



Admission of Children outside their Normal Age Group Policy

2024 to 2027

Legal Basis

The information in this policy is based on the [School Admissions Code paragraphs 2.17 to 2.20](#).

When making a decision, parents should refer to the [government advice](#).

In this policy, the term ‘parents’ refers to parents, carers, guardians and anyone with parental responsibility for the child.

This policy explains how Warrington Borough Council will handle requests for the admission of children whose parents have requested delayed or deferred entry to school, as well as parental requests for children to be taught out of their normal age group.

Admission of children below compulsory school age and deferred entry to school

- 1.1 Admission authorities of all state-funded primary schools **must** provide for the admission of all children in the September following their fourth birthday.
- 1.2 The authority **must** make sure that where they have offered a place at a school, that child is entitled to a full-time place in the September following their fourth birthday. Parents also have the following options:
 - a) Defer the date their child is admitted to school until later in the school year but not beyond the point at which they reach compulsory school age and not beyond the final term of the school year for which the application was made;

Or,

 - b) Their child attends part time until later in the school year but not beyond the point at which they reach compulsory school age.

Reception Class Entry for Summer Born Children

- 1.3 In addition, parents of summer born children, (born in April, May, June, July, or August) may consider delaying entry to reception for a whole year due to concerns, for example, about their child’s school readiness.
- 1.4 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 headteacher of the school concerned.

- 1.5 If the local authority is the admission authority for the school, when considering such requests, the local authority will take full account of parent's views but will make decisions on the basis of the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child concerned. If a child is allowed a delayed admission to school and starts reception a year later, the local authority will expect the child to have access to the Early Years curriculum during the year leading up to the child starting reception class i.e. attendance at a nursery setting or equivalent.
- 1.6 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. Admission of children outside their normal age group

Any parent may request a place for their child outside of their normal age group. For example, if the child is gifted and talented or has experiences problems such as ill health.

- 2.1 When considering such requests, the local authority will take full account of parent's views but will make decisions on the basis of the circumstances of each case.

3. Parental requests to educate their summer born child outside their normal age group at a community school

- 3.1 Initially, parents should read and carefully consider the [guidance document for parents](#) published by the Department for Education.
- 3.2 Parents should discuss their request with the head teachers of the schools they might like their child to attend, as they may be able to allay any concerns the parents may have about school readiness. Headteachers should also be able to share details of the provision on offer to children and how the needs of their youngest pupils are met.
- 3.3 Parents should also seek views from any professionals involved in the care of their child. All of these discussions should enable parents to make an informed decision.
- 3.4 Once the steps set out in paragraphs 3.1 to 3.3 have been completed, if a parent still wishes to pursue an out of cohort request, they must write to the admitting authority for each of their preferred schools providing full reasons why, in their view, their child would benefit from being educated outside their normal age group.

Making an application

- 4.1 Any decision made by one admission authority is not enforceable on any other admitting authority. This means that an admission authority for one school is not

required to comply with a decision made by the admission authority of another school. Therefore, it is important for parents to make an out of cohort request to every school at which they plan to apply for a place.

- 4.2 The table below sets out the admission authority for each type of school in Warrington.

Type of School	Who is the admission authority?
Academies	Academy Trust
Church Schools	Governing Body
Community schools	The Local Authority

- 4.3 All requests relating to Academies and Church schools should be sent to the school by email or posting to the school's address for the attention of the Headteacher/Chair of the Governing Board.
- 4.4 All out of cohort requests relating to community schools should be sent by email to schooladmissions@warrington.gov.uk or by post to the following address:
- School Admissions Team
East Annexe
Town Hall
Sankey Street
Warrington
WA1 1UH
- 4.5 Once a request has been formally received in writing, the parent will receive a written acknowledgement, normally via email. At this point, the parent will also be notified of the timescale. The local authority aims to deliver the outcome of requests within 15 school days (excluding school holidays). However, depending on the circumstances of the case, it could take longer than this in order for a decision to be reached.
- 4.6 Parents will also be notified that it may be necessary for the local authority to contact the child's nursery education provider and any other relevant professionals identified as having some level of involvement with or awareness of the child's development.
- 4.7 If the chronological age of the child means he/she is eligible to start reception class in the current admissions round, the parent will be advised to apply for a school place, even though the outcome of their request may not yet be known.
- 4.8 Requests can only be accepted from parents. Requests sent on behalf of school will not be processed, although any information submitted by schools will be used as supporting documentation for a parental request.

Outcome

- 5.1 All requests will be processed by the Admissions Manager. Other parties may be consulted to help make a decision, e.g. SEND Manager, Head of Virtual Schools, Early Help Manager. The Head of Service - Quality Education will make the final decision, based on all the information made available by the parent and all other relevant parties.
- 5.2 Where an out of cohort request is approved, the parent will be informed via a letter sent by email or by post.
 - 5.2.1 Once the parent of a reception class child has received formal notification of the admission authority's decision to approve their request, it is for the parent to decide if they wish to proceed with it. If a parent decides to proceed, they will be required to submit an application for their child's admission to reception class the following year. Applications must be submitted between September and mid-January and there is no guarantee of a place being offered at the preferred school.
 - 5.2.2 Where an out of cohort request has been supported and a place has already been offered during the normal admissions round for reception class entry, the offer cannot be carried over to the following year. If an out of cohort request is granted, parents will be informed of the requirement for them to write to school admissions and formally decline the place offered for the chronological age group. Parents will be informed that they must re-apply via the normal admission process the following year.
 - 5.2.3 Once a child has been admitted to a school, it is for the headteacher 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 made by the headteacher in consultation with the parent(s).
 - 5.2.4 Parents of children admitted out of cohort should note that when their child is due to transfer to secondary school, they will need to submit another request to be taught out of cohort. This must be done when their child's 'correct' cohort are making applications for a school place (see 4.1). This means that for a child who started school a year later than usual, parents need to apply for both a secondary school place and an out of cohort place when the child is in Year Five, rather than Year Six.
- 5.3 Where an out of cohort request is refused, the parent will be informed by letter sent by email or post. The letter will include the reasons for the decision.
 - 5.3.1 The parent does not have the right to appeal against the decision regarding an out of cohort request. However, parents may request a review of the decision giving reasons why they feel a review is necessary.

- 5.3.2 All review requests relating to community schools should be sent by email to schooladmissions@warrington.gov.uk or by post to the following address:

School Admissions Team
East Annexe
Town Hall
Sankey Street
Warrington
WA1 1UH

- 5.4 If a parent is unhappy about how their request has been considered, they can make a formal complaint. The link below provides useful information about the complaints process:
[Complaints | warrington.gov.uk](#)