

Admission of children outside their normal age group

Summary of the Code and DfE Guidance

Parents can request admission outside their child's normal age group (eg due to health issues or being gifted).

Parents of summer born children (1 Apr-31 Aug) can delay admission for their child to start a year later than their peer group in year 1 or they have a right to request that the child is admitted out of age group (OOAG) in reception.

Admission authorities must publish a clear process for making such requests.

The DfE does not believe it 'should become the norm for summer born children to begin reception at age 5'. Most 'will thrive if they are admitted to reception aged 4'.

Parents are advised to apply in the normal age group at the normal time and, also, to request OOAG at the same time (but all requests will be considered even if they don't apply for the normal age intake).

Each request must be decided individually and in the best interests of the child. It should be 'rare to refuse a parent's request'.

Decisions should consider:

- parents' views
- child's academic, social, and emotional development
- medical history or professional advice (if relevant)
- whether the child has previously been educated outside their age group
- premature birth considerations
- the views of the Headteacher.

Parents should not be expected to get evidence they do not already have and must consider requests that not accompanied by professional evidence. Admission Authorities should not refuse solely on the basis that the request is not accompanied by professional evidence.

Admission Authorities must clearly explain their reasons when informing parents of the decision.

Decisions can be made by a specially convened panel, but this is not mandatory.

If approved, the parents should then apply to the approved year group for it to be processed in the main admissions round using normal criteria (if possible).

The application must not be given lower priority because it is outside the normal age group.

Parents can appeal if refused a school place, but cannot appeal solely because the place offered is in a different year group than requested.

The parent may make further requests, for example, when they transfer from primary to secondary school.

Admission of children outside their normal age group is different to 'deferred entry' and part time attendance which must also be clearly outlined in the school's admission arrangements.

Relevant areas of the School Admission Code

2.18-2.20

And see also:

[Non statutory guidance relating to summer born children:](#)

[Advice for parents](#)

[Making a request for admission out of the normal age group](#)

OSA Case Study - The Oxford Diocesan Schools Trust - REF4552-REF4594 - 17 December 2025

43 schools in Oxford Diocesan Schools Trust over 3 LA areas.

Objection relating to lack of proper publication of admission arrangements (upheld) and that they "make no reference to summer born children; and do not set out the process for requesting admission out of the normal year group." (upheld).

Stated within the report was a 'summary of the requirements of the Code' and "...what admission arrangements need to contain in order to comply with the Code requirements and be in accordance with the DfE guidance".

With regard to out of age group applications, admission arrangements must clearly explain:

- Who the application should be made to
- When the application must be submitted
- Who will make the decision
- What factors will be considered (using 2.19 of the Code)

The process must be clear to parents, including the distinction between: *Applying for a school place* through the local authority, and *requesting admission outside the normal age group* from the admission authority.

Admission arrangements must also state that:

- parents of any child may request admission outside their normal age group, not just summer-born children
- if approved, parents must still apply for a Reception place the following year
- applications will be considered using the normal oversubscription criteria
- approval does not guarantee a place
- parents may appeal if refused a place at a school, but cannot appeal solely against refusal of admission outside the normal age group.