



BRIEFING

SUBJECT: Education out of normal (chronological) age group - process	
RECIPIENT(S): Headteachers and Chairs of Governors of all C of E schools and academies.	
SDBE CONTACT: Carol Jerwood	DATE: November 2015

I INTRODUCTION

1.1 The DFE School Admissions Code published in December 2014 required schools to publish information in their admissions arrangements about education out of normal age group. The Board provided guidance on this in its briefing published in January 2015 together with a suggested wording to be included in admission arrangements. The wording indicated that further details would be available from the school and several schools have requested assistance in drafting that wording. Attached to this briefing is a suggested process that schools may use when parents request education out of normal age group; this should **not** be incorporated into admissions arrangements, but may be made available to parents who request education out of normal age group for their child. The process is arranged in three sections:

- (i) Reception class admissions - this section is necessarily the most complex because children are being admitted to the school for the first time and it incorporates advice on admitting summer-born children. This applies to primary and infant schools only.
- (ii) Admission to other year groups – this would apply to all schools – both to in-year admissions and transfer to junior schools at year 3 and secondary at year 7.
- (iii) Moving children to their normal age group – this applies to all schools.

1.2 Schools may adapt the process if they wish and, obviously, secondary schools and junior schools will need to remove the section on reception class admissions. However, for reception class admissions, governors should be mindful that the process, as written, follows very closely the advice issued by the DFE on the admission of summer-born children which many parents have scrutinised. The process overleaf is intended to guide governors and headteachers through the steps they need to take when a request for admission out of normal age group is received and also to provide parents/carers with the information they need to make such requests.

2 ACTION FOR GOVERNORS

2.1 Please forward this information to the Chair of the Admissions Committee. The attached process should be discussed and adopted by the Governing Body, or, if such powers have been delegated, by the appropriate Committee.

PROCESS FOR REQUESTING EDUCATION OUT OF NORMAL (CHRONOLOGICAL) AGE GROUP - INFORMATION FOR PARENTS/CARERS

ADMISSION TO A RECEPTION CLASS

All children have a right to a full-time place in a reception class in the September following their child's fourth birthday. Most parents/carers are happy for their child to start school at this time and the Governors of this School agree with the Government's view that children should be educated in their normal age group with their peers with the curriculum differentiated, as appropriate, and that children should only be educated out of their normal age group in very limited circumstances.

Children must be in school full-time by the time they reach compulsory school age, ie, the beginning of the term after their fifth birthday. A parent/carer may choose to defer entry in accordance with our admissions arrangements until their child reaches compulsory school age, or, for a child born between 1 April and the 31 August, (ie, a summer-born child) until the beginning of the summer term. If, as a parent/carer of a summer-born child, you are considering requesting that your child is educated out of their normal age group, ie, admitted to the reception class a year later than other children in that age group, the following process will apply to such requests. This follows advice published by the DFE in December 2014.

- 1 Contact the school to make an appointment with the headteacher to visit the school and to discuss your request. The headteacher will be able to explain the provision on offer to children in the reception class and how it is tailored to meet the needs of the youngest pupils. The Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum which is taught in the reception year is largely based around learning through play.
- 2 If after your visit you decide that you wish to request education out of normal age group for your child, you should nonetheless apply to the school for a place in your child's normal age group at the usual time using your home local authority's common application form (and any supplementary information form, if applicable). (This will allow you the opportunity to accept a place for your child's normal age group should the governors decide not to allow your request.) At the same time you must submit your request for education out of normal age group. This request should be submitted by letter, or email, with any documents attached and should cover any relevant points from paragraphs 3(i) to (iii) below.
- 3 The Governors' Admission Committee will meet to consider your request. Decisions will be made on the basis of the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child. It is helpful if you provide as much information as possible and, in coming to its decision, the Committee will take into account the following:
 - (i) your own views as to why it would be beneficial for your child to be educated in reception a year later, rather than year one; this may include information about your child's individual needs and abilities and the potential impact on your child of being admitted to year one without having completed the reception year; the governors will also take account of the professional views of the headteacher;
 - (ii) whether, or not, your child was born prematurely and would have fallen into a different age group had they been born at full term;
 - (iii) any information about your child's academic, social and emotional development, medical or special educational needs, if relevant; professional evidence may be provided to support this, but is not compulsory.
- 4 Once the Admissions Committee has considered all the information you have provided it must decide the age group to which your child would appropriately be admitted if a place is available. There are two possible outcomes:
 - (a) if the governors decide to allow your request for education out of your child's normal age group, you will need to make a new application for reception in the following admission round, ie, a year later than normal. There is no guarantee that you will be offered a place in that year, but your application will be considered alongside other applications and in accordance with the school's oversubscription criteria. When making your application you must include a copy of the Governors' decision letter granting your request.

- (b) If the governors decide not to allow your request for education out of normal age group, you may then decide whether to continue with your application for your child's normal age group, or to withdraw the application and to apply for a year one place as an in-year applicant the following September. Again your application will be decided in accordance with the oversubscription criteria; there is no guarantee of a place.
- 5 The Admissions Committee will notify you in writing of their decision and the reasons for it as soon as possible and in advance of the deadline for offers to be sent out to parents/carers.
- 6 If you are offered a place at our school, but it is not in the year group you wish for, there is no right of appeal. You may, however, make a complaint, following the Governing Body's complaints procedure which is available from the school.
- 7 Any decision about a request to educate a child out of normal age group is made in respect of this school only; you may wish to consider whether to request admission out of normal age group at your other preference schools and should follow the process adopted by the admissions authority for those schools.

ADMISSION TO OTHER YEAR GROUPS

The Governors will consider requests from parents/carers for education out of normal age group where parents/carers request this when transferring their child from another school, or when an application is received to admit a child in-year. Decisions will be made on the basis of the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child. Parents/carers should contact the School to make an appointment with the headteacher (*or other appropriate person*) to visit the School and to discuss your request. The Admissions Committee will consider your request taking into account the following:

- (i) your own views as to why it would be beneficial for your child to be educated out of their normal age group; this may include information about your child's individual needs and abilities and the potential impact on your child of being admitted to their normal age group; the governors will also take account of the professional views of the headteacher;
- (ii) any information about your child's academic, social and emotional development, medical or special educational needs, if relevant; professional evidence may be provided to support this, but is not compulsory;
- (iii) whether your child has been educated out of their normal age group prior to your request and any evidence provided by your child's previous school.

If you are offered a place, but it is not in the year group you wish for, there is no right of appeal. You may, however, make a complaint, following the Governing Body's complaints procedure which is available from the school.

MOVING CHILDREN TO THEIR NORMAL AGE GROUP

Once a child has been admitted to school, it is for the headteacher to decide how best to educate them. It may be appropriate for a child who has been admitted out of their normal age group to be moved to their normal age group at a future date. Any decision to move a child to their normal age group will be based on sound educational reasons and made by the headteacher in consultation with the parents/carers.