

# **Sandwell's policy for deferred or delayed entry to school for community and voluntary controlled schools**

## **Background**

The School Admission Code of 2021 states that parents may seek admission of children below compulsory school age and deferred entry to school, for example, if the child is gifted and talented or has experienced problems such as ill health.

In addition, the parents of a summer born child, born between 1 April and 31 August may choose not to send that child to school until the September following their fifth birthday and may request that they are admitted out of their normal age group – to reception rather than year 1.

## **Sandwell's Policy**

Under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, children do not have to undertake full time education until the start of the term following their fifth birthday. In Sandwell children are offered admission at the beginning of the Autumn Term (September) following their fourth birthday. If parents/carers wish to defer entry until later in that academic year or until the child is 5, the following options are available:

### **Deferred entry:**

- a) the child is entitled to a full-time place in the September following their fourth birthday
- b) the child's parents can defer 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 final term of the school year for which the offer was made; and

- c) where the parents wish, children may attend part-time until later in the school year but not beyond the point at which they reach compulsory school age.

If parents/carers want option “b” or “c”, they should discuss this with the Head Teacher of their allocated school.

### **Delayed entry:**

Parents/carers sometimes request that the admission of their child is delayed for an academic year due to developmental issues. For community and voluntary controlled schools, the Local Authority, as the admission authority, will make a decision on the basis of the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child concerned. This will include taking account of:

- a) the parent’s/carer’s views, information about the child’s academic, social and emotional development, and, where relevant their medical history and the views of a medical professional. In addition, the Local Authority will consider whether the child has previously been educated out of their normal age group and whether they may naturally have fallen into a lower age group if it were not for being born prematurely; and
- b) the views of the Head Teacher of the school concerned.

Delayed entry beyond one academic year will not be supported.

This policy only applies to Sandwell’s community and voluntary controlled schools.

To help you make an informed decision please visit:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/summer-born-children-school-admission>

## Process

Parents/carers must apply for a school place through the normal admission procedures and must submit an application form by 15 January. A request to delay entry will be made by the parent in writing, outlining reasons for the request, to the School Admissions Team by no later than 15 January in the year of the child's scheduled entry to reception class. The request should include:

- any evidence from a health or social care professional who is involved in the care or treatment of the child, e.g. speech and language therapist, occupational therapist, social worker, paediatrician;
- a report from the Early Years setting regarding the child's current level of functioning with evidence of the child's attainments against the ages and stages of development from the Early Years Foundation Stage, the child's social functioning with the peer group and their views on the request;
- whether the child's premature birth has caused health problems or developmental delays that mean the child would benefit from a delayed school start; and
- what a nursery setting can provide the child that a reception class would not.

Late requests will **not** be considered unless the family are new to the area.

## Decision

A panel will be convened by the School Admissions Manager to consider the request. The Deferred Entry panel will be composed of a:

- Education Improvement Advisor - SEN
- Team Manager School Admissions
- Senior Leader Specialist Inclusion Service
- Early Years Lead
- Head Teacher(s) of the preferred school(s)
- A healthcare professional (where the request is based on medical needs)
- The parent / carer of the child (and a personal representative)

The School Admissions Manager will co-ordinate the work of the panel. The panel will consider:

- the parent's/carer's views;
- information about the child's academic, social and emotional development;
- where relevant their medical history and the views of a medical professional;
- whether the child has previously been educated out of their normal age group;
- whether the child may naturally have fallen into a lower age group if it were not for being born prematurely;
- the views of the Head Teacher of the school concerned;
- the impact of any decision on the child, parents /carers and the school;

The panel will reach a decision prior to the allocation of school places on 16 April.

In line with the School Admissions Code September 2021, the admission authority **must** make the decision based on the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child concerned.

Once a decision has been made, Sandwell Local Authority will formally notify the parent / carer, clearly setting out the reasons for the decision.

If the parent/carer is unhappy with the decision they have the right to appeal to the Executive Director of Children and Education. Their appeal will be heard by an independent appeals panel. However, the right of appeal only applies if a place at the preferred school is not offered, it is not allowed if a place at the school is offered, but it is not in the preferred year group

## **Attendance at an early years setting**

**Where it is agreed that delaying entry to Reception is in the child's best interests, the child will usually remain eligible for their funded early education entitlement (for example, 15 hours per week). This funding can be accessed through a range of approved early years providers, including school nurseries, private day nurseries, and other registered settings, subject to local authority funding arrangements. Children do not have to transfer to a school nursery in order to access their entitlement.**

## **Review**

Where it is agreed that the child should start school outside of their chronological age group, the parents / carers will be requested to apply for a school place again through the normal admission procedures the following year.

A review will take place at the start of Year 5 with a view to consideration of secondary school. The review will be conducted by the Deferred Entry Panel, a representative of the primary school where the children currently attends and a representative from a secondary school.

If the schools feels that the child is ready to be taught alongside peers of the same chronological age, consideration should be given to moving them to year 6.

The review will be conducted prior to the allocation of secondary school places.

Parents should be mindful that this policy only applies to maintained schools, so any agreement to a deferred entry by a secondary school will be a decision made by that individual school.

The school and or parents/carers can request a review sooner if it is felt that the child has progressed sufficiently to be taught alongside peers, however consideration will be given to the admission limit of the year group concerned.