



## **Policy for responding to requests for admission to community and voluntary controlled schools to a year group different to that determined by their date of birth, including delayed admission to reception for summer born children**

### **Introduction**

This policy document sets out the process and criteria for considering requests for community and voluntary controlled schools in BCP Council. This policy applies to all children with the exception of those holding or undergoing assessment for an Education, Health and Care Plan who should contact the Special Educational Needs Team for advice.

It is Council policy that children attending BCP community and voluntary controlled schools normally be placed with their own age group, and be educated for the majority of the time with their age peer group. Parents do however from time to time seek places for children in a lower or higher age group. Such requests may be made for a variety of reasons, for example where a child has moved to the area from abroad, or has missed schooling due to illness, or has a marked talent or ability. In these cases differentiation of the curriculum and/or additional support within their age group should usually address the particular issue.

The School Admissions Code requires school admission authorities to provide for the admission of all children in the September following their fourth birthday. Parents can request that their child attends part-time until they reach compulsory school age, or that the date their child is admitted to school is deferred until later in the same academic year or, in the case of summer born children (ie those born between 1 April and 31 August), that their child is admitted to reception one year later than their chronological age would normally determine.

The School Admissions Code requires that admission authorities consider such requests and take account of the circumstances of each case.

NB for schools that are academies, foundation or voluntary aided the application must be made to, and considered by, the Governors of the school and not the Local Authority.

## **Process for consideration of requests for community and voluntary controlled schools**

1. On receipt of such a request, by telephone or in writing, the admissions team will confirm with the parent/carer that their request is for a year group different to that determined by a child's date of birth and advise them to discuss this with the head teacher(s) of the schools they are interested in applying to in the first instance.
2. School Admissions Team will also contact the head teacher and advise/remind them of the procedure for dealing with 'out of year' group admission requests.
3. If, after discussion with the head teacher, the parent/carer still wishes to pursue an 'out of year' admission, they will be asked to complete and submit an application form together with supporting evidence.
4. The application form will ask for basic information about the child as well as:
  - The nature of the request
  - Clear reasons for the request
  - The child's educational history
  - Indication of the child's wishes (with opportunity for the child to record their views directly where practical/age appropriate)
5. In addition they will be asked to provide specific information/documentation which may include:
  - School or other educational reports (from the previous school or Early Years Setting where this is available)
  - Existing professional reports and assessments e.g. educational psychology reports from LA
  - Health information
  - Exam courses being followed
6. The parent/carer will be informed of the date that the Panel will meet within 15 school days of receipt of their written request (application form and supporting evidence).
7. The parent/carer will be informed of the decision of the panel in writing within 5 working days of the meeting.
8. In the meantime, if the child is already attending a school, they should continue to attend their current school.

## **The decision making process**

When requests for admission to a year group different to that determined by a child's date of birth are received, a panel will be convened to consider the written application and supporting information provided by the parent/carer.

This panel will consist of:

- A senior officer from the School Admissions Team (Chair)
- The Principal Educational Psychologist (PEP) (or their representative)
- The head teacher(s) of the preferred school(s)
- An early years advisory teacher/advisor from the School Improvement or 0-19 Team (where appropriate)

An officer from the School Admissions Team will take notes at the meeting and inform the parent/carer of the outcome.

On occasion there may be insufficient evidence for the panel to reach a decision. In this instance the panel may request additional information or a meeting with the parent/carer which may include requesting to meet/observe the child.

## **Criteria for agreement to 'out of year' admissions**

The panel will consider evidence relating to all aspects of the child's development and needs in coming to a decision. Issues to be considered will include:

For requests for change of year group where a child is already in school

- Whether there is clear evidence that the child has previously been educated in a year group above or below that determined by their date of birth and that this has had positive benefits.
- Whether there is clear, documented evidence that to place the child in their normal age group would be detrimental to their educational progress or likely exam performance.
- Whether there is clear evidence that it is in the interests of the child's social and emotional development to be educated in a year group above or below that determined by their date of birth.

For requests for delayed admission for summer born children the Panel will consider the following:

- the needs of the child and the possible impact on them of entering year 1 without having first attended the reception class;
- in the case of children born prematurely, the fact that they may have naturally fallen into the lower age group if they had been born on their expected date of birth;

- whether delayed social, emotional or physical development is adversely affecting their readiness for school;
- relevant research into the outcomes of summer born and premature children; and
- relevant advice, guidance and legislation from the Department for Education.

### **Right of appeal following the decision**

There is no right of appeal if a parent/carer is offered a place in their preferred school and it is not in the year group they would like. However, parents/carers can make a complaint through the Council's complaints procedure.

If a parent/carer is unhappy with the way the BCP Council has handled their complaint, the parent/carer may then refer their complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman.