

Admission of Children Outside of Their Normal Age Group (Delayed Entry)

This information sheet offers advice and guidance to parents who are considering making a request to delay their child's entry to school so that they enter a year behind that indicated by the child's date of birth. It sets out Peterborough City Council's policy and procedure for responding to such a request.

In general the policy of Peterborough County Council is not to delay the entry of pupils into Reception. However, in accordance with the *Schools Admissions Code* all requests will be considered on the basis of the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child taking account of his/her educational and social development. Decisions will be based on a judgement of what is best for the child both now and in the long-term. Possible immediate gains need to be weighed against a range of difficulties including those related to school leaving age and loss of peer group.

Is my child ready for school?

All children find starting school demanding and very tiring, particularly those whose 5th birthday falls later in the school year. If you do not think your child is ready for full-time school attendance in September of the school year in which his/her 5th birthday falls, you may discuss with your child's school the possibility of an individually designed induction timetable, which might include an extension of part-time attendance or a delay in taking up the place until later in the same academic year. This is often a more practical alternative to deferring admission to Reception by a whole year.

Issues to consider

Even if their birth date falls within the last few months of the school year, a child with significantly delayed attainment and development should not automatically be considered for delayed entry to school, as their needs can normally be met through differentiation and appropriate levels of support within the school. Please bear in mind that very few children are admitted late to Reception.

If a child has been placed out of year group prior to entering the Primary Phase of their education, whilst there may be a presumption that a child/young person continues in the same cohort, there is no guarantee that this will be the case. Should you move to another local authority area, or when your child moves to secondary school, the school they are moving too, may not accept such applications and may require the child to join the year group appropriate to their chronological age.

Delayed entry should only be considered when both the parents and the professionals involved are of the opinion that the needs of the child cannot be best met within his or her age group even with appropriate levels of differentiation and support.

The key test questions are these:

Do all professionals involved and the child's parents think that only in a lower year group the child:

- would be more closely matched in terms of physical and emotional maturity to the other children; and
- would make significant progress; and
- would be able to maintain a better position academically within the class and;
- would cope with curricular demands with no, or much less, differentiation and support?

If the answer to all of the above questions is clearly 'yes' then delayed entry could be valuable and would be considered.

However, if it appears that the answer is 'no' or there is doubt, or that the child may have longer term special educational needs, then it would normally be more appropriate for the child to enter a Reception class with his/her peer group with the appropriate levels of support.

Delaying entry into Reception will usually involve an extra year at nursery, or other pre-school setting, which may not be available on a full-time basis, whereas the child may need more co-ordinated educational input plus the opportunity to play. The Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum in a Reception class is able to provide this. Additionally, the place might not be funded, as a free early years funded place ends? from the beginning of the term in which the child becomes statutory school age i.e. the term following their fifth birthday.

Making an Application for Delayed Entry to Reception for Children Born Between 1 September and 31 March

If you are thinking of making a request for delayed entry to Reception you should discuss this with your child's pre-school provider, the Headteacher for your preferred school and any other professionals involved with your child, as soon as possible and submit your formal request by 15th January, at the latest, in the academic year in which your child has his/her 4th birthday.

Any such application should be submitted alongside your application for a Reception Place for your child, as there is no guarantee that your request will be agreed.

If you decide you wish formally to pursue a request for delayed entry you will need to provide as much information and detail as possible explaining why you think that deferred admission is the best course of action for your child. As a minimum you will need to provide:

- information regarding how your child is performing in the 7 areas of learning and development in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- if applicable, details of any interventions/additional support your child receives in their current pre-school setting
- if applicable, a copy of your child's two most recent personal support, or additional needs plans

- a covering letter explaining your reasons for your request
- if applicable, reports from other agencies e.g. medical professionals or any other agency who may be supporting or working with your child
- anything else which you feel is relevant

The LA will, as required under the School Admissions Code, seek the views of the Headteacher of your preferred school.

Requesting Delayed Entry for a Summer Born Child

If your child's birthday falls between 1 April and 31 August the LA's approach to considering requests for delayed entry is slightly different.

All of the above still apply but the LA operates a permissive approach when considering requests for summer born children to enter **Reception** in the September after their 5th birthday. There is a presumption to agree to such requests in accordance with the Section 2.17 of the School Admissions Code (2014) provided:

- there is evidence **specific to the child** (i.e. not just reference to academic research) to support the request. This information should include as a minimum;
 - information regarding how your child is performing in the 7 areas of learning and development in the Early Years Foundation Stage from the child's current early years setting; and
 - reports from other agencies e.g. medical professionals, or any other agency who may be supporting or working with your child, if applicable
- the headteacher of your preferred/catchment school has no concerns
- the request is driven by the best interests of the child and not because, for example, the parents have failed to secure a place in their preferred primary school or because it would be more convenient for the parents if the child delays his/her entry into Reception

Your formal request for delayed entry, setting out the reasons why you believe this request is in the best interest of your child and confirming that the Local Authority can approach your preferred/catchment school and your child's current pre-school, should be sent to:

The Admissions Team,
Peterborough City Council,
Ground Floor
Sand Martin House
Bittern Way
Fletton Quays
PETERBOROUGH
PE1 8TY

Or by email to admissions@peterborough.gov.uk

Who will make the decision?

The LA, through its nominated officer panel, will look at all aspects of your child's case e.g. social/emotional maturity, as well as his/her educational progress. The request will be considered using the Ashton Checklist criteria, **appendix 1**.

You can expect a decision, within 20 school days of submitting your request and supporting information. If your request is unsuccessful and you do not present your child in school in Reception during the school year after their 4th birthday, s/he will enter Year 1 in the September after his/her 5th birthday.

Applications for delayed entry into a community or voluntary controlled school are considered by an officer panel, comprising at least three of the following: a manager from the school admissions team; a manager from the Special Educational Needs and Inclusion Service; an early years specialist and an adviser for the primary phase.

Applications for delayed entry into a voluntary aided or foundation school or an Academy will be considered by the school's governing body, except where they have chosen to purchase this service from the LA.

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.

Further information and contacts

If you would like to discuss any of the issues surrounding delayed admission to Reception please contact the Peterborough Admissions Team on 01733 864007.

If, during the school year in which your child's 4th birthday falls, you are considering requesting delayed entry, **please note the LA's advice is that parents should still complete a primary application form before the January deadline**. If your request for delayed entry is agreed you can always withdraw your application or decline a Reception place that has been offered.

A copy of the admissions booklet for parents, is available on line at www.Peterborough.gov.uk/admissions or can be requested by contacting the Peterborough Admissions Team on 01733 864007.

Further independent information and advice for parents is available from the Advisory Centre for Education (ACE)

Advisory Centre for Education (ACE)
1c Aberdeen Studios, 22 Highbury Grove, London N5 2DQ
020 7704 3370
www.ace-ed.org.uk

Ashton Checklist

All these criteria should be satisfied before placing a child/young person outside their chronological year group:

School, parent/carers, child/young person and involved professionals all feel that this placement would substantially increase the possibility of the child/young person's successful inclusion in mainstream school	
Consideration has been given to the long-term emotional and social impact of this placement	
There has been a discussion with parents/carers about likely future issues, e.g. leaving school without completing Key Stage 4	
This decision is not being made in order to delay other interventions, such as a placement into a different school	
All involved feel that the child/young person will be able to learn more from the children in the proposed year group than by being around children of their own age group	
The child/young person will have a peer group in their new class, which is likely to continue to be somewhere that they can 'fit in' as the cohort matures	
The plan for the child/young person includes interventions to address their particular needs, in addition to placement with a different year group	
Consideration has been given to the likely future placements for the child/young person, e.g. returning to their own year group, or remaining with the new year group	
This decision is not being made due to difficulties in making appropriately differentiated provision in the class to which the child/young person should normally transfer	
The placement would not breach infant class size legislation	
Consideration has been given to the rights of other children who might otherwise take that place	