



South Tyneside Council

DEALING WITH REQUESTS FOR ADMISSION OUTSIDE OF THE NORMAL AGE GROUP (INCLUDING SUMMER BORN CHILDREN)

GUIDANCE

COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED SCHOOLS

INTRODUCTION

It is a requirement of the School Admissions Code 2014 that admission authorities must make it clear within their admission arrangements the process for requesting admission outside of the normal age group.

N.B. Academies, foundation and voluntary aided schools should set out their process within their own admission arrangements.

It is usual practice for children to be educated in the school year groups as determined by their date of birth, however there is no statutory barrier to children being admitted outside of their year group. Parents do not have the right to insist that their child is admitted to a particular age group but they may make a request for this to happen. Such requests may be made for a variety of reasons, for example where a child has moved to the area from abroad, has missed schooling due to illness, has a marked talent or ability or a summer born child. In most cases differentiation of the curriculum and or additional support should address the issue.

Guidance from the Department for Education states that “the government would agree that, in general, children should be educated in their normal age group, with the curriculum differentiated as appropriate and that they should only be educated out of the normal age group in very limited circumstances”.

SUMMER BORN CHILDREN

Admission authorities are required to provide for the admission of all children in the September following their fourth birthday.

Parents may request that their child attends part time until they reach compulsory school age, or that the date their child is admitted is deferred until later in the same academic year.

Where parents of summer born children (those born April to August) do not take up the place in the academic year and choose to make an application for the following September, the application will normally be for admission into year 1.

If a parent of a summer born child feels that their child is not ready for school they can request that they enter the reception class in the September of their fifth birthday, one year later than their chronological age would normally determine.

Where a child has been educated outside of the normal age group, parents will need to decide whether to again request admission outside of the normal age group when they transfer to junior and or secondary school.

ADMISSION OUTSIDE OF THE NORMAL AGE GROUP

Parents may request that their child is educated in a year group above or below their chronological age.

Evidence relating to all aspects of the child’s development would be considered in the decision making process.

MAKING AN APPLICATION / REQUEST

Parents should make a request for admission outside of the year group in writing to the Local Authority School Admissions Team, Level 0, Town Hall, South Shields, Tyne and Wear, NE33 2RL or e-mail school.admissions@southtyneside.gov.uk. The application should include:

- Details of the request and why the request is being made including which year group is to be considered
- Information on why it would be in the best interests of the child to be admitted outside of the normal year group
- Any available evidence from professionals to support the request
- Any available information from the current education provider.

For admissions in the “normal round” (i.e. Reception for infant and primary schools, year 3 for junior schools and year 7 for secondary schools) parents should submit an application in the first half of the summer term of the academic year preceding the year of admission in order that requests may be determined before applications open in the autumn term and allowing parents sufficient time to meet national closing dates. Requests for other year groups should be submitted as soon as possible.

Where necessary, parents may submit an application for their child’s year group at the usual time alongside a request for admission outside of the normal age group.

For “normal round”, if the request is agreed, then the application for the normal age group may be withdrawn before a place is offered.

In the case of deferred entry to reception, parents must make a new application as part of the “normal round” in the following year.

DECISION MAKING PROCESS

All requests will be considered on a case by case basis and the decision making will be made in the best interests of the child. This will include taking account of

- The parents’ 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 outside of the normal year group
- Whether they may naturally be born into a lower age group if it were not for being born prematurely
- The opinion of the Head Teacher of the school concerned.

A meeting will be convened to consider the case and attendees will include:

- Parents
- The Head Teacher(s) of the school(s) concerned
- Professionals involved with the child
- Governor Support and School Admissions Manager
- Head of Education, Learning and Skills.

Any information, reports or evidence will be considered alongside verbal presentations.

Parents will be advised of the decision in writing by the Head of Education, Learning and Skills.

CONSIDERATIONS LOOKING AHEAD

Transition to Junior and or Secondary School and Transferring School In-Year

Admission authorities are not required to automatically agree for a child to be placed outside of their normal age group and may decide that they will only offer a school place for the normal year group. Admission authorities are required to make decisions on an individual case basis.

Leaving School

A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday of June in the school year that they become 16 years of age. If a child is educated outside of the normal year group (i.e. is in year 10 when this date is reached) the child will no longer be of compulsory school age during the school in which most children will take their GCSE examinations.

All children are now required to continue in education, training or employment until they reach their 18th birthday. This could potentially mean that a child could legally leave school in year once the statutory leaving age is attained.

RIGHT OF APPEAL

Parents who are refused a place at a school for which they have applied have a right of appeal to an independent admissions appeal panel. They do not have a right to an appeal if they have been offered a place and it is not in their preferred year group. They may make a complaint about the admission authority's decision not to admit their child outside of their normal age group.

If a parent is unhappy with the way in which their complaint has been handled then they may refer their case to the Local Government Ombudsman or the Education Funding Agency (in the case of an academy).