

Protocol for Deferring or Delaying Entry to Primary and Infant School Reception Classes

for admissions from September 2011

This applies to:

All Devon County Council maintained schools at primary and secondary phase except for Special Schools.

All parents and carers seeking admission to school for a child in their care.

Policy updated:	September 2011
Review date:	November 2010 for 2012-13 and then annually unless a need to review earlier is identified

Description of Policy

This policy describes how parents can discuss with a school and require that their child not enter the Reception class until he or she reaches statutory school age.

Linked Policies

The In-Year Co-ordinated Scheme, The Secondary Co-ordinated Scheme, The Primary Co-ordinated Scheme.

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Appendix 1	Equality Impact Needs Assessment is located at http://www.devon.gov.uk/index/learningschools/schools/admissions/admissionarrangements/admissions-determined2011.htm	

General Information and Contacts

Date	September 2011
Review date	Annual
Approval	by Cabinet Members of Devon County Council
Key partners	Learning and Development Partnership Education Welfare Service Devon Association of Primary Headteachers Devon Association of Governors Church of England Diocese of Exeter Roman Catholic Diocese of Plymouth School Admissions Team
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Useful links	Department for Education Office of the Schools Adjudicator School Admissions Code

POLICY

1 Equality Statement

- 1.1 Devon County Council will only commit to policies and practices which will eradicate discrimination and promote equality for all, regardless of age, gender, disability, religion and belief, race and ethnicity and sexual orientation.
- 1.2 This policy will be subject to an Equality Impact and Needs Assessment. This assessment will be integral to all future policy and guidance reviews.

2 Safeguarding Statement

- 2.1 Devon County Council and its partners recognise that safeguarding is everybody's responsibility. Whether their interest is in all young people 'staying safe' in all aspects of our services, or whether they are working in specific areas of vulnerability, all staff will have appropriate training and induction so that they understand their roles and responsibilities and are confident in carrying them out. Settings, schools, children, young people and their parents or carers, or any member of the community should feel secure that they could raise any issues or concerns about the safety or welfare of children and know that they will be listened to and taken seriously. This will be achieved by maintaining an ethos of commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. This is supported by a clear child protection policy, appropriate induction and training, briefings on and discussion of relevant factors and refreshed learning in line with current legislation and guidelines.
- 2.2 Devon County Council acts as a Corporate Parent for Children in Care. This means that the local authority has a legal and moral duty to provide the kind of support that any good parents would provide their own children. This policy has been written to comply with this principle.

3 Introduction

- 3.1 Devon County Council (DCC) offers early admission to the Reception class for Community and VC primary and infant schools. Children are offered admission at the beginning of the September term following the child's fourth birthday.
- 3.2 This policy complies with the requirements of the School Admissions Code of Practice as amended in February 2010. Formerly some schools offered places either in September or January according to a child's date of birth.
- 3.3 Under the Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998, children do not have to undertake full-time education until the start of the term following

their fifth birthday. Parents may decide whether early admission to school is appropriate for their child.

- 3.4 Where possible, any enquiry from a parent regarding deferring entry until later in the academic year or to the start of the autumn term of the following academic year should be discussed with the school, the child's early years setting and any other education or health professionals who may be in a position to advise the parent.

4 Purpose

- 4.1 The best interests and needs of the child should be the focus of any discussions surrounding his or her admission to school.
- 4.2 The process of identifying a child who may benefit from deferred entry to school should begin as early as practicable and integration planned to make the process as smooth as possible.
- 4.3 Early identification will enable all appropriate agencies to take a full part in decision-making and providing support to the child.
- 4.4 A flexible approach can be adopted for the child's entry to school and the entry can be monitored and reviewed by all parties.
- 4.5 Deferment before full-time attendance in a Reception class will normally be until the start of the next term within the same academic year.

PROCEDURE

5 Policy for Deferred Entry to School

- 5.1 Children have a statutory right to be admitted full-time to school at the start of the school term following their fifth birthday.
- 5.2 Parents have a statutory obligation to ensure their child receives appropriate full-time education from the start of the term following their fifth birthday.
- 5.3 DCC has a policy of offering a place at school at the start of the autumn term 2011-12 for those children who have reached the age of 4 on or before 31 August 2011.
- 5.4 Where a parent wishes to defer entry to the following September 2012, that place will be for entry in Year 1 and not in Reception. An application for entry must be made in accordance with the Local Authority's (LA's) Co-ordinated In-Year Admissions Scheme. A place will not be held open in anticipation of that application.
- 5.5 Where a parent wishes to defer entry to September 2012 but enter in the Reception class, out of the child's chronological cohort, a fresh application must be made under the Co-ordinated Primary Admissions Scheme for that year of entry. This is called delayed entry. Such an application must be supported in writing by an educational, medical or social care professional, demonstrating a detriment to the child by not entering into Reception in September 2012.
- 5.6 A deferred entry procedure has been introduced to enable parents to secure a school place before postponing admission by up to two school terms where the child is considered to require more time to be ready for school. This procedure is intended to better meet the needs of children not considered ready for a September 2011 start at school.
- 5.7 The requirements of Key Stage 1 Class Size legislation on infant class sizes will apply to all children admitted within the Reception year, irrespective of the child's start date. Where deferred entry is agreed, that child's place is held open and is not available to be offered to another child during the academic year.
- 5.8 It is advisable that agreement on a deferral be reached by all parties – parents, headteacher, early years provider and other professionals where appropriate, such as an educational psychologist.
- 5.9 Parents who defer entry to Reception while the child is below statutory school age will have an entitlement to early years provision.

6 Criteria for Deferment

- 6.1 The purpose of deferment is to meet the needs of a child where it is considered to be beneficial to their long-term educational development.
- 6.2 A Programme for Integration should be drawn up by the school and agreed with the parent.
- 6.3 This Programme for Integration should be reviewed by those parties on a regular basis to ensure that it assists in progressing the child towards a successful admission.
- 6.4 Agreement to defer should be based on discussion between all parties.
- 6.5 No agreement to defer admission if made before the allocation of school places in the co-ordinated admission scheme will contribute to the offer or refusal of a place under that scheme.
- 6.6 All agreements to defer will be reported to the Admissions Team of the LA for monitoring purposes
- 6.7 This expectation of discussion and agreement does not impinge on a parent's statutory right not to admit a child until the term following the child's fifth birthday. The wish of the parent to defer within the academic year is overriding.

7 Funding

- 7.1 Advice and guidance from the DfE regarding funding arrangements will inform Devon's funding arrangements.

8 Procedure

- 8.1 Parents must apply for places in Reception through the normal application process of the Co-ordinated Primary Admissions Scheme.
- 8.2 A parent may contact a school to discuss the possibility of deferred admission before the allocation of places under the Co-ordinated Primary Admissions Scheme on 15 April 2011. This must not be taken by the parent or school to be a part of the allocation process. However, it may be helpful for all parties to be aware of this as a consideration in advance.
- 8.3 A school will assume that a child will be admitted to Reception in September 2011 unless a parent contacts the headteacher after the allocation of places.
- 8.4 Parents are strongly encouraged to discuss deferment with the headteacher

and any other professionals to help in deciding whether September or deferred admission is in the best interests of the child. The final decision rests with the parent.

- 8.5 Children with fifth birthdays between 1 September and 31 December may defer admission to Reception until the beginning of the spring term.
- 8.6 Children with fifth birthdays between 1 January and 31 August may defer admission to Reception until the beginning of the spring or the summer term.
- 8.7 Children with fifth birthdays between 1 April and 31 August may defer admission until the beginning of the following autumn term (2012) but will be required to decline the offer of a Reception place for 2011/12 and make an in-year request for a Year 1 place for September 2012 under the Co-ordinated In-Year Admissions Scheme.
- 8.8 Children starting in a Reception class may begin with part-time attendance, increasing to full-time attendance. Children with a deferment may also be expected to begin with part-time attendance. Parents may wish to discuss this with the headteacher(s) of their preferred school(s).

9 Options for Parents Deferring a Place in Reception

- 9.1 A parent will have these options in response to the offer of a place for admission at the beginning of the September term following the child's fourth birthday:
1. full-time in the Reception class at the school OR
 2. part-time in the Reception class OR
 3. Defer admission to Reception as at section 9.1 and take up a funded part-time place at an early years setting OR

The child may not take up a part-time place in Reception and a funded part-time place at an early years setting. This does not prevent the parent paying for hours at an early years setting in addition to the part-time Reception place.

- 9.2 There is no requirement on a school to offer flexible part-time hours in Reception prior to the child attending full-time. It will be for the school to detail the part-time arrangements available to parents. It is recommended that part-time provision will be equivalent to the 15 funded hours per week available at early years settings. Schools may feel it is appropriate for children to attend for whole morning or afternoon sessions.
- 9.3 Parents should take into account that free transport will not normally be available during the school day under the Education Transport Policy. Transport is available where there is an entitlement, at the beginning and end of the official school day.

- 9.4 Parents should take into account that free school meals, where there is otherwise an entitlement, are not provided unless the child attends for that entire school day.

Determined

EMPLOYEE GUIDANCE

10 Guidance for Employees

- 10.1 The Policy is operated by officers of the Schools Admissions Team in co-operation with management and staff in schools. The governing bodies and staff in all schools are requested to support the efficient operation of the Policy by encouraging parents to apply on time and to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of deferring admission for the child, referring families to the School Admissions Team or to the Devon Choice Advice Service where support may be beneficial.
- 10.2 Any queries regarding the operation of the Scheme should be referred to the School Admissions Team for advice and support.

Policy History

Date	Summary of change	Contact	Implementation date	Review date
11/2008	Policy formulated taking into account the requirements of the School Admissions Code of Practice.	Policy Unit	9/2010	12/2009
6/2009	Policy reviewed and formatted into a Directorate Policy shell	Policy Unit	9/2010	12/2009
12/2009	Policy reviewed for 2011-12, informed by new requirements to offer all children admission to Reception from the September following the fourth birthday. Affected sections: 3.2; 3.4; 7.1; 8.2-8.7	Policy Unit		
3/2010	Policy amended by the insertion of section 2.2 (corporate parenting), section 9.1-9.4 (options for parents deferring), sections 10.1-10.2 (employee guidance) and Appendix 1 (EINA).	Policy Unit		
4/2010	Policy determined by Cabinet Members for 2011/12	Policy Unit	9/2011	11/2010
10/2010	Policy amended to reflect change of title for the Department for Education	Policy Unit	9/2011	11/2010
9/2011	Policy amended with name of the Strategic Director EINA relocated onto Admission Arrangements website	Strategic Support and Policy Officer	9/2011	2012 policy already in place