

Accelerated/delayed school admissions policy

Background

Schools are advised that children should be educated with their chronological year group as a general rule. Children are entitled to be educated within their cohort and should be given access to a broad and relevant curriculum, including the National Curriculum, appropriate to their individual needs.

Past experience suggests that early transfer is only in the best interests of a child in rare and very exceptional circumstances. Schools have a responsibility for educating the whole child and emotional, social and physical intellectual development all need to be taken account of. In almost all cases, a broader, richer and deeper curriculum in the age appropriate grouping is more supportive of a child's all round development. Requests for early transfer can give rise to problems where the views of the parents/carers differ from those of the other parties involved.

Delayed transfer requests are usually less contentious and arise from concerns about a child's progress, which are shared by the parents/carers and the school. Such concerns are likely to be picked up and addressed by both parties at an early stage and an appropriate course of action can be agreed.

Examples of exceptional situations in which a delayed transfer could be considered an appropriate intervention include:

- Children who have missed a lot of school through a lengthy illness or a medical condition.
- Children with the most complex special educational needs (but not with a Statement of Special Educational Needs or Education, Health and Care Plan).
- Children who arrived into the UK who have received little or no educational experience and need time to adjust to school life here.
- Children born prematurely

However, inclusion is an entitlement for all children. This should be promoted through curriculum differentiation and/or modification within the classroom, rather than by moving the child into another year group. This may mean using knowledge, skills and understanding from the foundation stage or the previous key stage. For children whose attainment is particularly high, a differentiated curriculum may include joining a group of a different age for individual subjects or using knowledge, skills and understanding from the next key stage.

There is no statutory barrier to children being admitted outside their normal age group, but parents do not have the right to insist that their child is admitted to a particular age group.

Issues to be considered for children working outside their chronological year group include:

- Infant class size regulations.
- Potential emotional impact, as he or she matures, the child may realise that the rest of the class are of a different age.
- The child may begin puberty at a different time from their classmates, which could be confusing for him or her.
- The child is eligible to leave school at 16, and if he or she has been held back a year, may leave without completing key stage 4.
- The child must receive education until the age of 16, and if he or she has been accelerated a year, they may have completed the key stage 4 curriculum before then, so educational provision must be in place.
- Children learn a great deal from their peers, and receive social, emotional and academic support from each other.
- Other interventions may be more appropriate in the long-term; placement outside the chronological year group could simply be delaying that provision.
- Placing a child in another year group may deny some other child a place at the school.

Procedures

The decision to allow a child to repeat a year or to admit a child into a cohort outside their chronological year group, in most cases lies with the school or educational setting. However, the following requests must be referred initially to the School Admissions Team at Children and Adults for consideration and advice

1. for children on roll at community schools due to transfer from one phase of education to another (i.e. key stage 1 to key stage 2 or key stage 3 to key stage 4).
2. for children who are chronologically due to start Reception / Foundation 2, regardless of which school they are applying for
 - a) parents are required to make an application for their child's normal age group at the usual time (by 15 January) but should also submit a request for admission out of the normal age group at the same time.
 - b) The relevant admission authority will be required to make a decision on which age group the child should be admitted to. One admission authority is not required to honour the decision made by another admission authority on admission out of the normal age group.
 - c) If the request is agreed by all admission authorities, the application for the normal age group may be withdrawn before a place is offered. Parents will then need to make a new application for reception / Foundation 2 as part of the main admissions round for the following year. The application will then be considered alongside other applications received and determined against the admission arrangements.
 - d) If the request to be admitted out of age group is refused, the parent must decide whether or not accept the offer of a place for the normal age group, or to refuse it.
3. for children due to transfer from key stage 2 to key stage 3 (with the exception of pupils on roll at Nottingham Academy who wish to continue to attend the academy)

- a) parents are required to make an application for their child's normal age group at the usual time (by 31 October) but should also submit a request for admission out of the normal age group at the same time.
- b) The relevant admission authority will be required to make a decision on which age group the child should be admitted to. One admission authority is not required to honour the decision made by another admission authority on admission out of the normal age group.
- c) If the request is agreed by all admission authorities, the application for the normal age group may be withdrawn before a place is offered. Parents will then need to make a new application for Year 6 as part of the main admissions round for the following year. The application will then be considered alongside other applications received and determined against the admission arrangements.
- d) If the request to be admitted out of age group is refused, the parent must decide whether or not accept the offer of a place for the normal age group, or to refuse it.

Community schools wishing to admit pupils outside of their chronological age group at key stage 4 must, in the first instance, refer the application to the School Admissions Team as this ultimately would lead to a pupil receiving an additional year of statutory education.

If either an accelerated or a delayed transfer is likely to be requested, it is most important that as much notice as possible should be given to the School Admissions Team to allow time for an assessment to be made. This will then allow there to be proper and measured consideration of how best to meet a particular child's needs. Applications should be made in the autumn term and will not normally be considered after the end of the spring term.

All requests are dealt with individually on the basis of the advice and information received from the child's present / previous Head Teacher, Educational Psychologist, Special Educational Needs Casework Officer and other relevant professionals as appropriate.

Nottingham City Council advises that:

- Placement outside the child's chronological year group should be very exceptional and for as short a period of time as necessary.
- Head Teachers should consider the issues and evidence to act in the long-term best interests of the child.
- Before making any such request Head Teachers should have sought the advice and/or support of other professionals involved with the child (e.g. Educational Psychologist, Behaviour Support Link Teacher, Special Needs Team) to ensure that all additional interventions have been explored and tailored to support the needs of the child.
- The views of parents/carers and the child should be sought.
- If placement of a child outside their chronological year group would lead to a breach of infant class size regulations, prior approval must be given by the School Admissions Team.
- Any decisions made to place children outside their chronological year group should be well documented, to protect the school and the Local Authority in future.
- Parents need to be aware that the decision made by one admission authority may not be honoured by another admission authority on admission out of the

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normal age group. Therefore, any future changes of school may result in their child being placed back into their chronological age group.

Children with a Statement of Special Educational Needs or Education, Health and Care Plan

The following procedure should not be used for pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or education, health and care plan. Any discussions as to whether or not a child with a statement or plan should be placed outside of their chronological age group should form part of the Annual Review and be appended to the Statement/Plan or the Statement/Plan amended.

If a request is to be made, the following procedure should be followed:

1. All requests should be forwarded or referred to the School Admissions Team at Children and Adults. Such requests will need to be made in writing and can be from the parent/carer of a child and/or the Head Teacher of the child's present school.
2. The Admissions Officer will request essential information from the child's present school in order for the Local Authority and/or the appropriate admission authority to give appropriate consideration to the request for a delayed transfer/admission.
3. The Admissions Officer will check the age of the child. In the case of a request for accelerated transfer, a child cannot be admitted to a secondary school until the age of 10 years and 6 months has been reached on the date of admission (Education Act 1996, Chapter 1). Pupils will not be admitted into Foundation 2 any earlier than the start of the academic year in which they reach their 5th birthday.
4. The Admissions Officer will contact other relevant professionals to seek information and advice about the child and their views on the request.
5. A Moderation Panel consisting of relevant professionals may be requested to make a recommendation to the Director of Children and Adults (or her nominated representative), taking account of all the advice and information received to help ensure consistency of decision making.
6. A letter confirming the decision on the request will be sent to the parents/carers and all parties consulted will be notified of the outcome. In the case of an accelerated transfer being approved, the Governing Body of the receiving school will also be informed.
7. A decision to approve a delayed / accelerated transfer may be for a defined period of time only, i.e. a period of 6 months/12 months after which time the decision will be reviewed taking into account the child's progress.
8. If the decision is not to approve a request to delay a transfer / admission outside the child's chronological year, further advice and support will be offered to the parents/carers. If it is not possible to reach agreement with the parents/carers the relevant papers should be forwarded to the Director of Children and Adults.

Parents do not have a right of appeal to an Independent Appeal Panel if their request for delayed or accelerated admission is denied.

Financial Issues

Children are funded according to their chronological age, with the following exceptions:

- Secondary aged pupils being educated in a primary school.
- Primary aged pupils being educated in a secondary school.
- Pupils aged 16+ being educated in a secondary school.

In the case of the exceptions detailed above AWPU funding will be based on the year group they are being educated in. For example, a pupil aged 11 whose transfer has been delayed and is still being educated in a primary school will receive AWPU funding for Year 6 pupils.

Checklist to aid consideration of making a request for delayed / accelerated transfer / admission

- ✓ Appropriate agencies have been consulted about the extent of the pupil's needs and all appropriate interventions have been made.
- ✓ School, parent/carer, child and all professionals involved feel that this would substantially increase the probability of the child's successful inclusion in mainstream school.
- ✓ The request is not being made in order to delay other interventions, such as placement into a different school.
- ✓ The decision is not being made due to difficulties in making appropriately differentiated provision in the class to which the child should normally be admitted or transfer.
- ✓ Consideration has been given to the long-term emotional and social impact of this placement.
- ✓ Consideration has been given to the likely future placements for the child, e.g. returning to their own year group or remaining with the new year group.
- ✓ There has been a discussion with parents/carers about the likely future issues, e.g. leaving school without completing key stage 4 or leaving a year later than those of the same age.
- ✓ All involved feel that the child will be able to learn more from the children in the proposed year group rather than by being educated with children of their own age group.
- ✓ The child will have an appropriate peer group in their new class, which is likely to be able to continue, and that the child can 'fit in' as the cohort matures and develops.
- ✓ The placement would not breach infant class size regulations.
- ✓ The request is not being made merely so the child can be educated in the school of the parent/carers preference or just because the school is full in the child's chronological age group.
- ✓ Consideration has been given to the rights of other children who might otherwise be given a place.