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# Summer born guidance

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## Closing date to apply for full year deferral

For schools and academies in Blackpool, parents should submit applications to defer primary reception for a full year deferral by **15 January 2026** (children who would usually start in September 2026).

## Relevant documents

School Admission Code - statutory guidance and advice (last updated september 2021). Department of Education (DFE) advice on the admission of summer born children non-statutory (last updated november 2024)

[School Admissions Code \(March 2022\) – statutory guidance](#)

[DFE Advice on the Admission of Summer Born Children \(April 2023\) – non statutory advice](#)

## Children with an education, health and care plan (EHCP)

Please note that for children with an EHC plan the department of education guidance about admission requests for delayed primary school starts does not apply. Parents will need to discuss their child's situation and needs with the Blackpool Council special educational needs and disability team (SEND).

## General information

All admission authorities must provide for the admission of children in the September following a 4<sup>th</sup> birthday (School Admissions Code – 2.17). The majority of children start school at this time. The DFE does not believe that it should be the norm that summer born children start reception at age 5 and acknowledges that most will thrive if admitted at the usual time in september after a 4th birthday.

When parents receive offers for reception places for the September after a 4<sup>th</sup> birthday, they may:

- Access the place in September (and the majority do so)
- Agree part time attendance with the school or academy (usually on a short-term basis building to full time at an agreed date)
- Accept the place and agree to access it within the same school year – no later than when the child reaches statutory school age (usually a start date in January or March / April).

Parents can accept a reception place in the September after a 4<sup>th</sup> birthday and then agree a delayed start within the same school year - but not beyond the start of the final term of that school year. We will reserve the offered place where a child will start reception in that school year

## Summer born children- General

Summer born children are those with birthdays between 1 April and 31 August.

Parents must apply for reception places as usual for the September after a 4<sup>th</sup> birthday (statutory application deadline is 15 January prior to the September school start date).

Their statutory school start date is however the September after the child's 5<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Parents can decide to have a primary school start date in the September after a 5<sup>th</sup> birthday; however, there is no statutory entitlement to a reception place. Parents would normally need to apply for Year 1 places as the child would miss reception – and popular schools and academies may already be full.

Teachers are skilled in differentiating the curriculum to meet a diverse range of needs. We encourage parents to visit the schools and academies. Staff will be able to explain how they can vary provision to meet the needs of individual children. In addition, how they can address the needs of each child as they move through the school or academy.

Whether a child attends a school, academy or an early years setting during the school year following their 4<sup>th</sup> birthday they will follow the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum. This is, in the main, based on learning through play.

If parents decide to access a nursery or early years setting during the school year after a child's 4<sup>th</sup> birthday there is no right to have a reception place in a primary school or academy from the September after the 5<sup>th</sup> birthday. The child would normally start school in Year 1.

## Summer born children- Requests for full year deferral with reception start

Parents of summer born children must apply for primary school or academy admission in the September after a 4<sup>th</sup> birthday (the statutory closing date is 15 January prior to the September school start date).

Parents of summer born children can also apply to defer their child's admission until the September after a 5<sup>th</sup> birthday with a reception start. This is in addition to the usual primary application. There is a separate summer born application on Blackpool Council's website (please complete in addition to the usual reception application).

Please note that it is unlikely applications for full year deferral with reception start received after 15 January will be considered (unless the information / evidence to support only became available after that date or you only moved to the Blackpool area after that date). We will not consider applications received after final primary allocations are resolved – about 2 weeks prior to statutory offer date on 16 April in the normal year of entry.

Individual admissions authorities will consider on time requests for full year deferral with a reception start. A decision to allow admission in the September after a 5<sup>th</sup> birthday with reception start only applies to the school or academy whose admission authority has agreed the request. Decisions about the same request may vary between different admission authorities.

In most cases decision(s) about any request to defer until the September after a 5<sup>th</sup> birthday with a reception start will be confirmed ahead of the statutory primary offer date on 16 April (there may sometimes be a delay – for example where the outcome of an SEND assessment impacts on consideration of a particular request).

## Making requests for full year deferral with reception start

Advice from the Department for Education (DFE) is that it is reasonable for admission authorities to expect parents to provide information to support a request. This will allow decisions based on the circumstances of each case.

Parents are not required to obtain professional evidence or other information, which they do not already have. Admission authorities consider each request based on the information and supporting evidence that parents include with their request. However, information that is more robust will assist the decision making process in relation to a full year deferral with reception start.

Admission authorities will generally consider the following (these are not however exclusive – please note the DFE advice):

- Parent's views
- Information about a child's academic, social and emotional development
- Where relevant, a child's medical history and the views of a medical professional
- Whether a child would naturally have fallen into a lower age group if they had not been born prematurely
- The potential impact of admitting a child to their normal age group and, as a consequence, missing a year of education
- The views of the headteacher and senior staff

Admission authorities can reasonably expect parents to provide evidence from professionals involved in their child's treatment or care - for example from a speech and language therapist, an occupational therapist, a social worker, a paediatrician or a child's nursery or child minder.

For schools for which the council is the admission authority we must take the view of the headteacher into account. All admission authorities must take into account transfers for children already being educated out of their normal age group and maintain this arrangement unless there are sound education reasons to do otherwise.

The process for considering admission after a 5<sup>th</sup> birthday with a reception start follows DFE guidance (as updated in november 2024). There is no statutory requirement for any admission authority to place any child outside of his or her chronological year group.

Applications for full year deferral including only personal views and opinions and reference to guidance and research are not usually as compelling as those that focus upon the child's individual needs and circumstances. Requests which include specific reasons (supported by evidence) which show why it would be in the child's best interests to be admitted to reception in the September following their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday are likely to be considered as more compelling.

## Decisions

The council will share all information provided by parents with the admission authorities and head teachers of all relevant schools and academies. The council and individual admission authorities may liaise with parents. Schools and academies will usually offer visits to allow discussion. The council's admission team co-ordinates responses and we will share and discuss information with other relevant professionals (early year, health professionals, SEND etc.).

In accordance with guidance, there will be consideration of the potential impact on a child of admission to Year 1 without having attended a reception year. The final decision will be for each admission authority (and may vary between admission authorities). We will usually confirm decisions ahead of the primary offer date on 16 April.

Where a full year with a reception start agreed, we will ask parents to withdraw their application for the normal year of entry (after a 4<sup>th</sup> birthday). Parents will need to submit a new application for the next admission round (for a reception place in the September after a 5<sup>th</sup> birthday) this would be an application for a place at any school or academy, which has agreed full year deferral.

Where full year deferral with a reception start is refused, parents will need to decide whether to accept the offer of a reception place for the normal year of entry, or to refuse it and make an in-year application for admission to Year 1 for the September following the child's 5<sup>th</sup> birthday.

## Additional information

An agreed deferral does not mean a place that we will automatically allocate a place at a preferred school or academy the following year. All applications are subject to the school admission code and associated legislation. Agreement by any admission authority to full year deferral does not provide any additional priority for a place the following year. Each school and academy's determined admission arrangements apply to each year's batch of intake applications.

After admission, the placement of any child within a school or academy is a decision for the head teacher and governors.

Once agreed that a child can be educated outside of their normal year group the assumption will be that this will continue unless there are sound educational reasons to do otherwise. This applies to later transfers between primary schools and to secondary transition.

Parents must be aware that children who proceed through primary and then secondary school or academy a year behind their usual age range (year group) will reach statutory school leaving age on the last Friday in the June after a 16<sup>th</sup> birthday. They could therefore leave secondary school at the end of Year 10 without completing Year 11 or taking any GCSE examinations.

## Challenging decisions

There are no statutory right to appeal a decision not to allow full year deferral with a reception start. The statutory admission appeal process does not apply to a decision to refuse delayed entry to a school or academy.

Parents may submit a complaint via the school's complaint procedure for academies and voluntary aided schools or via the council's complaints process for community and voluntary controlled schools.

If there is a concern about how an application has been handled parents may then approach the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (after local complaints processes have been undertaken).

## Information and advice

Parents are strongly encouraged to have discussions with the headteachers of their preferred primary school and academies if they are considering applying for a full year deferral with reception start.

Information and advice about the process is available from Blackpool's school admission team

## Blackpool Council

Municipal Buildings  
Corporation Street  
Blackpool  
FY1 1NF

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