

# Admission of Children Outside their Normal Age Group

## Guidance

It is the expectation of Croydon Council that a child is educated alongside his/her age equivalent peers, in almost all cases. We would strongly advise that all children enter into their normal year group. The responsibility for addressing individual educational needs lies with the school through an appropriately differentiated and enriched curriculum.

Parents may request that their child is exceptionally admitted outside their normal age group. The admission authority of a school will decide whether or not the individual child's circumstances make this appropriate on educational grounds.

*Croydon Council is the admission authority for community and voluntary controlled schools situated within Croydon. The governing body is the admission authority for foundation and voluntary aided schools and the academy trust is the admission authority for academies and free schools.*

When parents submit a request to educate a child outside their normal year group, they may wish to include evidence of the child's circumstances from a relevant professional detailing the child's educational need which makes education outside the normal age group necessary.

Parents must consider the impact of a child being educated with children of a different age both within primary school and at transition to secondary school where admissions outside the cohort cannot be guaranteed.

Admission to school for all children is provided in the September following their fourth birthday and parents have the right that their child either:

- Start school full-time in September with their natural academic cohort
- Start school on a part-time basis for a selected period of time or until the point of reaching statutory school age (statutory school age is the term after the child's fifth birthday)
- Defer entry. Entry can be deferred, however a child must attend school within the Reception year, entry cannot be deferred until Year 1 (Applicants would need to re-apply for a place at the school using the In-Year application process if they wish to start their child's admission in Year 1)
- Request admission outside of the normal year group, for example, if the child is gifted and talented or has experienced problems such as ill health

For summer born children

- Request admission outside of the normal year of entry to start Reception when the child would normally be attending Year 1

### ***What should I consider when deciding to place my child outside their normal age group?***

#### ***Transition to secondary school and transferring school In-Year:***

Admission authorities are not required to automatically agree for a child to be placed outside of their normal year group and may decide they will only offer a school place for the normal year group. Admission authorities are required to make decisions on the basis of the circumstances of each case.

#### ***Leaving school:***

A child ceases to be compulsory school age on the last Friday of June in the school year they become 16. If a child is educated outside of their normal age group (i.e. is in year 10 when this date is reached) the child will no longer be of compulsory school age during the school year in which most children take their GCSE examinations.

The government has changed the law so that all young people will be required to continue in education or training until their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday in 2015. Young people have a choice about how they do this. It could be through full time education in school or college, an apprenticeship or full time employment combined with part time education. The school leaving age will remain unchanged and therefore a child can choose to leave school before they have completed year 11.

Potentially, a pupil could legally leave school in year 10 once statutory leaving age is attained.

***If I want my summer born child to be admitted to the reception class in the September following their fifth birthday (outside of the normal year group), how do I go about arranging this?***

You must make a request to Croydon Council and (if applicable) all admission authorities concerned, this should be done prior or during the application process for your child's normal year group. You must also make an application to Croydon local authority for a school place in the correct year group. This will ensure you are not disadvantaged for a preference school place in the event your request is refused.

If your request is accepted, your application for the normal year group will be closed and you will be required to apply in the usual way the following year, along with the cohort of applicants for that year group. Your application will not receive priority over or above any other applicant for this year group and your application will be considered in line with the published admission criteria for each school along with all other applicants for each school for the year group you are applying.

***Do I need to provide any documentation when I make a request for my child to be admitted outside of their normal year group?***

As the Admission authority for community and voluntary controlled schools, Croydon Council will require an explanation from the applicant and may request supporting professional evidence from a relevant professional documenting:

- Whether delayed social, emotional or physical development is adversely affecting their readiness for school
- In the case of children born prematurely, they may have naturally fallen into the lower age group if they had been born on their expected date of birth
- The needs of the child and the possible impact on them of entering later in the year or entering year 1 without having first attended the reception class

Decisions are made on the basis of the circumstances of each case and in the best interest of the child. This includes taking account of the following (where applicable):

- Parents views
- Information relating to the child's academic, social and emotional development, where relevant
- Medical history and the views of a medical professional
- Any previous history of being educated outside of their normal age group
- If the child may naturally have fallen into a lower age group if it were not for being born prematurely
- Views of the head teacher of the school(s) concerned

***What should I do if I am unhappy with an admission authority's decision about which year group my child will be admitted to?***

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. You do not have the right of appeal if you have been offered a place and it is not in the year group you would like. However, you may make a complaint.

In the case of community and voluntary controlled schools you should complain to the local authority. In the case of foundation and voluntary aided schools, academies and free schools, you should make a complaint under the school complaint procedure.