



DELAYED AND ACCELERATED ENTRY TO SCHOOL

GUIDANCE FOR PARENTS, SCHOOLS AND
ADMISSION AUTHORITIES

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ROYAL BOROUGH OF GREENWICH

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I. Introduction

- I.1 This guidance relates to children in mainstream education and is intended for parents and carers who wish for their child to be educated in a different year group than their chronological age at a Royal Greenwich school. This includes those considering delaying school entry for their summer-born child, as well as those requesting placement of their child in a lower or higher year group.
- I.2 This guidance also provides advice for schools and admission authorities of Royal Greenwich schools on the process to undertake when requests for delayed or accelerated entries are received and guides them on how to make an informed decision on such requests.
- I.3 The guidance applies to children who are due to start school or already on roll at a school, and includes those with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) who require a place in a Local Authority Resource Provision (LARP) based in a mainstream school. The guidance reflects the requirements of the [School Admissions Code 2021](#) and also the Department for Education's non-statutory guidance on [summer-born children, advice for parents](#) published on 26 July 2013 and last updated on 27 April 2023 and [summer-born children, advice for admission authorities](#) published on 27 May 2021 and last updated on 28 November 2024.
- I.4 As a general principle, Royal Greenwich believes that children should progress through school with their chronological age group. With access to a rich and differentiated curriculum, and teaching tailored to individual needs, children of all aptitudes and abilities can thrive within their age-appropriate year group. The default expectation is that children remain with their chronological age cohort and move up alongside their peers. Research does not support the idea that being placed in a different year group, either ahead or behind, leads to better educational outcomes. Specifically, the notion that an additional year will help a child 'catch up' lacks evidence. Further information can be found in the following [Education Endowment Foundation research](#).
- I.5 Placement of a child outside their chronological year group should therefore be considered only in exceptional circumstances, following thorough discussions between the parent or carer and relevant professionals. This may also occur where Greenwich's SEND Assessment and Review Service agrees to recommendations made during the Annual Review of a Statement of Special Educational Need for children with a SEND diagnosis. It is important to note that under no circumstances should a child be held back for more than one academic year.

2. Who is responsible for making the decision for a child to be placed outside of their chronological age peers?

2.1 Whilst there is no statutory barrier to children being educated out of their chronological year group, ***there is also no statutory duty for such a request to be agreed.*** Therefore, ***while a parent can request for their child to be educated out of their normal year group, they cannot insist that their request is agreed.*** It is the view of the Royal Greenwich School Admissions Service that most children should be educated in their chronological year group, with the curriculum differentiated appropriately to meet the needs of the individual child. A child should only be educated out of their chronological year group in ***very limited circumstances for example, where they have diagnosed special educational needs or developmental delays that significantly affect their cognitive development.***

2.2 In line with Paragraph 2.19 of the School Admissions Code 2021, each request must be considered according to the circumstances of the case; the needs of the child, and what is considered to be in the child's best interests. It must also take account 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. The views of the Headteacher of the school concerned must also be considered. Responsibility for making the decision will depend on whether the child is applying to start a new school or whether a request is to a school that the child is already attending.

Request for a child who is starting a new school

2.3 Where a parent requests that their child be admitted to a new school out of their chronological year group, i.e. where a child is not currently on roll at the school, the admission authority for the school must make the decision. For community and voluntary controlled¹ schools, the admission authority is the local authority where the school is located. For other types of schools (e.g., voluntary aided schools and academies), known as own admission authority schools, the admission authority will be the school's governing body or academy trust.

Request for a child who is already attending the school

2.4 Where a child is already on roll at a school, the headteacher in consultation with the admission authority of the school will decide whether or not a child should be placed in a year group different to that of their chronological age. In all cases, the local authority must also be consulted and where the local authority is not the admission authority, the headteacher must notify the local authority of the final decision once it has been made.

¹ There are currently no voluntary controlled schools in Greenwich.

3. Starting school in reception and summer-born children

When is a child required to start school?

- 3.1 Paragraph 2.17 of the School Admissions Code requires local authorities and other admission authorities to provide all children with the opportunity to join a Reception class in the September following their fourth birthday. A child does not reach statutory school age until the beginning of the term after they turn five years old.
- 3.2 While most parents and carers are happy for their child to start in the September after their child turns four, some may feel that their child is not ready to start school at this point. These parents or carers can request that their child attends Reception part-time until they reach statutory school age; or that the date their child is admitted to Reception is deferred until later in the same academic year.

Summer born children

- 3.3 Summer born children are defined as those born between 1 April and 31 August and they reach statutory school age at the beginning of the September after they turn five years old. Whilst the majority of parents and carers of summer-born children will be happy for their child to start in Reception at the same time as other children their age, some may have concerns about whether their child is ready for school. In such circumstances, parents can choose for their child to start school when they reach statutory school age. The DfE's advice is that it should be rare for an authority to refuse a parent's request.
- 3.4 If it is agreed that a summer born child will start school in the next academic year, parents must reapply for a school place for September following the child's fifth birthday. This will typically be for entry into **Year 1**.
- 3.5 However, some parents may prefer their child to begin in Reception rather than Year 1, meaning the child would be educated outside their chronological year group. In these cases, the admission authority must decide whether starting in Reception or Year 1 would be in the child's best interests.
- 3.6 This flexibility does not apply to children born in the autumn or spring terms, as they are legally required to start full-time education in the term following their fifth birthday.

4. Factors for parents to consider when making a request

- 4.1 In all cases, parents and carers who are considering making a request for their child to be educated out of their chronological year group should talk to the school(s) concerned to discuss the provision on offer, how they might be able to provide a differentiated curriculum to provide for the needs of their child and, where applicable, the child's

readiness for school. If the child has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), the parent should also discuss any request with the child's SEND case officer.

Placement in a lower year group

- 4.2 Available evidence shows that children are seldom uniformly delayed in their intellectual development. Areas of cognitive or physical ability are particularly at risk of not receiving appropriate stimulation if a child is placed in a lower year group and a reduced set of general expectations applies.
- 4.3 Physical, emotional and social expectations may be inappropriate when a child is taught in a lower year group.
- 4.4 Some summer-born children may exhibit lower levels of achievement and maturity; however, schools are experienced in addressing this with children within their chronological year group through normal differentiation of the curriculum.
- 4.5 Whether a summer-born child attends a primary school or early years setting during the academic year following their fourth birthday, they will receive the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum in which learning is developed largely through play.
- 4.6 At each transition (i.e. between Key Stages or schools) a new request for out-of chronological year group admission must be made, and the decision on whether to maintain a child's placement in a lower year group must be made by the admission authority for the school. This will be based on the circumstances of the case and what is in the best interests of the child at that time. There is no guarantee that a child will continue to be educated out of their chronological year group throughout their education. However, the consequences of attempting to 'make up' a year are often very negative for the child. Furthermore, they are at risk of missing a statutory entitlement to a national curriculum year programme of study or being denied the ability to enter public examinations.
- 4.7 Where placement in a lower year group is maintained, phase transfers, SATs, GCSEs and school leaving are reached a year or more late. Young people cease to be classed as being 'of statutory school age' on the last Friday of June in the school year in which they turn 16 years of age. Therefore, if they are being educated in a lower year group the school must make provision for them until the date they are due to leave school, even if the young person has been excluded from school. If a young person was to require a new school place at this time, they would have to negotiate admission and there is no guarantee that a school would admit a student above statutory school age.

- 4.8 Where a young person is educated in a lower year group, they may find that their post 16 entitlement is reduced from three years to two years which may impact attainment and opportunity post 16.

About our Reception classes

- 4.9 Greenwich primary schools are nationally recognised for the quality of the provision of the Early Years Foundation Stage and can ably meet the spectrum of needs and abilities of children entering the Reception class. They are experts in ensuring that children's transition into Reception class is a smooth and positive experience for all concerned. Each school will have its own way of introducing children into reception class, which will usually include:
- Welcome visits
 - Meetings for new parents
 - Individual meetings with parents
 - Home visits
 - Phased starts in September, etc.
- 4.10 These practices are intended to make starting school an exciting experience for both parents and children.
- 4.11 All Reception classes follow the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. This places a heavy emphasis on children's emotional wellbeing, responding to individual children's needs, and the fact that children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates. Schools make sure that children learn through play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated experiences.
- 4.12 Reception classes will generally look and operate in a very similar way to nurseries and nursery classes, particularly early on in the year, gradually introducing more structured learning when children are ready.

Placement in a higher year group

- 4.13 Whilst a child placed a year ahead of their chronological age may, as a consequence, receive a higher level of intellectual stimulation, this will apply across all subject areas and the child's intellectual strengths and achievement may not be universally ahead of age expectation.
- 4.14 In some cases, physical, social and emotional maturity may fail to match exceptional intellectual maturity; in which case a child may present with physical, emotional or social demands which are less effectively catered for in a higher year group. The self-esteem and

other negative emotional consequences of this may be considerable, particularly during adolescence.

- 4.15 Assuming overall maturity is broadly in line with intellectual maturity, placement a year ahead of chronological age can lead to successful outcomes for the child. However, these outcomes could equally be addressed through an enriched and differentiated curriculum within the same chronological year group.
- 4.16 Once the age shift is made, it is difficult to reverse, necessarily involving the repeat of a National Curriculum Year.
- 4.17 At each transition the decision whether to maintain the placement in a higher year group must be made by the admission authority for the school based on the circumstances of the case and what is in the best interests of the child. As such, there is no guarantee that it will continue throughout the child's education and a new request must be made at each transition.
- 4.18 Where placement in a higher year group is maintained, the consequence is that the child will reach the next phase transfer, SATs or GCSEs, and school leaving point a year or more early. Young people do not cease to be of statutory school age until the last Friday of June in the school year they turn 16 years of age and as such would have to negotiate transfer early to a school sixth form or further education college, which would not be guaranteed.

5. When to make an out-of-year group request

- 5.1 If a parent believes it would be in their child's best interests to be educated out of their chronological year group, then they will need to submit a request along with any relevant information and evidence they may have.
- 5.2 There is no expectation for a parent to obtain professional evidence they do not already have, however submitting all available evidence and information will assist the admission authority or headteacher in determining whether it would be in the child's best interests to be admitted out of their chronological year group.
- 5.3 Parents are encouraged to contact their preferred schools prior to making a formal request and schools are encouraged to meet with parents to discuss their intentions, as this will aid the decision-making process (although for community and voluntary controlled schools, the decision must be made by the local authority). However a parent is not obliged to make prior contact with a school and, where they do not, any request must still be considered.

Applying for a lower year group as part of the normal admissions round

- 5.4 If a parent wishes to request that their child is admitted to a lower year group as part of the normal admissions round for a school, they should initially apply for a school place at the normal time i.e. in line with the application dates appropriate for the chronological year group of their child. These dates are:
- Reception entry – apply by 15 January in the academic year the child turns four.
 - Secondary entry – apply by 31 October in the academic year the child turns 11 (i.e. in Year 6).
- 5.5 At the same time, parents should submit their request for their child to be educated out of their chronological year group along with any supporting evidence they may have.
- 5.6 Applying at the normal time will ensure that an ‘in-principle’ decision can be made on the out-of-year group request in good time. This also means, should a request be refused, a parent maintains the option of sending their child to school in their chronological year group, thus ensuring their child does not miss out on accessing a year of education.

Transfer to secondary school

- 5.7 Due to a change in legislation (for summer-born children who started in reception a year later than is usual), parents will now need to apply for a secondary school place when the child is **in Year 5** rather than year 6. This means that for a child who has been educated out of their normal year group, you will need to request that your child continues to be educated ‘out-of-cohort’
- 5.8 The request should include information detailing why a delayed admission is in your child’s best interests. Royal Greenwich as the admission authority for community schools will decide whether or not to agree to your request for delayed admission to its maintained community schools. For faith schools, free schools, academies and schools outside the borough, the decision is taken by the respective admission authorities for these schools, and parents must therefore contact them directly. For many children, it will be right for them to remain with their adopted year group, but it is possible that others may be better off joining their normal year group.

Applying for a higher year group as part of the normal admissions round

- 5.9 If a parent wishes to apply for admission to a higher year group as part of the normal admissions round for a school, they should apply for a school place along with other parents applying for the same cohort. For example, if a parent wishes their child to be educated one year higher than their child’s chronological year group, applications should be made by the following dates:
- Reception entry – Apply by 15 January in the academic year the child turns three.

- Secondary entry – Apply by 31 October in the academic year the child turns ten.
- 5.10 At the same time, parents should submit their request for their child to be educated out of their chronological year group along with any supporting evidence they may have.
- 5.11 Applying by the relevant deadline will ensure that, if the request is agreed, school places will not have been filled by other applicants who applied on time.

Request for in-year admission for children without an Education, Health and Care Plan

- 5.12 If a parent wishes to apply for admission out of chronological year group at any other time, i.e. not during the normal admissions round, then they should apply for their preferred schools via the in-year admission process, no more than six weeks prior to anticipated entry.
- 5.13 At the same time, they should submit their request for their child to be educated out of their chronological year group along with any supporting evidence they may have.

Request for in-year admission for children with an Education, Health and Care Plan

- 5.14 If a parent wishes to apply for admission out of chronological year group at any other time, then they should liaise with the child's SEND case officer or the SENCo at the school where their child is currently enrolled.

Request where the child is already on roll at the school

- 5.15 If a parent wishes for their child to be transferred to a lower or higher year group at the school they currently attend, a request should be made in writing to the headteacher. This request should contain the reasons for requesting out-of-year group education, along with any supporting evidence they may have. If the child has an EHCP, then the parent should also liaise with the child's SEND case officer.

6. Factors that will be taken into account when making a decision

- 6.1 When an out-of-year group request is received, a decision must be made based on the circumstances of the case and what is in the best interests of the child. In line with Paragraph 2.19 of the School Admissions Code 2021, the decision must also take account 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. The decision must also take into account the views of the head teacher of the school concerned. In each case, it is beneficial if the school has already had detailed discussions with the parent and any relevant professionals involved with the child.

- 6.2 Whilst there is no expectation for a parent to obtain professional evidence they do not already have, submitting all available evidence and information will assist the admission authority/headteacher in determining whether it would be in the child's best interests to be educated out of their chronological year group.
- 6.3 The responsibility for addressing individual needs generally lies with the school through an appropriately differentiated/enriched curriculum. If this is problematic, schools are expected to seek support from the local authority.

Placement in a lower year group

- 6.4 For a child to be placed in a younger year group, the admission authority/headteacher should consider the following in order to assess what is in the best interests of the child:
- The impact on a summer-born child of being admitted to Year 1 without first having completed Reception (should a parent exercise their right to delay their child's entry to school until the September following their child's fifth birthday).
 - Whether the child is currently being educated out of their chronological year group;
 - Whether the child shows a delay in intellectual development/educational skills, across all subject areas, to an extent that curriculum differentiation (with appropriate SEND resources) is not reasonable;
 - Whether the child's physical maturity places them in a position of being developmentally different from their peer group;
 - Whether the child shows an equivalent delay in emotional development and social skills, appropriate for a younger peer group;
 - Whether the child was born prematurely on or before 31 August and the expected due date was after 31 August;
 - Whether there is parental support and agreement;
 - Where relevant, the child's medical history and any views of a medical professional;
 - Whether the child has an EHCP and the most recent Annual Review endorses the decision to move the child out of their chronological year group. A child with an EHCP should not be moved unless an Annual Review has taken place and the recommendation has been upheld by Royal Greenwich SEND Panel. In all cases schools must liaise with the child's SEND case officer before considering a request.

Placement in a higher year group

- 6.5 For a child to be placed in a higher year group, the admission authority/headteacher should consider the following in order to assess what is in the best interests of the child:
- Whether the child is currently being educated out of their chronological year group;
 - Whether the child demonstrates advanced intellectual skills and achievement in all subject areas;
 - Whether there has been a full exploration of curriculum extension/enrichment possibilities being delivered in the child's correct chronological year group;
 - Whether the child has physical maturity sufficient to meet the curriculum and play demands of a higher National Curriculum year;
 - Whether the child's emotional and social maturity is sufficient to establish positive peer relationships with a higher age group;
 - Whether there is parental support and agreement;
 - Whether there is child support and agreement following extensive explanation and counselling as to the implications;
 - Whether plans to manage phase transfers and examinations have been anticipated or are in place, including the need for an early transfer to a school sixth form or further education college where the child is secondary school age.

Other factors which may be taken into account

Infant Class size legislation

- 6.6 Even when an admission authority/headteacher agrees it is in a child's best interests to be educated out of their chronological year group, they may not be able to facilitate a request if it is for a Key Stage 1 class.
- 6.7 Other than a few permitted exceptions, under Infant Class Size legislation a Key Stage 1 class (Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 which contain 5, 6 and 7-year-olds) must not contain more than 30 pupils with one teacher. The permitted exceptions are set out in paragraph 2.15 (a)-(h) of the School Admissions Code 2014. *Any other child placed out of their chronological year group is not regarded as an exception to Infant Class Size legislation. As such, a school would be unable to admit or move a child out of their chronological year group to a Key Stage 1 year group if it was full, as this would breach the infant class size limit and may result in additional costs for the school by way of the requirement to provide an additional teacher.*

Published admission number

- 6.8 In addition, there is complexity regarding the legal requirement of a school's Published Admission Number (PAN) which, in law, reflects the minimum number of children that should enter or transfer to a school within the relevant age range. The PAN is legally age-related. If a Reception class has a PAN of 30 and can only admit 29 children because a child is held down a year in Reception, this in effect takes away the legal right of another child to

have a place in that year group as the maximum class size of 30 for Key Stage 1 prevents a class of 31 being created.

Children recently arrived in the United Kingdom

- 6.9 It is generally recognised within the English school system that children should be placed with their chronological peers. Children with English as an additional language should not, as a rule, be treated any differently. Placing them with their peer group affords them all the same advantages and benefits it offers other children.
- 6.10 However, exceptions may apply if the circumstances of the case would indicate that it would be in the child's best interests to be educated out of their chronological year group, such as when:
- Prior educational experience has been limited or fragmented with the result that formal learning skills (in-home language as well as in English) are significantly behind those of chronological peers.
 - GCSE examinations are imminent and an additional year's preparation would enable the student to perform well. Children who are emotionally distressed or traumatised should not, in general, be considered suitable for placing out of age. This is unlikely to reduce significantly the overall impact of settling in the United Kingdom or overcoming the effect of past experiences.

7. The outcome of the request

- 7.1 Where an out-of-year group request is received for one of Greenwich's community schools, the decision will be made by Royal Greenwich's School Admissions Service, in liaison with the headteacher of the school. Greenwich's School Admissions Service will respond to the parent regarding the outcome of the request.
- 7.2 Where an out-of-year group request is received by Royal Greenwich's School Admissions Service in relation to an own admission authority school, they will forward the request to the appropriate school(s). Own admission authority schools will respond to the parent regarding the outcome of the request and at the same time will also inform Royal Greenwich School Admissions Service of the outcome.
- 7.3 Some own admission authority schools may receive out-of-year group requests directly from parents. In such cases, the school will respond to the parent regarding the outcome of the request but will also notify Royal Greenwich's School Admissions Service of the request and the outcome.
- 7.4 Where an out-of-year group request is made for a child who is already on roll at the school, the headteacher in consultation with the admission authority of the school, will

make the decision and will inform the parent of the outcome. Where the local authority is not the admission authority for the school, the headteacher will also inform the local authority of the final decision when it has been made.

a) Where a request is agreed

Request for a lower year group as part of a normal admissions round

- 7.5 For normal round admissions, where a request is agreed for entry to a lower year group, any preferences named for the child's correct chronological year group will be withdrawn. The parent will be required to reapply during the application round for the requested year group in order for the child's application to be considered alongside other applicants in that year. Parents should ensure they are aware of the application deadlines for the year group in which they will be seeking admission, as missing the relevant deadline could result in the child missing out on an offer of a place.

- 7.6 If an offer has already been made for the chronological year group then this will be withdrawn as offers cannot be carried forward from one academic year to the next.

Request for a higher year group as part of a normal admissions round

- 7.7 For normal round admissions, where a request is agreed for entry to a higher year group, any preference will continue to be processed for entry to the school. The application will be considered alongside all applicants seeking entry as part of the same admissions round. The parent will be notified of the outcome of their application once it has been processed, usually on the national offer day if the application was made on time.

Request for in-year admission

- 7.8 For in-year admissions, where an out-of-year group request is agreed, the admission authority will consider whether or not a place is available in the selected year group. If a place is available, it will be offered. If a place is not available, the parent will have the opportunity for their child to be placed on the waiting list for the school.

Request where the child is already on roll at the school

- 7.9 Where an out-of-year group request is agreed for a child who is already on roll at the school, the headteacher will arrange placement in the agreed year group at the earliest opportunity, in liaison with the parent.

b) Where a request is declined

Request for a lower year group as part of a normal admissions round

- 7.10 For normal round admissions, where a request is declined for entry to a lower year group, the admission authority must set out their reasons. For summer-born children, the admission authority must also confirm the year group that it considers will be in the child's best interests to start when the child turns five years old.

- 7.11 Any preferences named for the child's correct chronological year group will continue to be processed until such time as a place is offered or the parent indicates they wish the preference to be withdrawn.
- 7.12 If a place is offered, the parent will be notified of this, usually on the national offer day if the application was made on time. The parent can then choose whether to accept or decline the offer, although parents are advised to only decline a place once alternative suitable education provision has been organised.

Request for a higher year group as part of a normal admissions round

- 7.13 For normal round admissions, where a request is declined for entry to a higher year group, the admission authority must set out their reasons. The parent's preferences will be withdrawn, and the parent can then reapply for a place the following year for the correct chronological year group.

Request for in-year admission

- 7.14 For in-year admissions, where an out-of-year group request is declined the admission authority must set out their reasons. The admission authority will consider whether or not they can offer a place in the child's correct chronological year group. In some cases, the child may not be of an age eligible for entry to the school, such as where a child's chronological year group is Year 7 and the parent is seeking entry to a primary school in Year 6. In such cases, the school would be unable to consider the child's admission and the school has no further duty to process an application.

Request where the child is already on roll at the school

- 7.15 Where an out-of-year group request is declined for a child who is already on roll at the school, the child will remain within their correct chronological year group.

8. Important factors to consider following a decision

- 8.1 Agreement to consider a child for admission out of their chronological year group does not guarantee an offer of a place at a particular school as an offer will be dependent on whether a vacancy exists and whether or not other children have a higher priority for a place when ranked against a school's oversubscription criteria.
- 8.2 Decisions are made individually for each school. There is no guarantee that different admission authorities will come to the same decision regarding a request and one admission authority cannot be required to honour a decision made by another.

- 8.3 Where admission to a lower year group is sought, parents should consider carefully the likelihood of gaining a place at their preferred school should a request be agreed upon and their application for admission at the correct time is withdrawn. If a child is not able to secure a place at their preferred school in the following year, there is no guarantee that other schools will accept an out-of-year group application at that time.
- 8.4 Where it is agreed to place a child out of their chronological year group, this will not normally be for more than a single National Curriculum year. In the case of vertically grouped classes, this will apply to the age range of the class rather than a single chronological age.

9. Will a child be expected to remain out of their chronological year group?

- 9.1 Where it is deemed in the best interests of a child, a school may seek to move a child back to their chronological year group. In a few cases, it may be deemed appropriate to further decelerate or accelerate a child's year group. However, this is extremely rare.
- 9.2 In most cases, it will be appropriate for a child to remain educated out of chronological year group. In these cases, it is not possible to plan comprehensively for transition as in each case transition will be subject to:
- a separate out of year group decision being made by the admission authority for the new school, an application being submitted by the parent, and a place being offered according to the school's admission criteria; or
 - a child's Education, Health and Care Plan.
- 9.3 At each transition, the decision regarding entry out of chronological year group must be considered by the admission authority for the new school. However, Royal Greenwich's expectation is, where a child is currently educated out of their chronological year group within the English educational system, the child should remain out of year group unless there is any significant evidence or information to the contrary.

10. Appeals and complaints

- 10.1 Parents do not have a right to appeal against the decision not to allow their child to be educated out of their normal year group. However, a parent may make a complaint about:
- a) an admission authority's decision not to admit their child out of their chronological year group:
- in the case of academies, free schools and voluntary aided schools, parents may make a complaint using the school's complaints procedure.
 - in the case of community schools, parents may make a complaint to the local authority.

- b) a headteacher's decision on whether or not to place a child, who is already on roll at a school, in a year group different to that of their chronological age. In all such cases, parents may make a complaint using the school's complaints procedure.
- 10.2 If a parent is not satisfied with the way a local authority or a maintained school has handled their complaint, the parent may refer their complaint to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.
- 10.3 If a parent is not satisfied with the way an academy or free school has handled their complaint they may complain to the Department for Education (DfE), which will consider the complaint on behalf of the Secretary of State for Education.

11. Advice for schools and admission authorities of Royal Greenwich schools on delayed or accelerated admission requests

- 11.1 Parents who are considering educating their child outside the normal age group (either delayed or accelerated) should be encouraged to **submit their request as early as possible**. Early submission allows sufficient time for the admission authority and the school to assess the request thoroughly and reach a decision **before the start of the academic year** for which the application is intended.
- 11.2 Schools and admission authorities should make it clear to parents that a request for admission outside the normal age group is **distinct from an application for a school place**. This distinction is important because the admission authority must first decide **which year group the child should be admitted to** before it can determine whether a place is available in that year group.

Clarity in admission arrangements

- 11.3 In accordance with Paragraph 2.18 of the School Admissions Code, admission authorities must clearly outline the process for requesting admission outside the normal age group in their published admission arrangements. This requirement applies to all mainstream schools and academies.
- 11.4 While admission authorities have the discretion to determine their own process, they are required to follow a transparent and consistent approach. This guidance provides a framework for what that process should typically include, ensuring fairness, clarity, and compliance with statutory requirements.

Considering a request for admission outside the normal age group

- 11.5 When discussing requests for admission outside the normal age group, schools and admission authorities should ensure that parents are fully informed and supported throughout the process. Specifically, they should satisfy that parents:
- a) **Understand when and how to make a request** for admission outside the normal age group.
 - b) **Know what information they need to provide**, such as evidence relating to their child's development, medical history, or professional assessments.
 - c) **Receive the outcome of their request in good time**, enabling them to make an informed decision about when their child should start school.
- 11.6 When a request is made for a child to be admitted outside the normal age group, the School Admissions Code requires admission authorities to make decisions based on the individual circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child. This includes considering:
- a) The views of the parent or carer
 - b) The child's academic, social, and emotional development
 - c) Relevant medical history and the views of medical professionals
 - d) Any other pertinent information.
- 11.7 In all cases, the admission authority should consult with the school concerned before reaching a conclusion.
- 11.8 While not a statutory requirement, some admission authorities may find it helpful to **convene a panel to consider requests for admission outside the normal age group**. A panel can provide a balanced and informed perspective, especially when composed of a mix of professionals. Suggested panel members may include:
- a) the school's headteacher
 - b) an early years professional (where the child is starting primary school)
 - c) a health care professional
 - d) an educational psychologist
 - e) an admissions officer
- 11.9 Admission authorities may also wish to **invite parents to attend panel meetings**, allowing them to share their views directly and engage in the decision-making process.
- 11.10 The DfE advises that **parents are generally best placed to determine how their child should be educated**. Therefore, parental preference has a significant priority under the current legislative framework, and any decision to refuse a parent's request must be supported by a strong rationale and clear evidence. Without this, the decision is unlikely to

be able to stand up to a challenge, for example, through the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO).

- 11.11 Therefore, schools and admission authorities are advised to ***consider each request carefully and ensure that their views are based on objective evidence***. This is essential, as admission authorities must provide parents with a clear explanation of the reasons behind the final decision.

Considering a request for delayed admission (moving down a year)

- 11.12 Requests for delayed admission are most commonly made by parents of summer-born children (born between 1 April and 31 August) but may also be submitted by parents of children with SEND or those born prematurely.
- 11.13 While most summer born children will thrive if they are admitted to reception aged four, some parents may be concerned that their child is not ready for school at that age and may need support to decide what is right for their child. Under these circumstances, admission authorities and schools should support parents in making informed decisions about their child's readiness for school and encourage early engagement to allow sufficient time for consideration and planning.
- 11.14 In the process, schools and admission authorities should encourage parents to visit the school to enable teachers to explain the provision on offer in the reception class and how children's individual needs are supported. They should encourage parents who are worried about their child having a learning difficulty or disability that will make school challenging for them, to meet the school's Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo) who will be able to explain the school's approach to supporting children with SEND.
- 11.15 Some children born prematurely (i.e., before 37 weeks' gestation) may experience developmental delays or health issues. The earlier a child was born, the greater the likelihood of such concerns. If a parent of a prematurely born child is considering delayed admission, schools should encourage discussions with the child's medical specialists to explore the best educational pathway.
- 11.16 The DfE generally expects that requests from parents to delay admission for summer-born children or those with developmental delays or health issues, will be agreed, unless the admission authority, having adequately considered the individual circumstances of the case, as outlined in Paragraph 11.6, determines that delaying admission would not be in the child's best interest.
- 11.17 Therefore, admission authorities should approach these requests with an open mind and ensure that decisions being made are supported by clear reasoning and evidence.

Considering a request for accelerated admission (moving up a year)

11.18 When a school or an admission authority receives a request for a child to be admitted to a higher year group, they should satisfy themselves that most or all of the following criteria are met:

- a) *The child has an **exceptional intellectual ability*** across all subject areas;
- b) The school has the resources to deliver **curriculum extension or enrichment** options likely to be required by the child within the current year group;
- c) The child is capable of the **physical maturity** sufficient to meet the demands of the higher year group's curriculum and social activities;
- d) The child is capable of the **emotional and social maturity** to form positive peer relationships with older children;
- e) There is **parental support and understanding**, following detailed discussion of the implications of educating out of chronological year group;
- f) The school has the resources to **plan for the child's phase transitions**, such as moving from primary to secondary school or preparing for examinations.

11.19 Schools may adopt any appropriate method to gain clarity on a parent's request for admission outside the normal age group. However, it is strongly recommended that schools invite parents to a meeting to discuss the request in detail. This meeting serves several important purposes:

- a) Allowing the school to better understand the parent's perspective and reasoning;
- b) Ensuring that parents are fully informed about the educational and developmental implications of their request; and
- c) Providing an opportunity to discuss the potential impact on future transitions between educational phases, such as moving from primary to secondary school.

11.20 Where appropriate, schools may also wish to meet the child to gain a clearer understanding of their developmental readiness and individual needs. This holistic approach supports a well-informed and balanced recommendation to the admission authority.

Final decision

11.21 Once the school has gathered enough evidence on the request, they should provide their admission authority with a written view, which will be used to make the final decision.

11.22 The admission authority must then issue the final decision letter to be parents, clearly setting out the rationale for the decision. A copy of the final decision letter must also be sent to the Royal Greenwich School Admissions Service where the admission authority is not the local authority.

12. Glossary

Cohort

This is the age range of a group of children. The age range relates to those children born between 1 September in one year and 31 August the following year. For example, children born between 1 September 2022 and 31 August 2023 are the cohort of children expected to start reception class in September 2027.

Deceleration

If your child is decelerated, it means they have delayed their admission to school.

Deferred admission

This is when a parent accepts a school place in the correct cohort and arranges for the child to start reception class later in the same academic year.

Delayed admission

This is when a child is admitted outside their normal age cohort and applies for a school place, a year later than expected.

Summer born

A summer-born child is one born between 1 April and 31 August.