

## Starting School in Reception

### Useful information if your child is due to start school

This information will help you to plan your child's start at school and aims to explain some of the different things you should consider.

The law states that children must be receiving a full-time education by the start of the school term after their fifth birthday. In Cumberland there are three school terms, split into six half terms and the school year runs from 1 September to 31 August with varying start and finish dates depending on the individual school/setting.

A child is of 'compulsory school age' on the 31<sup>st</sup> of December, 31<sup>st</sup> March or 31<sup>st</sup> August following their fifth birthday as illustrated in the table below.

5 <sup>th</sup> Birthday Between	Compulsory School Age
<b>1<sup>st</sup> September – 31<sup>st</sup> December</b>	<b>January</b> - Beginning of term 2 (Spring Term)
<b>1<sup>st</sup> January – 31<sup>st</sup> March</b>	<b>April</b> - Beginning of term 3 (Summer Term)
<b>1<sup>st</sup> May – 31<sup>st</sup> August</b>	<b>September</b> - Beginning of term 1 (Autumn Term) in the next academic year

Most children start school full-time in the September following their fourth birthday. This means they will turn five during their first year at school.

Applications for school places in Cumberland are made through the [School Admissions Team](#). Students with an Educational, Health and Care Plan should contact their [EHCP Co-ordinator](#).

Schools take children of four and five years old with a wide range of abilities at the beginning of the school year, starting in the reception class. Teachers are used to adapting the school day and all activities and learning involved in the first year at school to meet a range of children's needs, including those that are the youngest in the year group.

If you want to know more about a particular school, we recommend that you arrange to meet with the school and ask what they can do to help your child settle into school life.

By giving the school all the necessary information about your child in advance, sharing your child's experience of school and keeping in close contact with your child's class teacher throughout the first terms, your child should settle happily into school.

## Deferred entry to school - later in the academic year

For various reasons parents/carers may feel that their child is not ready to go to school in the September of the school year in which they reach the age of five.

For example, if, your child was born in the summer months (between 1 April and 31 August) and will be four years and a few weeks old when they are due to start school or your child was born prematurely and if born nearer the expected due date, would attend school the following school year.

If you do not think your child is ready to start school at the usual time, you may have heard about the option to 'defer' or 'delay' your child taking up a school place.

Parents / carers can request that their child attend's 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.

Deferral dates are set out as follows:

Child's fifth birthday	Can defer until...	If I defer which class will my child join?
1 September - 31 December	1 <sup>st</sup> January	Reception class
1 January - 31 March	1 <sup>st</sup> April	Reception class
1 <sup>st</sup> April – 31 <sup>st</sup> August	1 <sup>st</sup> September	Year One

For a Deferred school place, you need to apply for a school place for your child in the normal way. When you are informed by the Local Authority which school your child has been offered a place at, you should accept the place and discuss a deferred start date directly with the school.

## **Delayed admission - outside of your child's normal age group**

Parents / carers may request that their child is admitted outside of their normal age group. It is the responsibility of the admission authority of the school to make the decision on the basis of the circumstances of each case.

Factors considered by an admission authority when considering admission outside the normal age group include:

- 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.

Parents/carers should think very carefully about the implications of admitting their child outside the normal age group and ensure that joining a lower year group is in the best interests of the child.

## **Admission to summer born children / delaying when your child starts primary school**

It is important to note that parents / carers of Summer born children do not have a right to enter their child into a different year group, they simply have a right to request that their child is considered for education outside of their year group.

Parents /carers may request for their child to be held back a school year (to start school in the September after their fifth birthday) if both the following apply:

- They were born in the summer (1 April - 31 August).
- You do not think that they are ready to start school in the September after their fourth birthday.

To request a delayed admission, parents /carers must apply for a place during the standard application process timeline for their child's chronological age group, stating their reasons for requesting delayed entry to the following year.

The Local Authority is the admission authority for community and voluntary controlled schools. 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.

If a child has additional needs and has an Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP), or is being assessed for an EHCP then a decision about delayed school entry will be made during the assessment process, or through a review of the EHCP by the Cumberland SEND Team.

If your request is agreed, your application will be withdrawn, and you will need to make a fresh application for the following school year by the National Deadline date of

15 January annually.

Please note if your request to delay entry is not agreed there is no right of appeal against the decision.

<b>Types of school</b>	<b>Admission authority</b>
Academy and free school	Academy/School Trust
Community or maintained school	Local Authority
Foundation school	Governing body
Voluntary Aided School	Governing body
Voluntary Controlled School	Local Authority

Please remember schools take children with a whole range of abilities at the beginning of the school year, starting in the reception class. Teachers are used to adapting activities and learning involved in the first year of school to meet a range of children's needs, including those that are young in the year group or those who struggle with some day-to-day tasks.

### Things to consider...

- If you are worried about your child not being ready for school it is useful to know that learning in the reception class has a more play-based curriculum and that as a matter of course teachers will be adapting the activities and routines in the classroom for a wide range of children with differing abilities and ages, including those who are youngest in the year group. Children in the reception class follow the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) curriculum, which is also followed in nurseries, preschools and by child minders.
- You may wish to contact your preferred school(s) before applying for a school place to discuss how they tailor provision for the younger children in the reception class. The school may be able to allay your concerns about your child's readiness for school.

Starting one or two terms later than most of the other children in the reception class may mean that:

- Your child missed a range of activities designed to help the children settle into life at school and become familiar with the school's routines.
- Your child will be joining an already established year group of children. Social groups and friendships may already be taking shape before your child joins the class.

If you think your child has or may have special educational needs, this may not necessarily be a reason to defer entry to school. You may wish to discuss admission to school with the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) at your child's early years setting before deciding whether or not to delay entry.