Deferral into reception class

Compulsory school age

Your child must start full-time education once they reach compulsory school age. This is either on 31 December, 31 March or 31 August following your child's fifth birthday. If your child's fifth birthday is on one of those dates then they reach compulsory school age on that date.

For example, if your child reaches compulsory school age on 31 March, they must start full-time education at the beginning of the summer term.

Making a decision

You will need to apply for a primary school place in the year before your child is due to start school. Applications to apply for a school place for your child, opens in September and closes on 15 January each academic year.

You should apply to your local authority for a school place as normal – as if your child were going to start school at age 4 – even if you think you want to delay their start until age 5. If you do not want your child to miss their reception year, you should submit a request for admission out of the normal age group to the school's admission authority at the same time.

Norfolk County Council; https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/norfolkfirstadmissions

Suffolk County Council; https://suffolkone.capitaone.cloud/CitizenPortal/en

If you decide to delay your child starting school until the September following their fifth birthday, but do not request admission out of their normal age group at this time, your child will start school in year 1 and miss out on the reception year.

When considering whether or not to defer your child's entry into the reception class, it is important to be aware that the school of your choice is unable to hold a place for your child from the previous year.

If your application to educate your child out of the normal age group is accepted, there are things to be aware of throughout your child's time in education.

1) **Moving back to the normal age group**
   Headteachers decide how to educate the children in their school. On occasion, this can include moving a child to a different year group, but only when there are good educational reasons to do so. This means your child's school should continue to educate them out of their normal age group unless there are good educational reasons not to.

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2) **Changing schools**

If your child is to remain out of their normal age group when they transfer to a new school, for example if you move house or when they transfer to secondary school, you will need to submit another request for admission out of the normal age group.

The admissions authority of the new school will decide whether it is in your child's best interests to continue to be educated out of their normal age group. Unless there are good educational reasons for a child to join their normal year group (meaning they would miss a year of school), they should remain with their adopted year group.

Negative Impacts of Deferring Reception

Deferring entry to reception can lead to your child feeling potential social isolation, as the older child in the classroom, they may struggle to connect with younger peers, and they might feel emotionally out of place as they realise their age difference. This often becomes more noticeable the older your child becomes, particularly once they start high school. Additionally, there may be challenges in securing a spot at your preferred school the following year, when you apply for your child to start school.

While deferring school entry for your child you may feel this will provide some benefits, such as additional time for maturity, it also carries significant risks related to your child's emotional well-being, social integration, and academic readiness. These factors should be carefully considered before requesting a deferral into reception for your child.

Please note
To date, there is no evidence to suggest that children who have been educated outside of their normal age group, have improved outcomes. Therefore, a decision to put a child's entry to reception back by a year should be based on when you believe your child is school ready, alongside considerations of whether school may be a better environment and a more practical alternative.

Remaining in Preschool outside of the normal age group

The manager and Trustees will consider each request for a child to remain at the setting outside of their normal age group. However, unless there are extenuating circumstances, it is unlikely that we will agree to your child carrying out a further year at the preschool, due to.

* The implications for your child's eligibility to receive nursery education funding. The 15/30 hours entitlement ceases when the child reaches compulsory school age (the term after their fifth birthday). which means we would no longer received funding for your child's education whilst they are attending the preschool.

* The challenges faced to staff, educating a reception aged child alongside the remaining children aged 2, 3 and 4 years old. As we would not agree that this is in the best interest of either the preschool aged children or the child being educated outside of their normal age group.

* Our concerns around the safeguarding of all our children, as there is generally, a considerable difference in size and weight and strength, between a reception aged child and a preschool aged child. This can be a serious safety concern, particularly if the older child is struggling to regulate their behaviours, as they are physically much stronger than the younger children in the group.

Educating your child at home

You can teach your child at home ('home schooling') either full or part-time. Further information about home education can be sought from your local council.

https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/38144

https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/children-families-and-learning/schools/elective-home-education

However, you must make sure your child receives a full-time education from the age of 5, but you do not have to follow the national curriculum, https://www.gov.uk/national-curriculum

During the time that your child is being home educated, the local council can make an 'informal enquiry' to check your child is getting a suitable education at home. They can serve a school attendance order if they think your child needs to be taught at school.

If you would like further information, support or guidance you can speak to the manager or contact Early Childhood and Family Service https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/earlychildhood they would be able to offer support, practical help or guidance as you prepare for your child's transition into Primary education.