

Sandwell's policy for delayed entry to school for community and voluntary controlled schools

Background

The School Admission Code of 2014 states that 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.

*born between 1 April and 31 August

Sandwell's Policy

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

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

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

Delayed entry beyond one academic year will not be supported.

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

Process

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

- a report from the Early Years setting regarding the child's current level of functioning with evidence of the child's attainments against the ages and stages of development from the Early Years Foundation Stage, the child's social functioning with the peer group and their views on the request;
- where applicable, reports from other professionals involved e.g. health professionals, education psychologist, specialist early years teacher.

Decision

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

- Education Improvement Advisor - SEN
- Team Manager School Admissions
- Senior Leader Specialist Inclusion Service
- Early Years Lead

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

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

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

If the parent/carer challenges the decision, they will be given a right of appeal to the Director of Education. A right of appeal to an independent panel is only given if a school is not offered for the relevant year.

Attendance at an early years setting

If it is decided that it is in the best interests of the child to delay entry, the child will be entitled to a 15 hours funded placement in a nursery setting within a school until they commence full time education. If the child is in a private Day Care Setting, they will be eligible to transfer to a school nursery setting but will not be able to remain at the Day Care Setting.

Review

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

A review will take place at the start of Year 5 with a view to consideration of secondary school. The review will be conducted by members of the panel above, a representative of the primary school and a representative from a secondary school.

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

The review will be conducted prior to the allocation of secondary school places. Which school the child attends, will not form part of the panel's decision. Parents should be mindful that only one Sandwell Secondary School is a Community School and that this policy does not apply to Foundation Schools, Voluntary Aided Schools or Academies. The school and or parents/carers can request a review sooner if it is felt that the child has progressed sufficiently to be taught alongside peers. Consideration will always be given to the admission limit of the year group concerned.