

In-year admission of children outside their normal age group

Introduction

This information sheet is for parents applying for a place in a Cambridgeshire school when their child is already part way through their primary or secondary school education elsewhere e.g. in another part of the UK or in the independent sector, and wishes their child to enter their preferred school a year above or below the cohort indicated by their date of birth.

In general, the policy in Cambridgeshire is not to delay or accelerate a child's journey through school. In line with School Admissions legislation the Local Authority (LA) will only be able to offer you a place in the year group indicated by your child's date of birth. However, we have a procedure whereby formal requests for a child to be admitted outside their normal age group can be fully considered and a decision made based on the individual circumstances of the case. This procedure is set out below.

Please note that the fact that a child has come from an educational system abroad, or does not speak English as their first language will not normally be considered as an exceptional circumstance. Support is available in our schools within the correct year group for these children. An unsuccessful application for a place at a school will not be considered appropriate grounds for then requesting a place in a different year group.

If your child has a statement of special educational needs or an Education, Health & Care Plan the appropriateness of whether or not to admit him/her to a younger year group in a Cambridgeshire school will be considered by the Statutory Assessment Team (SAT). You can contact SAT on 01480 372600 or e-mail start@Cambridgeshire.gov.uk

If you are coming from a different LA which has previously formally agreed to your child being taught outside the year group indicated by their date of birth, you will need to provide written confirmation of that decision from an officer of that LA.

Making an application for a place outside my child's normal age group

If your child is in any year group between Reception and Year 8 and you wish to apply for a place for your child outside their normal year group your request will first have to be considered by the LA's nominated officer panel.

Depending on the age of the child, the panel usually comprises at least 3 of the following:

- a senior educational psychologist;
- an adviser 11-19 (Secondary/Special);
- an adviser for the primary phase

- a primary school headteacher

You will need to provide as much information as possible for the panel to consider your case. As a minimum you will need to submit:

- information regarding how your child is performing in National Curriculum subjects English, Maths and Science (teacher assessment levels should be available from your child's current school);
- if applicable, details of any interventions/additional support your child is currently receiving at school;
- if applicable, a copy of your child's two most recent Individual Education Plans (IEPs);
- if applicable, reports from other agencies e.g. medical professionals, the specialist teaching service, educational psychologist, who may be supporting or working with your child;
- a covering letter explaining your reasons for your request ;
- anything else which you feel is relevant.

As required by the School Admissions Code, the LA will seek the views of the headteacher of the school concerned.

You should send your request and the supporting information to: Cambridgeshire County Council, The Admissions Team , Box OCT1213, Shire Hall, Castle Hill, Cambridge CB3 0AP.

You can expect to receive a decision within a month (excluding school holidays).

How will the decision be made?

The panel will look at all aspects of your child's case e.g. social/emotional maturity as well as educational progress. A child's educational attainments or where their birthday falls in the school year would not be strong enough reasons alone for a child to enter a school a year outside their age range.

The majority of children, including those that are deemed gifted or talented and those born early in a school year (1st September to 31st August), are best placed within the year group indicated by their date of birth. Acceleration (admission into the year group above their chronological cohort) should only be considered when both parents and professionals agree that the needs of the child cannot be met within his or her year group.

Equally, even if their birthday falls within the last few months of the school year, pupils with significantly delayed attainment and development should not automatically be considered for deferral (admission into the year group below their chronological cohort), as their needs can normally be met through differentiation and appropriate levels of support either from the school and/or through LA provision where appropriate. Deferral should only be considered when both the parents and the professionals involved are of the opinion that the needs of the

pupil cannot be best met within his or her age group even with appropriate levels of differentiation and support.

In the case of an acceleration request, the panel will be looking for evidence that the child:

- is performing on a par with the highest attaining children in the older cohort, across the curriculum;
- is mature for their age, confident and well adjusted;
- will be able to maintain their social and academic position in the accelerated year group.

What happens after the panel has considered my request?

You will be informed of the panel's decision in writing.

If the panel agree to the request for your child to enter a Cambridgeshire school outside his/her normal age group you will then be able to make an application for a school place in that different year group. You will need to send a copy of the decision letter with your application for a school place.

There is no right of appeal against the panel's decision. However, where the panel agree to your request for your child to be placed outside their normal year group but there are no places available in your preferred school in that year group, you will have a statutory right to an admission appeal.

If your request is refused the LA will only be able to offer you a school place in the year group indicated by your child's date of birth.

If your child is of Year 9 age or older you will be offered a place in the year group indicated by his/her date of birth. If you wish your child to be taught in a different year group you will then need to contact the school directly to pursue with request.

Information about applying for a school place is available from the Admissions Team on 01223 699662 or 699200 or on line at www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/admissions

Your application will be regarded as an in-year admission. You will therefore need to complete an In-Year School Application form.



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