

We welcome children of all faiths, backgrounds and beliefs into our inclusive community. We seek inspiration from the life and teaching of Jesus Christ to help our children achieve their full potential. We uphold the distinctive Christian ethos and values of the Heartwood academy when making all decisions and implementing policy and practice. We aim to provide a caring and stimulating environment which promotes a love of learning whilst seeking to inspire every pupil to become a well-motivated, independent and resourceful learner.

Heartwood Church of England

Academy Trust



Heartwood
Church of England Academy Trust

Guidance and Policy relating to the education of children outside of their chronological year group

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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE

INTRODUCTION

This document sets out Warwickshire County Council's (the 'Local Authority') policy on educating pupils outside of their chronological year group. This relates to children where a request is received for them to be educated outside of their normal age range year group; that is that they are educated in the year group below, or the year group above, their chronological age.

This policy applies to all schools where the Local Authority is the Admissions Authority: i.e.: all Community and Voluntary Controlled schools. Where the school is located within Warwickshire but is its own Admission Authority - for example, Voluntary Aided schools or Academies - the Local Authority will automatically apply this policy to applications received via the coordinated scheme, but will also strongly recommend that the it is endorsed by schools in the process of In-Year admissions.

This document does not relate to situations where pupils are in mixed-age classes. Mixed age classes are classes where pupils may be taught in a class where a number, or even the majority, of pupils are in an adjacent year group. As long as this arrangement will not affect the age at which the pupils will transfer to the next key stage in their education, then the pupil is not considered to be 'educated outside of his/her age group'.

RATIONALE

The Local Authority's (LA) policy is that pupils should normally be educated in the year group appropriate to their chronological age, for the following reasons:

- The LA is concerned with the development of the *whole child*. This includes physical and emotional maturity, the development of social and interactional skills and the pupil's ability to respond to a curriculum which is age-appropriate, as well as suited to his/her abilities.
- The LA promotes and provides *inclusive* teaching. Teachers are expected to match the pupils' learning objectives and the learning activities planned to the abilities, aptitudes and individual needs of pupils.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum and the Programmes of Study in the National Curriculum incorporate flexibility within, and between, each key stage in order to support a diverse range of pupils' needs. Where a pupil's abilities are significantly out of step with other pupils of his/her age, then individual provision should be planned. This could include addressing any special educational needs. In almost all cases, such individual provision will be made within the pupil's own year group.
- The SEN Code of Practice outlines a 'graduated response' of special provision, assessments and review within schools which does not normally require pupils to be educated out of their correct year group.

- Pupils have an entitlement to the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum and the Programmes of Study of the National Curriculum, designed for their age group. The LA and all schools within this authority have a legal duty to make sure this is available.
- When a request is being considered, a long term view should be taken of the pupil's educational needs. The LA would wish to avoid the adverse consequences which frequently arise if pupils are educated out of their year group, including the possibility of a difficult transition back into their chronological year group at a later date, if this is deemed appropriate. Additionally, pupils taught in a younger year group may be of an age to leave school before they have had the opportunity to acquire external qualifications. They may, in this way, become educationally disadvantaged.
- Teaching an older pupil in a younger year group may well extend the time which he/she spends at school. This will have significant financial implications for the use of public and/or designated funds. The LA has a public duty to resource education equitably and fairly, and the Funding Agreements in place for schools who are their own admission authority will have strict financial guidelines in place.
- Educational research has not demonstrated that accelerating more able pupils into older age-groups is in their best interests. Such acceleration inevitably brings emotional and social pressures which are not conducive to the well-being of the young person concerned. The advantages of accelerating the normal academic milestones, from developments in early years through to public examinations, have not been shown to outweigh the personal and social costs which can be involved.

However, in September 2015 the Department for Education (DfE) wrote to all Local Authorities to advise that the School Admissions Code (2014) would be updated in the near future in respect of the admission of summer born children into schools. Therefore, requests for part-time, delayed or deferred entry for children who are due to start school can be made to the Local Authority, and those requests will be considered on an individual basis, in line with this policy.

Requests for children who are already of compulsory school age to be educated outside of their chronological year group will be considered on an individual basis, in line with this policy.

Please ensure that you have read this document in full before submitting such a request.

TABLE TO SHOW THE BIRTHDAY THAT OCCURS IN EACH OF THE ACADEMIC YEARS:

School Year Group, where children enter the year group on 1 st September	The birthday which occurs between 1 st September and the following 31 st August	Relevant Key Stage to which National Curriculum will be focused
Nursery	4	FOUNDATION
Reception	5	
Y1	6	KEY STAGE 1
Y2	7	
Y3	8	KEY STAGE 2
Y4	9	
Y5	10	
Y6	11	
Y7	12	KEY STAGE 3
Y8	13	
Y9	14	
Y10	15	KEY STAGE 4
Y11	16	
Y12	17	SIXTH FORM/POST-16
Y13	18	

SECTION 2: THE LAW

All admission authorities are legally required to have regard to the statutory guidance as set out in the **School Admissions Code** (2014). This policy, including any guidance, will be updated as and when the Code is amended.

The following extracts are taken from the School Admissions Code, in relation to the education of children outside of their chronological year group:

2.17 Parents may seek a place for their child outside of their normal age group, 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 * 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. Admission authorities **must** make clear in their admission arrangements the process for requesting admission out of the normal age group.

2.17A Admission authorities **must** make decisions on the basis of the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child concerned. This will include taking account of the parent'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 they have 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. They **must** also take into account the views of the head teacher of the school concerned. When informing a parent of their decision on the year group the child should be admitted to, the admission authority **must** set out clearly the reasons for their decision.

2.17B Where an admission authority agrees to a parent's request for their child to be admitted out of their normal age group and, as a consequence of that decision, the child will be admitted to a relevant age group (i.e. the age group to which pupils are normally admitted to the school) the local authority and admission authority **must** process the application as part of the main admissions round, unless the parental request is made too late for this to be possible, and on the basis of their determined admission arrangements only, including the application of oversubscription criteria where applicable. They **must not** give the application lower priority on the basis that the child is being admitted out of their normal age group. Parents have a statutory right to appeal against the refusal of a place at a school for which they have applied. This right does not apply if they are offered a place at the school but it is not in their preferred age group.

** The term summer born children relates to all children born from 1 April to 31 August. These children reach compulsory school age on 31 August following their fifth birthday (or on their fifth birthday if it falls on 31 August). It is likely that most requests for summer born children to be admitted out of their normal age group will come from parents of children born in the later summer months or those born prematurely.*

Any requests received in relation to the deferred entry of **summer-born children** will be considered alongside the following guidance from the Department for Education (DfE):

***“Advice on the admissions of summer born children
For local authorities, school admission authorities and parents”
(December 2014)***

Statutory Assessments

There are statutory assessments, checks and tests which must be completed by all pupils at the end of each phase of education, and the results reported to the DfE.

These may be deferred or taken early, but it could disadvantage the child in some circumstances to do this.

In Primary (and Infant/Junior) schools, statutory assessments occur in the following year groups:

- Reception
- Year 1
- Year 2
- Year 6

Statutory testing occurs in Year 2 and Year 6 of Primary (and Infant/Junior) schools.

Each individual case must be discussed with the Statutory Assessment Team, so that parents and schools are clear about the impact of any change to the normal admission procedures, and subsequent changes to statutory assessment and testing dates.

SECTION 3: STARTING SCHOOL

The majority of children will start school, and attend on a full-time basis, in the September following their fourth (4th) birthday. In Warwickshire, children will start their education at this point in the Reception year group.

However, in some cases it may be more appropriate that a child starts school on a **part-time basis** initially, or starts later in the school year – for example, in the Spring term, after the Easter holidays. This is referred to as '**Delayed Entry**'.

There are many reasons that it may be appropriate to delay the point at which a child starts school. These could concern medical issues which a child has, special educational needs which are either confirmed or being assessed, or the child may not be emotionally, socially or psychologically 'ready' to start school during the term after their fourth birthday.

For some children - for example, in the case of some 'summer-born children' (those born between 1st April and 31st August) it may be appropriate to request that the child starts school a year later so that the child is educated in the chronological year group below where they should be. This is referred to as '**Deferred Entry**'.

The Law states that children have to be in full-time education by the start of the term following their fifth birthday. This is when they reach 'compulsory school age'.

REQUESTING **PART-TIME ADMISSION** FOR CHILDREN DUE TO START SCHOOL

When a child starts school in Reception, the offer of a place is made on the assumption that attendance will be on a full-time basis, from September. However, part-time admission can be agreed in certain cases. This is where the child will still start in Reception in September but will attend for fewer hours, either for a short period or more long-term. Part-time admission could be appropriate for a child who tires easily, possibly due to a medical condition.

Before a request for part-time admissions is made, an application for a school place **must** be made in line with the co-ordinated process, and all relevant deadlines adhered to, so that a school offer can be made prior to the request for part-time admission being made by the parent/carer.

The request for part-time admission must be made in writing directly to the head teacher of the school at which an offer has been made and accepted. This may be a preferable alternative to delaying entry until later in the year as it will give the child the opportunity to settle in gradually but they will still be able to make friends and become familiar with the educational setting.

If you wish to combine a part-time school place with any other childcare provider, your child's free entitlement will be used to pay for the school provision. You will need to pay the childcare provider for the hours used at the private provision.

The child must have started attending school on a full-time basis by the time they reach compulsory school age.

REQUESTING DELAYED ENTRY FOR CHILDREN DUE TO START SCHOOL

It may be appropriate for a child to start in Reception later in the school year, perhaps due to medical issues or because they are a summer-born child and are just not ready to start school in the September.

Before a request for delayed entry is made, an application for a school place **must** be made in line with the co-ordinated process, and all relevant deadlines adhered to, so that a school offer can be made prior to the request for delayed entry being made by the parent/carer.

The request for delayed entry **must** be made in writing directly to the head teacher of the school at which an offer has been made and accepted. If deferred entry is agreed then the school place will be held until the date it is agreed that the child will start school.

This may be a preferable alternative to deferring entry completely until a whole year later as it will give the child the opportunity to settle into Reception, make friends and become familiar with the educational setting, and then be prepared to start in Year 1 the following September.

The parent/carer is responsible for sourcing any childcare provision which is required prior to the child starting at school later in the academic year, and the child will still receive their free entitlement based on 15 hours per week until they start school.

The child must have started attending school on a full-time basis by the time they reach compulsory school age.

DISADVANTAGES OF PART-TIME ADMISSION AND DELAYED ENTRY

Although there may be justifiable reasons why a child should start their education in Reception on a part-time basis, or start later in the school year as an approved delayed entry pupil, the parent/carer should give this route careful consideration prior to a request being made.

Part-time admission may mean that the child will miss out on a range of learning opportunities carried out in the Reception class, as well as some of the play-based curriculum. They may also take more time to develop the required physical stamina to meet the demands of attending for a whole school day. Whilst part-time admission will still give the child access to all relevant learning opportunities, there will be less time for the child to practice them, meaning that they may not become as proficient in the relevant learning which forms part of the Early Years' Curriculum. This could also disadvantage the child in statutory assessments at the end of the academic year.

As well as the above, where delayed entry is being considered, it is also worth bearing in mind that this will mean that the child will miss out on a range of class activities which are administered at the start of the Autumn term, which are designed to help the children settle into school life and the routines of the school day. They will also be joining the year group at a later time than the majority of other children so friendship groups and social circles will already be well-established.

Where a child has identified Special Educational Needs and part-time admission or delayed entry has been agreed, it may be the case that funding or support in relation to those needs may not be consistent.

Where part-time admission (or flexi-schooling) has been agreed, any previous agreement in respect of School Transport Assistance may not continue, as these arrangements are usually put in place with contractors who work to normal school hours.

REQUESTING DEFERRED ENTRY

A formal request for **deferred entry** should be made to the Admissions Service in the autumn term of the year *before* the child is chronologically due to start school. For example, for a child who is due to start in school in September 2017, the request for deferred entry should be made by no later than 1st December 2016.

An application for the child to start school **must** also be completed and sent with the request. This ensures that the child can still be considered for a school place which is relevant to their chronological age group, if the request for deferred entry is denied. If the request is approved then the application will be withdrawn and a new application must be made for the following year of entry, in line with the co-ordinated admission arrangements for that particular year of entry.

The application form, and the form which must be completed in order to request deferred entry, can be found on the website: **www.warwickshire.gov.uk/admissions**
School admission authorities are responsible for making the decision on whether or not a child will be admitted outside their normal age group. The admission authority in the case of community and voluntary-controlled schools is the LA and in the case of academies, foundation, trust, voluntary-aided and free schools, it is the academy trust or governing body of the school.

However, where a child has an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan or a Statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN), the decision rests with the Local Authority (LA) and must be confirmed in the Plan/Statement.

Admission authorities are required to make a decision based on the circumstances of each case but must give regard to the views of head teacher and/or governing body of the school.

The LA recommends that the decision is made in consultation with the head teacher of the school concerned, as well as the LA, the parents, and all professionals involved with the child. It is therefore in the interest of the parent/carer making the request to communicate with the Head teacher of the school for which they are seeking delayed or deferred entry so that the interests and needs of the child in each specific case are given full and proper consideration.

The primary issue for consideration is what is in the child's best interests in all circumstances. The following matters in particular will be taken into account when a request for deferred entry is being considered:

- the child shows a significant delay and/or little progress in their personal and emotional development;
- social skills are not appropriate to the child's chronological age group;
- the child shows significant delay and/or little progress in intellectual development/educational skills across the subject areas, to an extent that it is not reasonable to expect curriculum differentiation within their correct year group to be successful;
- there is clear evidence that the child's needs will be met more effectively out of their chronological year group than would be possible within.

Each individual case may be discussed with the Statutory Assessment Team, so that parents and schools are clear about the impact of any change to the normal admission procedures, and subsequent changes to statutory assessment and testing dates.

Deferred entry requests for **summer-born children** are different to other requests for a child to be educated outside of their chronological year group. This is because this is the first time that a child will enter the school system. The Guidance in relation to this sets out that, where a request is made for deferred entry for a summer-born child, parents need to be confident that it is in the best interests of the child for them to start school in Reception a year later.

DISADVANTAGES OF DEFERRED ENTRY

Whilst deferred entry may be the most appropriate option for some children, it is worth noting that there will be consequences if such a route is approved. The child will be educated out of their chronological year group and so will be a whole year older than the rest of their peers. This could affect the child on a long-term basis, both psychologically and emotionally, as they mature and begin to recognise that they are different to the rest of their classmates.

Deferred entry may mean an extra year with an alternative early years provider, which may not be able to offer the appropriate level of educational input through play that is available in Reception. Funding will be available for the equivalent of 15 hours per week for term time at a private provider, but parents will have to pay for any attendance at a setting over and above this time.

When your child transfers to Junior or Secondary school, there is no obligation for the next school to adhere to the agreement which was put in place for deferred entry in Reception. If the new school disagrees that the child should be educated out of their chronological year group, they may be forced to join their appropriate age cohort and may therefore completely bypass a whole year of education.

As Warwickshire is a county which contains grammar schools, and carries out an 11+ testing process which is based on academic ability in order to consider possible candidates to those schools, it is also important to bear in mind that this will also be affected by deferred entry.

11+ tests are held annually and scores are standardised based on a cohort within a specific age range. Where a child falls outside of that age range, there is no guarantee that the 11+ test for that particular year of entry will be adapted for a child who does not chronologically fall within the year group for which entry is being sought.

All of the grammar schools within Warwickshire are Academies, meaning that they are their own admission authorities. These schools would have to be in agreement that such a child could be tested alongside the peers of the year group for which admission is being sought, and those schools would also have to be in agreement that the child could enter the school either a year above or below their chronological age group. There is no guarantee, and no obligation on the part of those schools, that such an agreement will be made.

Where a child has identified Special Educational Needs and deferred entry has been agreed, it may be the case that funding or support in relation to those needs may not be consistent.

Each individual case must be discussed with the Statutory Assessment Team, so that parents and schools are clear about the impact of any change to the normal admission procedures, and subsequent changes to statutory assessment and testing dates.

STARTING SCHOOL A YEAR EARLY

A formal request for **accelerated entry** should be made to the Admissions Service by no later than the end of the autumn term of the year before the child is asking to start school. For example, for a child who is due to start in school in September 2018, but is seeking entry in September 2017, the request for accelerated entry should be made by no later than 1st December 2016.

An application for the child to start school **must** also be completed and sent with the request, as this will be considered if the request for accelerated entry is agreed.

The relevant request form can be found on the website:
www.warwickshire.gov.uk/admissions

See Section 5: 'Accelerated Entry' for further information

SECTION 4: TRANSFERRING TO JUNIOR OR SECONDARY SCHOOL

REQUESTING DEFERRED ENTRY FROM INFANT TO JUNIOR SCHOOL

The majority of children will start school in Reception at a Primary school and will automatically accelerate through the relevant year groups at the same school until the end of Year 6. However, a small number of children will start Reception in an Infant School, which only accommodates children until the end of Year 2. At that point, children will make an application for schools and then transfer to start Year 3 in a Junior or Primary school. A child will normally start in Year 3 in the September following their seventh (7th) birthday.

Where a child is moving from Infant to Junior school, and an agreement is already in place for them to be educated out of their chronological year group, then this arrangement will normally continue, as long as the reasoning for deferring (or accelerating) entry in the first instance still applies. However, even if this is the case, if the school which is being applied for is its own admission authority then there is no guarantee that the arrangement for the child to be educated outside of their chronological year group will continue.

For those requesting deferred entry when transferring from Infant to Junior school – i.e.: where a request is made to delay entry to Junior school in Year 3 and for the child to repeat a year in Year 2 - specific reasons need to be identified in order for this to be agreed. The child's current school will be consulted on this matter.

School admission authorities are responsible for making the decision on whether or not a child will be admitted outside their normal age group. The admission authority in the case of community and voluntary-controlled schools is the LA and in the case of academies, foundation, trust, voluntary-aided and free schools, it is the academy trust or governing body of the school.

However, where a child has an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan or a Statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN), the decision rests with the Local Authority (LA) and must be confirmed in the Plan/Statement.

Admission authorities are required to make a decision based on the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child, however, they should also give regard to the views of head teacher of the school.

The LA recommends that the decision is made in consultation with the head teacher of the school concerned, as well as the LA, the parents, and all professionals involved with the child. It is therefore in the interest of the parent/carer making the request to communicate with the Head teacher of the school for which they are seeking delayed or deferred entry so that the interests and needs of the child in each specific case are given full and proper consideration.

REQUESTING DEFERRED ENTRY FROM JUNIOR/PRIMARY SCHOOL TO SECONDARY SCHOOL

The majority of children will start their secondary education in Year 7, in the September following their eleventh (11th) birthday. The Local Authority's (LA) policy that pupils should be educated in the year group appropriate to their chronological age still applies.

Where a child is moving from Primary/Junior school and an agreement is already in place for them to be educated out of their chronological year group, then this arrangement will normally continue, as long as the reasoning for deferring or accelerating entry in the first instance still applies. However, even if this is the case, if the school which is being applied for is its own admission authority then there is no guarantee that the arrangement for the child to be educated outside of their chronological year group will continue.

A formal request for **deferred entry** from an Infant to a Junior school, or from Primary/Junior school to Secondary school, should be made to the Admissions Service by no later than the end of the autumn term of the year before the child is chronologically due to transfer to the appropriate year group. For example, for a child who is due to start in Year 3 or Year 7 in September 2017, the request for deferred entry should be made by no later than 1st December 2016.

An application for the child to start in the relevant chronological year group **must** also be completed and sent with the request. This ensures that the child can still be considered for a school place which is relevant to their chronological age group, if the request for deferred entry is denied. If the request is approved then the application will be withdrawn and a new application must be made for the following year of entry, in line with the co-ordinated admission arrangements for that particular year of entry.

The application form, and the form which must be completed in order to request deferred entry, can be found on the website: www.warwickshire.gov.uk/admissions

The decision to approve a request for deferred entry will be based on what is considered to be in the child's best interests and will be made in consultation between the LA and/or the admission authority for the school for which deferred entry is being sought, as well as any healthcare providers, medical professionals or other external agencies who are involved with the child and their needs.

The following will also be taken into account when a request for deferred entry is being considered, particularly if the child is not classed as 'summer-born':

- the child shows a significant delay and/or little progress in their personal and emotional development;
- social skills are not appropriate to the child's chronological age group;
- the child shows significant delay and/or little progress in intellectual development/educational skills across the subject areas, to an extent that it is not reasonable to expect curriculum differentiation within their correct year group to be successful;
- there is clear evidence that the child's needs will be met more effectively out of their chronological year group than would be possible within.

SECTION 5: ACCELERATED ENTRY

Accelerated entry refers to a child who is educated in the year group above their chronological year group. For example, a child is educated in Year 5 but their age means that they should, chronologically, be taught in Year 4, with peers within the same age range. Parents/carers will usually make a request for the child to be accelerated into the year group above based on the child's academic ability.

However, a school will not normally request that a child is educated in the year above their chronological age, or agree to such a request based simply on academic ability. This is because the curriculum can be adapted and differentiated to meet the needs of many ranges of academic ability within a cohort.

Such a request may be agreed to in limited circumstances – for example, if a child moves into the county from overseas and there is a history of that child being educated in the chronological year group above.

DISADVANTAGES OF ACCELERATED ENTRY

Whilst accelerated entry may be the most appropriate option in very exceptional cases, it is worth noting that there will be consequences if such a route is approved. The child will be educated out of their chronological year group and so will be a whole year younger than the rest of their peers. This could affect the child on a long-term basis, both psychologically and emotionally, as they mature and begin to recognise that they are different to the rest of their classmates. It could also have a serious impact on a child starting school in Reception where that child is only 3 years of age, due to the nature and length of the school day and the expectation for every child to participate fully in school life. They may not have the stamina to cope with such demands and may find the experience of formal schooling very stressful at that age.

When your child transfers to Junior or Secondary school, there is no obligation for the next school to adhere to any agreement which was put in place for accelerated entry previously. If the new school disagrees that the child should be educated out of their chronological year group, the child may then be forced to join their appropriate age cohort and may therefore have to repeat a whole year of education.

As Warwickshire is a county which contains grammar schools, and carries out an 11+ testing process which is based on academic ability in order to consider possible candidates to those schools, it is also important to bear in mind that this will also be affected by accelerated entry.

11+ tests are held annually and scores are standardised based on a cohort within a specific age range. Where a child falls outside of that age range, there is no guarantee that the 11+ test for that particular year of entry will be adaptable to a child who does not chronologically fall within the year group for which entry is being sought.

All of the grammar schools within Warwickshire are Academies, meaning that they are their own admission authorities. These schools would have to be in agreement that such a child could be tested alongside the peers of the year group for which admission is being sought, and those schools would also have to be in agreement that the child could enter the school a year above their chronological age group. There is no guarantee, and no obligation on the part of those schools, that such an agreement will be made, and each child will only have one opportunity to sit the 11+ test in respect of such schools.

Each individual case must be discussed with the Statutory Assessment Team, so that parents and schools are clear about the impact of any change to the normal admission procedures, and subsequent changes to statutory assessment and testing dates.

REQUESTING ACCELERATED ENTRY FOR RECEPTION, JUNIOR OR SECONDARY SCHOOL

A formal request for **accelerated entry** should be made to the Admissions Service in the autumn term of the year before the child is asking to start school or transfer to junior/secondary school. For example, for a child who is due to start in school in September 2018, but is seeking entry in September 2017, the request for accelerated entry should be made by no later than 1st December 2016.

An application for the child to start school **must** also be completed and sent with the request, as this will be considered if the request for accelerated entry is agreed. The relevant request form and appropriate application can both be found on the website:
www.warwickshire.gov.uk/admissions

SECTION 6: IN-YEAR ADMISSIONS

In some cases, children may need to move from one school to another during the academic year. This may be due to the fact that a family have moved into Warwickshire from another county, or from overseas. This is referred to as an 'in-year admission'.

Where a child is moving from one school to another as an in-year admission, and an agreement is already in place for them to be educated out of their chronological year group, this arrangement will normally continue, as long as the reasoning for deferring or accelerating entry in the first instance still applies. However, even if this is the case, if the school which is being applied for is its own admission authority then there is no guarantee that the arrangement for the child to be educated outside of their chronological year group will continue.

School admission authorities are responsible for making the decision on whether or not a child will be admitted outside their normal age group. The admission authority in the case of community and voluntary-controlled schools is the LA and in the case of academies, foundation, trust, voluntary-aided and free schools, it is the academy trust or governing body of the school.

However, where a child has an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan or a Statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN), the decision rests with the Local Authority (LA) and must be confirmed in the Plan/Statement.

Admission authorities are required to make a decision based on the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child, but they should also give regard to the views of head teacher of the school.

The LA recommends that the decision is made in consultation with the head teacher of the school concerned, as well as the LA, the parents, and all professionals involved with the child. It is therefore in the interest of the parent/carer making the request to communicate with the Head teacher of the school for which they are seeking delayed or deferred entry so that the interests and needs of the child in each specific case are given full and proper consideration.

A formal request for **deferred or accelerated entry** as an in-year admission should be made to the Admissions Service at the same time as submitting the 'Change of School' application form. Further information about the in-year admissions process, as well as the appropriate request form to complete in order for the child to be considered to be educated outside of their chronological year group, can be found on the following website:
www.warwickshire.gov.uk/changingschool

SECTION 7: WHAT TO DO NEXT

If a school place has been offered and accepted for entry into **Reception**, for the correct chronological year group, and you wish to make a request for **part-time** entry:

- Once you've been allocated a school place, speak to the head teacher as soon as possible to request part-time admission.

If you would like to request **delayed entry into Reception** until later in the academic year, for the correct chronological year group:

- You will still need to apply for a school place as if for September entry but this place will be held open for you until the time it is agreed that your child should start at the school. Once you've been allocated a place you will need to speak to the head teacher to make arrangements for delayed admission.
- Your child must start at the school by the beginning of the term after they turn five years old, at the latest.

If you would like to request **deferred entry** for your child to start school in **Reception** in the year below their chronological age (ie: a year later):

- You should speak to the head teacher at your preferred school, your early years provider, and any other professionals involved, and then complete and return the appropriate request from which can be found on our website: **www.warwickshire.gov.uk/admissions**
- You must also complete an application for your child to start school at the point which is relevant to their age, and abide by all relevant deadlines associated with that process. This is to ensure that your child is still offered a school place if your request for deferred entry is not agreed.

If you would like to request **accelerated entry** for your child to start school in **Reception** in the year above their chronological age (ie: a year earlier):

- You should speak to the head teacher at your preferred school, your early years provider, and any other professionals involved, and then complete and return the appropriate request from which can be found on our website: **www.warwickshire.gov.uk/admissions**
- You should also complete an application for your child to start school at the point for which accelerated admission is being sought. This is to ensure that your child is then considered for a school place if the request is agreed. If the request is not agreed then your application will be automatically withdrawn and you will be required to submit a new application for the relevant entry year.

If you would like to request for your child to be **educated outside of their chronological year group**, either in line with the automatic transfer from one key stage to the next, or as an in-year admission:

- You should speak to the head teacher at your child's current school and any other professionals involved, and then complete and return the appropriate request from which can be found on our website: **www.warwickshire.gov.uk/admissions**

Once a child has been admitted to a school it is for the head teacher to decide how best to educate them. In some cases it may be appropriate for a child who has been admitted out of their normal age group to be moved to their normal age group, but in others it will not. Any decision to move a child to a different age group should be based on sound educational reasons and should be made by the head teacher in consultation with the parents.

SECTION 8: APPEALS AND COMPLAINTS

Parents who are refused a place at a school for which they have applied have the right of appeal to an independent admission appeal panel. As the purpose of the appeals process is to consider whether a child should be admitted to a particular school, parents do not have a right of appeal if they have been offered a place in their chronological year group but their preferred year group is a different year group. However, you may make a complaint about an admission authority's decision not to admit your child outside of their chronological year group.

If your request for deferred or accelerated entry for your child has been refused then you can make a formal complaint through the following channels:

- Local Authority maintained schools (eg: Community and Voluntary-Controlled) = **Local Authority complaints procedure**. Further information can be found on the website: www.warwickshire.gov.uk/complaints
- Own Admission Authority schools (eg: Academies, Free and Voluntary-Aided) = the **published complaints procedure of the school** for which deferred or accelerated entry has been requested.

If you are unhappy with the way the Local Authority or maintained school has handled your complaint you may then refer your complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman.

If you are unhappy with the way an Academy has handled your complaint you may then refer your complaint to the Education Funding Agency who will consider the complaint on behalf of the Secretary of State for Education. More information is available at: www.gov.uk

If your child has an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan and your request for them to be educated outside of their chronological year group has been refused then you can ask the SENDAR team about your right to appeal through an SEN Tribunal. Further information can be found on the SENDAR website at: www.warwickshire.gov.uk/sen

There is no appeal process in relation to a request being refused for a child to be educated outside of their chronological year group.

SECTION 9: USEFUL INFORMATION

- A request for deferment (including in relation to ‘summer-born’ children) or accelerated entry should be made by the **relevant deadlines** as outlined in this document, and in line with the admissions arrangements for the requested year of entry. Any requests (or applications for school places) not received by the relevant deadlines will not be considered.
- An **application for a school place** must be submitted with any request for delayed, deferred or accelerated admission. Any applications not submitted by the relevant deadline may affect the consideration and outcome of the request.
- **Reasons and evidence** to be taken into consideration must be submitted with the request form. Any delay in those documents being submitted may affect the outcome of the request. Any evidence or supporting documentation not received by the deadline will not be considered.
- Please ensure that you have read this document fully before submitting your formal request for deferred or accelerated entry.

USEFUL CONTACTS

School Admissions Service

Telephone: 01926 414143
Email: admissions@warwickshire.gov.uk
Website:
www.warwickshire.gov.uk/admissions

SENDAR (Special Educational Needs, Disability and Review Service)

Telephone: 01926 742060
Email: sen@warwickshire.gov.uk
Website: www.warwickshire.gov.uk/sen

Family Information Service

Telephone: 01926 742274
Email: fis@warwickshire.gov.uk
Website: www.warwickshire.gov.uk/fis

IDS (Integrated Disability Service)

Website: <https://warwickshire.gov.uk/ids>

EMTAS (Ethnic, Minority and Traveller Achievement Service)

Telephone: 01926 742623
Email: sarahdalli@warwickshire.gov.uk

ACE (Attendance, Compliance and Enforcement)

Website:
www.warwickshire.gov.uk/schoolattendance

Statutory Key Stage Assessment Team

Telephone: 01926 743015
Email:
edassessmentteam@warwickshire.gov.uk

SECTION 10: CRITERIA TO BE USED WHEN CONSIDERING REQUESTS FOR A CHILD TO BE EDUCATED OUTSIDE OF THEIR CHRONOLOGICAL YEAR GROUP

In all cases the final decision regarding requests to defer or accelerate entry at any stage will be made by the Head of Service, Education and Learning.

Each request should be allocated at least one of the following criteria before being considered further.

1. Request to delay entry to Reception beyond the September following the child's fourth birthday:

1a *the child has a summer birthday and parents feel that he/she is not ready to start school in September owing to developmental immaturity*

1b *parents wish, for whatever reason, to delay entry to school until the child is of statutory school age.*

Whilst delayed and part-time admission will still allow the child to experience all relevant learning opportunities, there will be less time for the child to experience them, meaning that they may not become as proficient in the relevant learning which forms part of the Early Years' Curriculum.

Parents have the right to delay school entry until later in the same academic year. In these circumstances, a place in Reception will be held for him/her until the parents wish their child to start school. However, his/her entry must not be delayed beyond the beginning of the term following his/her fifth birthday, nor beyond the end of the academic year in question.

In these cases, the child will simply have delayed entry to his/her age-appropriate year group and will move to Year 1 at the end of the year in question even though he/she may have spent two, or less, terms in school.

Please Note: Even where a request to delay or defer entry is agreed, there is no guarantee that a place will be offered at the parent/carer's preferred school.

2. Request to defer entry to Reception, until the September following the child's fifth birthday:

2a *the child has a **summer birthday** and parents feel that he/she is not ready to start school in September owing to developmental immaturity*

Any requests received in relation to the deferred entry of **summer-born children** will be considered alongside the following guidance from the Department for Education (DfE):

**“Advice on the admissions of summer born children
For local authorities, school admission authorities and parents”**

(December 2014)

2b *the child has been identified as having **special educational needs** and is not felt to be ready to access the Reception Class curriculum*

In the case of identified special educational needs, this request must be made to the School Admissions Service. They will take specialist advice on the nature and severity of the child's particular needs, e.g.: Integrated Disability Service or the Educational Psychology Service.

It is likely that a child with significant and complex, long term needs will have an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan or will be undergoing statutory assessment to establish whether a plan should be issued. In this case, the School Admissions Service will also seek the views of the SENDAR team.

If an EHC Plan *is* issued *and* the views of professionals are that entering school with a younger age-group is in the child's best interests, then this exceptional provision should be included in the EHC Plan and the arrangement should be reviewed annually at each Annual Review.

In the first instance, being out of year group for reasons of special educational need should always be regarded as a short term arrangement. There should be a plan to reintegrate the child to his/her correct age-group as soon as appropriate. This should usually be before the pupil's final year in primary school (Year 6).

2c *the child has had an **extensive and/or disabling period of illness or injury** and is felt to be unready to start school with his/her peers in the term following their fourth birthday*

In this case, a request must be made to the School Admissions Service who will then take specialist advice on the nature and severity of the child's particular needs. Professional medical evidence must be submitted to support the request.

If the child has an EHC Plan based on those medical issues, *and* the views of professionals are that deferring the child starting school is in the child's best interests, then this exceptional provision should be included in the EHC Plan and the arrangement should be reviewed annually at each Annual Review.

In the first instance, being educated out of year group should always be regarded as a short term arrangement and there should be a plan to reintegrate the child to their correct age-group as soon as appropriate.

2d *the child was a **premature baby** and, although born before 31st August, was not due to be born until after 1st September*

In the case of children who were premature babies, advice from health professionals on the severity of the ongoing effects of early birth, usually in excess of four weeks, is essential and must be submitted with the request for the child to be educated out of year group. In many cases, the development of cognitive abilities, after the date when the birth was due, will be normal.

In such cases, an EHC Plan may be inappropriate but it may be appropriate for the child to be educated out of his/her chronological age group for the duration of his/her school career. Such cases will be treated as exceptional and should not be confused with general developmental delay.

2e *the pupil is '**looked after**' in local authority care, or is **previously looked after***, and as a result of individual circumstances, has experienced severe disruption in their early childhood development*

In this case, the Schools Admission Service will seek the advice of the Head of Vulnerable Groups and the Virtual School, along with professionals in the Children's Services team. Any decision to educate such a child out of his/her correct chronological age group will go on to be reflected in his/her Personal Education Plan, and will have the full support of Social Services.

*Children in the care of, or provided with accommodation by, a local authority and children who were looked after, but ceased to be so. This may be because they were adopted or became subject to a child arrangements order or a special guardianship order.

2f *the child is a new arrival from a country where **English is not the first language** and the child cannot speak any English*

Decisions in respect of children with English as an additional language (EAL) are complex and need to be based on what is considered to be in the best interests of each individual student, in both the short and the long term.

The vast majority of EAL pupils will be admitted into their normal age group and their needs will be met through differentiation of work and, where possible, additional support. The opportunity to hear other pupils talk, in contexts that support understanding, is particularly important, especially in Infant/Primary Schools. The DfE document, 'New Arrivals Excellence Programme Guidance (2007)' will be consulted in relation to criteria 2f. Guidance states:

"...schools need to consider the emotional implications of placing children out of their chronological year group. One potential implication could be the frustration of being with younger children who are at a different developmental stage, leading to dominant or possibly even aggressive behaviour.

Primary aged children placed within their chronological year group often gain reading and writing skills quickly. Research has shown that high cognitive challenge and an age-appropriate curriculum are crucial to all EAL learners. Therefore, the most appropriate place for children new to English is in an age-appropriate classroom with their peers.”

(NAEPG: pg. 14)

In these cases, the child will usually have to meet other criteria listed in this document, as well as 2f, in order for a request for the child to be educated outside of their chronological year group to be agreed to. The School Admissions Service will seek professional advice from the Ethnic, Minority and Traveller Achievement Service (EMTAS) team.

3. Request to retain a pupil in the year group below that to which he/she should chronologically be in, including situations where this would mean delaying transition to the next key stage:

3a *the child has been identified as having **special educational needs** and is not felt to be ready to move into the next year group/key stage*

In the case of significant and complex special educational need, this request must be made to the School Admissions Service. They will take specialist advice on the nature and severity of the child's particular needs.

The child's needs will be discussed with the current/previous school and a decision may also require input from the Educational Psychology Service and the Assessment team, regarding the effect and options for statutory assessment.

It is likely that a child with significant and complex, long term needs will have an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan, or be undergoing statutory assessment to establish whether a plan should be issued. In this case, the Local Authority will also seek the views of the SENDAR team.

If an EHC Plan *is* issued *and* the views of professionals are that repeating a year is in the child's best interests, then this exceptional provision should be included in the EHC Plan and the arrangement should be reviewed annually at each Annual Review.

In the first instance, being educated out of year group for reasons of special educational need should always be regarded as a short term arrangement. There should be a plan to reintegrate the child to his/her correct age-group as soon as appropriate. This should usually be before the pupil's final year in primary school.

3b *the child has had an **extensive and/or disabling period of illness or injury** and is felt to be unready to transfer to the next year group and/or key stage*

In this case, a request must be made to the School Admissions Service who will then take specialist advice on the nature and severity of the child's particular needs. Professional medical evidence must be submitted to support the request.

If the child has an EHC Plan based on those medical issues, *and* the views of professionals are that educating out of year group is in the child's best interests, then this exceptional provision should be included in the EHC Plan and the arrangement should be reviewed annually at each Annual Review.

In the first instance, being educated out of year group should always be regarded as a short term arrangement and there should be a plan to reintegrate the child to their correct age-group as soon as appropriate.

3c *the pupil is '**looked after**' in local authority care, or is **previously looked after***, and as a result of individual circumstances, has experienced severe disruption during their previous schooling which has caused them to be unready to transfer to the next year group/key stage*

*Children in the care of, or provided with accommodation by, a local authority and children who were looked after, but ceased to be so. This may be because they were adopted or became subject to a child arrangements order or a special guardianship order.

In this case, the Schools Admission Service will seek the advice of the Head of Vulnerable Groups and the Virtual School, along with professionals in the Children's Services team. Any decision to educate such a child out of his/her correct chronological age group will be reflected in his/her Personal Education Plan, and must have the full support of Social Services and the child's current/previous school.

3d *the child is a new arrival from a country where **English is not the first language** and the child cannot speak English*

Decisions in respect of children with English as an additional language (EAL) are complex and need to be based on what is considered to be in the best interests of each individual student, in both the short and the long term.

The vast majority of EAL pupils will be admitted into their normal age group and their needs will be met through differentiation of work and, where possible, additional support. The opportunity to hear other pupils talk, in contexts that support understanding, is particularly important, especially in Infant/Primary Schools. The DfE document, 'New Arrivals Excellence Programme Guidance (2007)' will be consulted in relation to criteria 3d. This Guidance states:

"...schools need to consider the emotional implications of placing children out of their chronological year group. One potential implication could be the frustration of being with younger children who are at a different developmental stage, leading to dominant or possibly even aggressive behaviour. Primary aged children placed within their chronological year group often gain reading and writing skills quickly. Research has shown that high cognitive challenge and an age-appropriate curriculum are crucial to all EAL learners. Therefore, the most appropriate place for children new to English is in an age-appropriate classroom with their peers."

(NAEPG: pg. 14)

Where a child is of a chronological age to be placed into a secondary school (11-16 years old), the following advice from the 'New Arrivals Excellence Programme Guidance' (NAEPG) will also be taken into consideration:

"It may be necessary to give careful consideration to placing pupils in a lower year group to enable them to have time to catch up with curriculum demands. This may be particularly useful if a pupil arrives late in Year 9, 10 or 11."

(NAEPG: pg. 43)

In cases such as this the School Admissions Service will seek professional advice from the Ethnic, Minority and Traveller Achievement Service (EMTAS) team.

3e *the child is **transferring from another Warwickshire school** where an agreement is already in place for them to be educated out of year group and the reasons for such an agreement still apply*

3f *the pupil is **transferring from another school which is not maintained by Warwickshire LA**; i.e.: own admission authority, outside of the County or abroad, and has been educated up until the time of transfer in a younger year group or in an education system where the curriculum is incompatible with the National Curriculum*

In the case of criteria 3e, transfer between Warwickshire maintained schools should make no difference to the consequences of earlier decisions, subject to those decisions being made in line with this policy and guidance. The majority of children in these cases should continue to be educated out of year group, as long as the reasons for such an agreement being made are still relevant.

In the case of 3f, the School Admissions Service should decide, in consultation with the receiving school and, where possible, the previous school/other LA, and the Assessment team (with regard to Statutory assessment arrangements), whether the curriculum which has been followed will enable access to the correct age group. If not, and if it would be detrimental to the pupil's future progress to return them to their correct year group, then they should continue to be educated out of year group. This should never be more than one year different, in these circumstances.

A decision for the pupil to continue being educated out of age group should only be made following a detailed review of how and where the pupil's educational needs can best be met in the new school setting and in the light of the receiving school's curriculum and syllabuses. This will enable an informed decision to be made on whether the pupil's academic *and* social needs will continue to be best met by placing the pupil in the year below, or whether they might now be met by placing the pupil within his/her correct chronological year group.

3g *the pupil has spent a considerable amount of time out of school, owing to non-attendance for any reason*

In this case, the School Admissions Service will seek further professional input from the Attendance, Compliance and Enforcement (ACE) team, as well as SENDAR, the Educational Psychology Service, Children's Services, and any previous schools which the child has attended, where appropriate.

A decision for the child to be educated out of year group will only be made where it is felt by all professionals that this is in the best interests of the child, and that to not agree to such a request will be detrimental to that child.

4. Request to admit a child early to the Reception Year in school, before the September following his/her fourth birthday, or accelerate a current pupil into the year group/key stage above

4a *the child is of pre-school age but has been identified as being of **exceptionally high academic ability**. It is felt by all professionals involved that their needs cannot be met within the setting of their chronological year group and that to not accelerate them would be detrimental to the development of that child*

The LA's policy is that children should start school in Reception Year in the September following their fourth birthday.

The Foundation Stage curriculum, covering the Nursery and Reception Years, is flexible and has been designed to meet the needs of all children, including those who are gifted and talented, as well as those with special educational needs. Where a request for accelerated entry is submitted, the Local Authority will usually only agree to such a request in very exceptional circumstances.

4b *the child is of compulsory school age and has been identified as being of **exceptionally high academic ability**. It is felt that all appropriate steps have been taken to educate the child in their chronological year group, and that to not accelerate them would be detrimental to the development of that child.*

4c *the child is of compulsory school age and a request has been made by Social Services for the child to be educated in the chronological year group above due to **Safeguarding** issues. It is felt that there will be severe and detrimental consequences should such a request not be agreed to*

4d *the student has been 'fast tracked' at Key Stage 4 and it is proposed that he/she enters the sixth form ahead of his/her chronological age.*

The Local Authority will only consider requests which match only category 4 criteria if:

- the school has already tried, over a sustained period, a range of appropriate strategies (following LA guidelines) to extend and challenge the pupil, but these have still proved insufficient;
- the pupil's achievements in all curriculum areas means that his/her needs can be best met by being educated in the year group above;
- there is no disadvantage to the pupil in terms of statutory assessment arrangements, gleaned by consultation with the Assessment Team;
- the pupil has the social, cultural and physical maturity to move through the educational system out of year group and this is demonstrated by a range of evidence;
- the parents/carers and pupil are aware of the longer-term implications of acceleration;

- there is agreement between all concerned, including the pupil (*where this is age-appropriate*)
- the resulting arrangement is reviewed at least annually.

These points would need to outweigh the rationale for the LA policy outlined at the beginning of this document.

Full consultation with parents/carers (and pupils, where appropriate) is essential before any such request is agreed to. It is important that parents/carers do not feel rushed into any decisions which will have long-term implications for their children.

The school, along with parents/carers, should also consider the possible effects of acceleration on social, emotional and physical maturity, as well as intellectual ability. In particular, parents/carers and the school should seriously consider how a pupil may react as a teenager facing adolescence as the youngest in his/her year group.

Parents/carers should also realise that a decision to accelerate a pupil is not easily reversed; this will be a once and for all decision. Moving an accelerated pupil back in with their correct age group or 'repeating a year' can have a significant and negative impact on the pupil's academic performance and well-being.

Acceleration may also have significant implications for admissions arrangements. Schools in areas where 11+ selection arrangements operate need to take into account that a pupil taking the test a year early will be marked as though he/she were one year older than his/her actual chronological age. **It is not possible to re-sit the 11+ tests in the following year.** The implications of 11+ selection needs to be carefully considered prior to a request being submitted.

Schools will also need to consider arrangements for the statutory end-of-key stage tests. If a pupil sits these tests with an older age group, he/she will be unable to take the tests again the following year.

The process will involve consultation with the Link Inspector (LIO) of the school concerned, the Statutory Assessment team and the senior LIO. These officers may discuss with the school further strategies that might be pursued.

Only in exceptional circumstances will acceleration into an older age group be agreed. Under no circumstances should a pupil be accelerated by more than one year.

GLOSSARY

Admission Authority –The body responsible for setting and applying a school’s admission arrangements. For community or voluntary controlled schools, this body is the local authority unless it has agreed to delegate responsibility to the governing body. For foundation or voluntary aided schools, this body is the governing body of the school. For Academies, this body is the Academy Trust.

Academic year – the academic year (or ‘school year’) commences in September and finishes in July

ACE – Attendance, Compliance and Enforcement team

Admissions Service – will process applications for children into all year groups, including in-year admissions

Chronological year group – the year group, or cohort, which a child should be entered into according to their age, along with peers of the same age range

Compulsory School Age – this begins at the start of the term following a child’s 5th birthday

Deferred Entry – the child will start school a year later, or will be placed into the chronological year group below for those who are already of compulsory school age

Delayed Entry – the child will start school in their correct chronological year group but will start school later in the academic year

EHC Plan – Education, Health and Care Plan

EMTAS – Ethnic, Minority and Traveller Achievement Service

In Care/Looked After – children in the care of, or who have been provided with accommodation by, the Local Authority, e.g.: children who have been placed into foster care

In-year admission – changing school at any point of the school year, which is not in line with a transfer admission

Part-time admission – a child will obtain a school place in line with the admission arrangements for the relevant year of entry but will not attend full-time. The child

must have started attending on a full-time basis by the time they reach compulsory school age

Previously Looked After – children who were in the care of the Local Authority but have now ceased to be so. This may be because they were adopted or became subject to a Child Arrangements Order or a Special Guardianship Order

SENDAR – Special Educational Needs, Disability, Assessment and Review service

Transfer admission – the natural point at which a child will move into the next key stage, i.e.: starting school in Reception, transferring into Year 3 from an Infant school, and transferring into Year 7 at a secondary school.