on offer to children in the Reception class, how it is tailored to meet the needs of the youngest pupils and how the needs of these pupils will continue to be met as they move up through the school. They may also be able to allay any concerns that parents/carers may have about their child's readiness for school.

It is possible for parents/carers to consider part-time attendance for their child from September, but this must be agreed with the Headteacher of the school, prior to the child being admitted. It is also possible for children to delay admission until they are compulsory school age, i.e. the term after their 5th birthday. However, for summer born children this would mean starting Y1 rather than Reception after their 5th birthday. Again, a place would need to be secured and this would need to be agreed with the Headteacher.

Parents/carers wishing to request to defer entry must apply following the process for the child's normal year of entry. The application must include the reasons for the request and include any supporting information from relevant professionals.

All requests for admissions outside of the normal age group must be discussed with the LA and the relevant school Headteachers prior to the application being made.

Parents/carers should also be mindful when they are considering whether to request to defer entry to Reception that the admission authority for one school is not required to comply with a decision made by another school. Therefore, when it is time for your child to move from infant to junior school/primary to secondary school or transfer to another school, it will be necessary for that school to consider the request for the child to be taught outside of their normal age group. The Admissions Authority for the individual school does not have to agree to the request and may insist that the child is admitted to their normal age group.

It may also have an impact on your child's legal leaving age, i.e. until this is changed by the Department of Education, a child can leave school on the last Friday in June during the

school year that they become 16. This would mean that a child being taught outside of their normal age group could leave school at the end of Y10 without taking any GCSE exams.

Parents/carers will be notified of the outcome of their request before the National Offer Day, 16 April 2026, if the application is received before the National Closing date (15 January 2026). In reaching a decision in respect of Community & Controlled schools, the LA will consider the parents/carer's views; information about the child's academic, social and emotional development; where relevant medical history and views of medical professionals and they will also consider whether the child may naturally have fallen into a lower year group if they had not been born prematurely. The LA will also consider the views of the headteacher(s) of the school(s) for which the request is being made.

In respect of an application for Academies and Aided Schools, the decision will be made by the relevant Admission Authority for the school, i.e, their governing body or Trust Board. Sunderland Local Authority can only make a decision on requests for Community and Controlled schools.

Any parent/carer who successfully requests that their summer born child starts Reception class a year later than their normal age group must reapply for admission for September 2026 and their application will be considered against the relevant school(s) admission policy along with all the other applications received on time for this year group.

Where a request to defer entry is declined, parent/carer does not have the right of appeal against not being offered a place outside of the normal age group. .

If the request is for a Voluntary Aided School or Academy, the governing body/Trust Board are the Admission Authority and they will follow the school's policy. Parents/carers should refer to the school's website for further information.

It is advisable for parents/carers to submit their request to defer entry through their application which must be submitted no later than 15 January 2026. However, requests received after this date but before the National Offer Day (16 April 2026) may still be considered in exceptional circumstances. This may reduce the options that are available and, if your request is declined, you may miss out on a Reception place.

Any requested received after 16 April 2026 will only be considered in exceptional circumstances and it may not be possible to defer entry to school after this date.

The updated guidance from the Department of Education (DfE) is available via the following link

[Statement for local authorities, schools and admission authorities on the admission of summer-born children to school, from Baroness Barran, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the School System - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)