

Guidance for parents of summer born children considering delaying entry to school to reception year

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

Summer born children are statutory school age at the beginning of September after they turn 5 years old. This is the legal age when they have to start school. However, the expectation is that they normally start school in the September prior to this alongside their peers through the starting school application process. Once a child has been allocated a place through the starting school application process, parents can discuss with the school whether they would like their child to start on a part time basis initially or even start later in the academic year.

If parents decide to delay entry until statutory school age, they will have to apply for place via the in-year application process and the child will join Year 1

Some parents who decide they want to delay entry until the following September **may wish to request that their child is admitted into a Reception class rather than Year 1** i.e. to be educated outside their chronological year group or "decelerated". Please note there is no statutory duty (legal requirement) for such a request to be agreed. **Parents cannot insist their child is educated outside their chronological year group.**

Process for requests

Requests have to be considered and decided by the admissions authorities of the schools that parents are considering applying for.

Type of School	Admission Authority
Community School	Local Authority (LA)
Voluntary Controlled School	Local Authority
Voluntary Aided School	Governing Body
Academy School	Academy Trust

To make the process easier the LA (Admissions team) coordinates all requests on behalf of Portsmouth schools and academies and will liaise with the relevant admission authority where appropriate for their decision. Where the LA is the admissions authority for a school, they will still liaise with the school before making a decision.

You will need to fill out a "Request for delayed entry into Year R" form which can be obtained on request from Admissions or downloaded from the Portsmouth City council website www.portsmouth.gov.uk/schooladmissions. This needs to be returned by closing date of **15 January**.

Note - If a child is undergoing assessment for an EHCP (Education and Health Care Plan) or already has one, requests also need to be discussed with the SEN (Special Educational Needs) team.

Before making a request

Parents should apply for a starting school place by the closing date (15 January). Applying at the normal time will ensure the child is allocated a school place whilst the request is being

made. The application or allocation can be withdrawn if the decision is made to agree the request or if the request is not agreed, the child will still have a school place allocated and are not disadvantaged.

Prior to submitting a "Request for delayed entry into Year R" form, parents are expected to visit schools and make appointments to fully discuss their requests and reasons with relevant staff in the school, explore the Year R provision and find out how a school can support their child's needs whether academic, social or readiness for school etc.

Parents should also think about the following issues before making a request

Some summer born children may have lower levels of achievement or maturity compared to some of their peers but schools are very experienced in dealing with and supporting a wide range of abilities and needs; it is not just summer born children who may experience these issues. Starting part-time or a bit later in the academic year may be a better option and schools can advise on this.

All schools have carefully planned transition programmes for starting school so it might be possible for a school to adapt their transition programme for the child if parents have concerns about their child being ready for school.

Even if a parent considers their child is delayed in one area, they will be achieving well in other areas so placing them in a younger age group may not be appropriate in relation to their other skills and abilities.

Professionals that work with children with special educational needs including those with EHCPs consider that these children benefit from being in the structured Year R environment with access to school and multi-agency support.

English as an additional language should not necessarily be a reason for children delaying starting school. In Portsmouth, the Ethnic Minority Achievement Service (EMAS) provide training and support for staff in schools and in some cases support to individual children.

Future consequences

If it is agreed that a child can delay entry into Year R this will impact on entitlement for Funded Early Education; this will cease at the end of the term the child turns 5 years old. Parent/carers should enquire with the relevant early years setting about the possibility of keeping their child there and whether they will continue to be able to access a free place.

If a child has to move schools due to a house move or as result of a transition, infant to junior or primary to secondary, the decision to maintain the child in a younger age group has to be made again by the admission authority of the schools being applied for. There is no guarantee that a new school will agree to a child continuing to being educated outside of their chronological age group. For example, a child moving house in Year 9 or 10 could be severely disadvantaged in relation to their GCSEs if the new secondary school did not agree to continue the arrangement.

A child working a year below their chronological year group would reach statutory school leaving age in June in Year 10 so could decide to leave school at that point and there would be no legal requirement for them to continue to attend.

Where a young person is educated in a younger year group they may find their Post 16 entitlement is reduced from 3 to 2 years.

Evidence

Parents are asked to submit evidence from other professionals working with their child as part of their request. This is not compulsory but will assist the admissions authority in making a decision.

The Admissions Authority's decision making process

Decisions are made based on the circumstances of the case and what is in the best interests of the child. This is why it is beneficial for the parent to have additional evidence to consider and to have detailed discussions with their preference schools. Admission Authorities may need to consult professionals involved before making a decision.

Factors considered

Would differentiation (adaption) of the curriculum not be able to meet the needs of the child?

Is physical maturity a significant factor compared to their peer group?

Is social and/or emotional maturity a significant issue compared to their peer group and can this be reasonably addressed with support from school?

Was the child born prematurely before 31 August and how many weeks premature?

Are there significant medical issues where even with reasonable adjustments, it would be detrimental for the child to start school? What are the views of medical professionals?

Decision

If the decision is made to delay entry for Year R until the following year, the Starting School application/offer of place will be withdrawn. Parents will have to reapply for Starting School the following year. An agreement to delay entry to year does not mean a guaranteed place at the preferred school(s) the following year. **If a different school is allocated to one which made the decision, the new school is not bound by the earlier decision.**

If the decision is made not to delay entry, the starting school application will continue to be processed and a place allocated for the child. Parents can then discuss any concerns they have about their child starting school with the allocated school.

There is no right of appeal against a decision not to agree delayed entry into Year R. Parents can make a complaint through the corporate complaints procedure of the LA (for community or voluntary aided schools) or to the governors of an own admission authority school/academy under their own procedure.

Request form available from the Portsmouth City Council website
www.portsmouth.gov.uk/schooladmissions

Contact - admissions@portsmouthcc.gov.uk

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