

Deferment for Summer Born Children

(For Summer born children whose parents wish for them to be educated out of their normal age group – starting school the September after their 5th birthday)

In response to the Department for Education (DfE) guidance and the statutory requirements in the School Admissions Code 2014, Gloucestershire County Council has updated its admissions policy to address the options available to parents of summer born children (those born between 1 April and 31 August). This information guide is designed to explain the options available to parents for their child's starting school arrangements and to answer the frequently asked questions.

We are very aware that children can develop at different speeds at different times and schools in Gloucestershire have a breadth of experience in successfully managing the varying academic, emotional and social requirements of all pupils regardless of their age.

This is supported by the continuity of the statutory Early Years Foundation Stage between pre-school and the Reception year. Classroom environments are designed specifically with the needs of the youngest children in mind and learning opportunities are based on active, hands on learning both indoors and out. Careful planning tailored to each unique individual child ensures that each child has the opportunity to reach their full potential by the end of their Reception year in formal education.

When will my child reach statutory school age?

Children must be receiving full-time education by the start of the term following their fifth birthday.

- For children born between 1 September and 31 December, they reach compulsory school age on 31 December and must be receiving full-time education at the start of the Spring term (i.e. after the Christmas holidays, in January).
- For children born between 1 January and 31 March, they reach compulsory school age on 31 March and must be receiving full-time education by the start of the Summer term (i.e. after the Easter holidays, in March or April).
- For children born between 1 April and 31 August, they reach compulsory school age on 31 August and must be receiving full-time education at the start of the new school year (i.e. after the summer holidays, in September).

When do I need to apply for my child's school place?

Date of Birth	Start School	Standard Application Process
1 Sept 2012 – 31 Aug 2013	Sept 2017	Nov 2016 - 15 Jan 2017
1 Sept 2013 – 31 Aug 2014	Sept 2018	Nov 2017 – 15 Jan 2018
1 Sept 2014 – 31 Aug 2015	Sept 2019	Nov 2018 – 15 Jan 2019

We require parents to state their intentions for their child by the **15 January** of the year before they are chronologically due to start school - either by submitting an application form for a school place for that September, or a deferral application for the following September.

What options do I have available?

In Gloucestershire, we provide for the admission of all children in the September following their fourth birthday. Parents of non-compulsory school age children (four year olds) may request a pattern of part time attendance or defer if that best suits the needs of their child. Parents will be offered the opportunity for their child to:

- start Reception in September on a full-time basis from their first day of attendance or on a part-time basis up to the point of reaching compulsory school age.
- delay the date their child is admitted to the school until later in the school year but not beyond the point at which they reach compulsory school age and not beyond the beginning of the summer term of the school year for which the offer of the school place was made.

And for summer born children (those born between 1 April and 31 August) only:

Request to be admitted out of their normal age group - to defer their child's entry to school by a whole year until they reach compulsory school age and be admitted to Reception rather than Year 1 with their chronological peers. This means that a summer born child would not start school at all during the academic year after their fourth birthday. Details on the process for seeking approval for deferring a child's admission are provided below.

How do I request my summer born child's admission to be admitted out of their normal age group for a whole year?

Before deciding to admit your child out of normal age group, you should first contact the school(s) you are interested in applying for. They will be able to explain the provision on offer to children in Reception Year, how it is tailored to meet the needs of summer born children and how those needs will continue to be met as the children move up through the school. They may also be able to allay any concerns that you may have about your child's readiness for school.

If you still wish to admit your child out of normal age group, you must:

1. Seek approval from the admission authority of each school you wish to apply for, who will then contact Gloucestershire County Council's Access to Learning Team (A2L) Coordinated Admission Team to confirm whether they are prepared to defer entry for your summer born child.

Each child's circumstances are considered on a case-by-case basis and a decision will be made in the best interests of the child. The Admission Authority is required to seek the views of the head teacher of the school concerned. Parents may have professional evidence that it would be appropriate for them to submit, for example, when a child receives support from a speech and language therapist, however, there is no expectation that parents will obtain professional evidence that they do not already have.

The admission authority for each type of school is shown below:

Type of School	Admission Authority for the School
Academy	Academy Trust
Community	Gloucestershire County Council *
Foundation	Governing Body
Voluntary Aided	Governing Body
Voluntary Controlled	Gloucestershire County Council *

You can find out the school's status on the school's website.

*Gloucestershire County Council is the admission authority for all Community and Voluntary Controlled schools in Gloucestershire. The application form to request deferred admission to reception year is available to download on our website <http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/education-and-learning/school-admissions/apply-for-a-primary-or-infant-school-place/>

Alternatively if you are unable to access this form please contact Access to Learning at the email address at the end of this document.

For schools outside of Gloucestershire, you will need to contact the individual schools directly to obtain their approval to consider deferring your application.

2. If you have received approval to delay entry from all preferred admission authorities, please send a copy of the approval(s) to the Gloucestershire's Access to Learning Co-ordinated Admissions Team. We will then contact you to confirm that we will withdraw your application for the chronological year group, and ask you to reapply the following year.

If you have not received approval to start school out of normal year group from all preferred admission authorities before the closing date, we recommend that you submit an application for the chronological year in case your request to defer is not approved.

3. You will receive a response from Gloucestershire's Access to Learning Co-ordinated Admissions in writing to your request to defer your entry before the 30th January of the offer year, setting out clearly the reasons for the decision.

If your request to delay is approved, you can simply withdraw your application for the normal age group. You will then need to make a new application as part of the main admission round for the following year.

If your request to delay is refused, you will need to decide either

- a. accept the offer of a place for the normal age group.
Parents can accept the offer of a place for the normal age group, and still delay the entry date into school until later in the school year. The place must be taken up by the beginning of Term 5 at the latest, or the place maybe offered to another child. Parents should contact the offered school to discuss starting arrangements
- Or
- b. refuse the offer of a place in Reception and make an in year application for admission to Year 1 for the September following the child's fifth birthday. There is no guarantee that a place will still be available for the following year.

Frequently Asked Questions

Do I need to provide medical evidence or reports from an educational psychologist?

Parents of Summer Born children know their children's needs and requirements, but may want to investigate their concerns further by contacting the pre- school settings or other professionals to discuss their child starting school a year later. As parents/carers you will already have considered the social and emotional development of your child when considering to defer their entry to school. You may provide evidence in support of your request, such as letters from pre-school, nurseries or other professionals involved with your child if you wish but it is not an essential requirement.

Will all admission authorities agree to my summer born child deferring for a year?

Not necessarily. It is important therefore that you seek approval to delay your child's admission at all of your preferred admission authorities. One admission authority cannot be required to honour a decision made by another admission authority.

Am I guaranteed a place for my summer born child?

Any agreement to delay your child's admission to Reception does not guarantee a place at the preferred school, nor does it provide any additional priority for a place. You should therefore give careful consideration to requesting delayed entry. Your application to the school will be considered alongside all other applications in accordance with the school's published admission criteria.

We can however, guarantee that your child will be given a school place. If we cannot offer any of your preferred schools, you will be allocated a Reception place at the nearest school with a vacancy that is willing to accommodate a child requesting a place out of normal year group.

Can I appeal against your decision to refuse my request to defer?

Parents do not have a right of appeal if they have been offered a place and it is not in the year group they would like. However, parents who are refused a place at a school for which they have applied have the right of appeal to an independent appeal panel.

We are clear that we require parents to state their intentions for their child by the 15th January of the year before they are chronologically due to start school - either by submitting an application form for a school place for that September, or an application to delay entry for the following September.

Reviewed October 2016

Timescales and deadlines should be followed in accordance with the published admission arrangements. Setting dates and rules for this process recognises that some summer born pupils may not be ready to start school in September.

However this process also ensures that we do not give any family an unfair advantage at securing a preferred school by being able to apply for a reception place for two consecutive years. There is no right to appeal if you have not followed the timescales,

How can I complain if I am not happy with the decision?

You may make a complaint about an admission authority's decision not to admit a child outside their normal age group either using the Local Authority's complaints procedure (for Community and Controlled Schools) or the school's own complaints procedures for Academies, Aided, Foundation or Trust Schools. For schools outside of Gloucestershire, parents should contact the school directly for information on their complaints procedure

What happens when my summer born child transfers to the next level of schooling (either to junior school or any secondary school)?

Ideally, your child will remain with the cohort they have been taught with, but this is not guaranteed: at each point of transfer, the request for your child to be taught out of normal year group will be reassessed. Therefore, when your child's natural cohort are applying to transfer to junior or secondary school, you will need to speak to the headteacher of your preferred school(s) to obtain their admission authority's agreement to be taught out of normal year group. This includes grammar schools where test results will take account of a child's age.

If agreed, you would then apply the following academic year (when the other children in your child's class are applying to transfer).

Does deferring my summer born child's admission impact on when my child can leave school?

If your child has been taught out of year group, he/she will no longer be of compulsory school age during Year 11 of secondary school and will therefore be able to leave school before completing examinations. However, young people are required to continue in education or training until their 18th birthday.

My child is a summer born child and started in Reception Year this year but is struggling. What should I do?

You must speak to your child's school about your concerns. Together with the school, you may consider schooling on a part-time basis or defer their entry into the Reception class until the Summer Term. You may wish to consider applying for a Year 1 place for your child for the following September, however this year group may already be full and have no capacity to admit your child.

Unfortunately as your application for a place in a reception class has been processed, we are unable to reapply for another place in Reception class at this stage. However, once all normal applications have offered places in the next Reception class, and if there is a vacancy in the year group, a parent/carer may reapply to the admission authority to start reception again. We do not recommend removing your child from a school in case an alternative place cannot be offered.

My summer born child is currently deferred, but we feel he/she is catching up. Can they now be moved into their correct chronological year group?

You should speak to your child's school and together consider your best option. There is no automatic right for your child to move into the chronological year group. If there is a vacancy in their chronological year group a place may be offered. If there is no vacancy in the chronological year group, a place may not be offered.

I have moved into Gloucestershire - can my child be taught in a different year group?

School places are generally considered based on a child's normal year group once the school system has started.

If you wish to apply for a place out of normal year group, you should provide evidence that your child has previously been educated on a deferred entry basis. The admission authority for the school will consider your application along with any evidence you wish to submit. There is no automatic right for a new admission authority to honour a decision made by another admission authority.

I made an application for a school place by the closing date and realise I now want them to defer

We ask parents to consider very carefully before they request to defer their child. Parents will not request deferment unless they felt it absolutely necessary for child's academic progress and social and emotional wellbeing. We recommend that if a parent is in doubt whether to defer or not, this should be discussed in advance of making the application with preschool or other professionals working with the child first. We require parents to state their intentions for their child by the 15 January of the year before they are normally due to start school - either by submitting an application form for a school place for that September, or an application to delay entry into Reception for the following September.

Once the closing date has passed, we are unable to change your application.

Therefore:

- For your child to start school with their normal year group, please submit an application by the closing date in the standard process time as above.
- For your child to start school a year later than their normal year group, please request this by writing to us by 15 January in the standard process time as above.

If you do not submit a request to delay entry, we will consider your child's application in their normal year group.

Once we have considered your child's application in one Reception group, we cannot agree for you to apply for a second time, the following year.

I'm still not clear, who can I speak to?

Please contact Access to Learning to discuss further using the following contact email address:

- Starting Reception for the first time – contact school.admissions@gloucestershire.gov.uk
- Moving school at any other time – contact inyearadmissions@gloucestershire.gov.uk