

Guidance for parents, carers and schools requesting deferment/offsetting of a Reception place

Background

All parents are expected to apply for and take up a reception place in the school year in which their child will reach the age of five (rising fives). All children are entitled to a full time place in the September following their fourth birthday. However, the legal starting age for full time education is the start of the term following the child's fifth birthday and parents may request that their child's entry is delayed (or 'deferred') until later in the same school year or until the term in which the child reaches compulsory school age.

School admission authorities are responsible for making the decision as to which year group a child should be admitted. The premise is that except in limited circumstances, if parents are determined to defer entry to full time education until the following academic year when the child reaches compulsory school age, as is their legal right, a place would be offered in Year 1, enabling their child to remain within their chronological age group and not being 'offset' unless it is deemed in the child's best interest to start in Reception.

Attending part time or deferred entry to the same academic year

Parents can 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. In such circumstances, an agreement can be made between parents and the headteacher of the allocated school without involvement of any other relevant professional.

Applications for admission outside the normal age group

Where parents feel that their summer born child's needs are such that they would benefit from starting school a year later, they may request this using the Local Authority's *'Request to Offset' form*. Admission authorities must make decisions on the basis of the circumstances of each case. The local authority is the admission authority for community and voluntary controlled schools. The governing body is the admission authority for voluntary aided, foundation and trust schools, and the academy trust is the admission authority for academies.

Considering a request to offset

All requests will be considered, however, it is the Local Authority's view that wherever possible, children should be educated with their chronological peers. When considering a request for offsetting, relevant factors will include:

- parents' individual case and the needs of the child;
- DfE document *'Advice on the admission of summer born children'*;
- any delayed, social emotional or physical development which may be adversely affecting the child's readiness for school (supported by a relevant professional);
- any significant learning or special educational needs (supported by a relevant professional);
- optimising children's learning
- pupil forecasting and sufficiency of early years places
- effective use of resources and public funds
- an educational professionals view on the best interests of the child

Requests for an 'offset' admission into reception for a child with significant special educational needs must be supported by a relevant educational professional such as an Educational Psychologist or pre-5 Specialist Teacher. Where this is not possible, the parent/carer will need to obtain a written recommendation from other education or health professionals involved with the child, such as a consultant paediatrician, speech and language therapist, etc. These cases may be considered by the SEN Panel if necessary.

Summer Born

Requests for deferment due to a child born prematurely, summer born or based on other personal circumstances will be considered by a panel consisting of an Educational Psychologist, Early Years Achievement Officer and a Primary school headteacher. It is important that the view of the Headteacher of the school that the child will be attending is taken into consideration, therefore it is important that families meet with the school to discuss their request to defer.

Procedures

- Application forms for all reception places should be completed and submitted for the year in which the child is eligible for a school place.
- Timescales and deadlines should be followed in accordance with the published admission arrangements which are set out in full in the *"Guide for parents about admissions to Primary Schools"*, which is available on the Council website.. Each year, applications should be made between mid November and 15th January and parents are informed of their allocated school on 16 April.
- **If parents and/or other relevant professionals involved with the child are of the opinion that the child's admission should be offset until the following school year, the 'Request to offset' form should be completed at the same time as the school application, to enable the Local Authority to make a decision before National Offer Day on 16th April. Late applications will be accepted but may not have a decision before the start of term in September, depending on when they are received and the availability of a Panel to consider the request.**
- The form must be accompanied by supporting letters and evidence from parents/carers and professionals involved explaining why the child is not ready for full time education and why it would be of benefit for the child to start reception a year later.
- The Head of Service, Admissions Team will write to parents/carers with the Local Authority's decision as to whether the child can be offset after a Panel has convened.
- If the allocated school is a voluntary-aided, foundation, trust school or academy where the governing body is the admission authority, the final decision will be made by the governors, based on the recommendations of the Local Authority.
- If the decision is that the child may be offset, the parent will need to apply for a Reception place the following year, however, there is no guarantee that a place will be offered at the preferred school.

Parents should be aware that:

- The child may only be offset with the agreement of the Local Authority and/or admission authority of the preferred school(s).
- Once agreed, the child should remain offset throughout their educational career and the transfer to secondary school will take place a year later. However, a different Local Authority or admitting authority in a different school may not abide by the decision and could revert to the chronological year group.
- Should agreement not be given and the parent still chooses to defer entry, the parent will need to apply for a place in Year 1 which will be dependent upon a place being available at the time. If the parent applies for Reception an educational professionals support, that it is in the child's best interests to start in Reception, will be required.
- Any child not being educated in the year group in which their chronological age falls is regarded as "offset". This may raise complications if the child transfers to another local authority or own admitting authority school mid-year.

For further information or clarification, please contact Rachel Phillips, Head of Service, Admissions Team, Margaret McMillan Tower, Bradford BD1 1NN.

Email rachel.phillips@bradford.gov.uk

**Request to offset a reception place for a summer born child in a
Bradford District Primary School**

Child's name DOB

Parent's/carer's name

Parent's/carer's address

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Tel no: Email:

Name of person completing the application (if different from above)

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Reason for requesting an offset place for you child (see attached guidance)

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Who is supporting the request?

Paediatrician

Educational Psychologist

Specialist Teacher

Speech therapist

Other (please specify)

Headteacher

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Consideration of the request may be delayed unless supporting documents (eg letters or minutes/ reports of multi-disciplinary meeting) are attached and the request is received at the time of application.

Please return the completed form to:

Rachel Phillips

Head of Service – Admissions

Margaret McMillan Tower

Bradford

BD1 1NN

Email: rachel.phillips@bradford.gov.uk