



HACKBRIDGE PRIMARY SCHOOL

“STARTING SCHOOL” POLICY FOR PART-TIME ATTENDANCE OR DELAYED OR DEFERRED ENTRY TO SCHOOL IN RECEPTION

At Hackbridge Primary School we offer full-time education to children from the September before their fifth birthday. It is our belief that full-time attendance from the beginning of the September in the academic year in which they turn 5, ensures that children in Reception can take full advantage of all that school offers and gain the educational and social skills necessary for them to build on in their future years of education.

As a primary school with attached Nursery classes, and a separate Nursery school within our federation, we have a wealth of experience and expertise in supporting children of 4 and 5 years old with a whole range of abilities who join our Reception classes at the beginning of September each school year. Our 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.

The School’s Position

In applying for, and accepting, a Reception place at Hackbridge Primary School, parents are committing to sending their child to school five days a week from the September in the year that their Reception place is offered.

Beyond our usual intake practices in the first week of starting school for Reception each September, it is expected that all Reception pupils attend school full-time, five days a week from the point that they join us.

We appreciate, however, that a very small number of parents/carers may feel that their child is not ready to go to school full-time in the September of the school year in which they reach 5 years of age. This policy explains the school’s position regarding the options available to parents/carers who may feel that their child needs to attend part-time until later in the school year or needs a deferred or delayed entry to starting school.

Part-time attendance until later in the school year

Some parents may feel that their child is not ready to begin full-time attendance from their second week of school in September when they join us and want to discuss an extended part-time attendance with us.

In line with the DfE School Admissions Code, it is for each individual school to decide their own policy for part-time attendance for Reception pupils. At Hackbridge Primary School, our policy for part-time attendance for Reception children until later in the school year is as follows:

A child can attend Reception on reduced hours on a five day a week basis, i.e. attending mornings only, Monday to Friday, from the start of September up until their 5th birthday or the end of the spring term of the Reception year (whichever occurs first).

In this instance, we expect the child to attend Reception full-time, Monday to Friday, for the summer term in preparation for their eventual full-time attendance in Year 1 the following academic year. This is because, in our experience, where children have joined us not having done this they find the transition to Year 1 very difficult.

Parents/carers can make a request for part-time attendance on the above basis to the school when returning their admissions forms to the school in the summer term before the September when they are due to start Reception. The Deputy Headteacher will contact the parent/carer to agree the arrangements – which may be for a half-term, term or two terms maximum depending on your child's date of birth. Please note that a decision to reduce a child's attendance in Reception will only be made on the basis that the child is not ready for full-time schooling.

There is flexibility in the arrangement in that sometimes parents/carers will have asked for their child to attend for five mornings only for an extended period, only to find that their child is then keen to stay all day when the autumn term actually arrives. In such instances, we are happy for you to approach us to then request that your child immediately begins full-time attendance.

Please note that we do not offer any option for pupils to attend for less than five days a week. Children who do not attend for five days a week are at a disadvantage to their peers by not being present to receive the teaching and learning that takes place daily, particularly in Phonics and Maths. Our previous experience has shown that where a child consistently and regularly attends Reception for less than five days each week, there is a negative impact on their attainment and progress as they miss crucial teaching which their peers have received, resulting in gaps in their understanding where new concepts have been taught that they have not been present for. Our teaching and learning pathways, including the activities and experiences to be delivered, are planned to build on the previous day's teaching and learning experiences. Therefore part-time attendance for less than five days a week is not something which we offer at our school.

By accepting a Reception place at the school, parents/carers are committing to sending their child to school five days a week from the beginning of September. Any child without this five day pattern of attendance would be determined a 'persistent absentee' as far as their school attendance record is concerned and this would fall under the remit of our Attendance policy and the steps therein followed to address the level of attendance.

Deferred entry

Parents can defer the date their child is admitted to school until later in the school year but not beyond the point at which they reach compulsory school age or, for children born between 1 April and 31 August, not beyond the beginning of the final term of the school year for which the offer was made.

Parents of spring and summer born children can approach the school to discuss a request for deferred entry for either the start of the spring or the start of the summer term of their child's Reception year. This could be on a part-time basis in the spring term, as set out under 'part-time attendance until later in the school year' above, but would again be expected to be full-time attendance in the summer term of the Reception year, again for the reasons outlined in the section above.

The arrangement to defer a child's entry must be made with mutual agreement between the school and the parent.

Deferred entry is generally a less preferable option to part-time attendance until later in the school year, as it means that children attend for less terms of their Reception year and therefore miss either one or two terms' worth of critical teaching and learning when they do eventually join us.

By starting a term or two later than the vast majority of the other children in Reception, your child will miss a range of activities designed to help the children settle and become familiar with the school's routines in the autumn term, along with one or two terms' teaching and learning, which they never catch up on. They would also be joining an already established class of children and social groups and friendships may already be taking shape before your child joins the class.

In our experience, parents/carers tend to decide in preference of part-time attendance until later in the school year over deferred entry when we explain our teaching and learning approach and they get to see our Reception learning environment as part of our intake processes.

Delayed entry to Reception for summer born children

This is when, for a specific and individual reason, a child starts school in September but a year later than usual. The child could be admitted a year late into the class with children of the same chronological age, so would start school in Year 1 and miss the Reception Year, or the child could be admitted into a class with children who are a year younger than his/her chronological age and start in a Reception Class.

Summer born children are defined as those born between 1 April and 31 August who reach compulsory school age at the beginning of the September after they turn five years old.

Whilst most parents/carers of summer born children will be happy for their child to start in Reception at the same time as other children of the same academic year, some may have concerns about whether their child is ready for school.

In this case, parents/carers have two options for delayed entry that are dealt with by the local authority admissions department:

Option A

Some parents/carers may elect for their child not to start Reception in their correct chronological year group. A request can be made to the local authority admissions department to delay your child's start until they are of Compulsory School Age. This would normally mean that the child would make an in-year application to enter school directly into Year 1.

In this instance, the London Borough of Sutton Admissions team will withdraw the child's starting school place with us for Reception and parents/carers would have to make an in-year application for a place for the September following their 5th birthday. The in-year application cannot be made until after the summer half-term of what would have been the child's Reception year.

If successful in gaining a place, your child would then begin school in Year 1.

Parents/carers should be aware that in choosing Option A, they are giving up their place at our school and that there is no guarantee that there will be a vacancy in the cohort for Year 1 if the year group is already full at that point. We cannot 'hold' a place for your child from the previous year. Parents/carers also need to seriously consider the impact of missing the Reception year with its focus on phonics and early arithmetic.

Option B

Some parents may wish to request that their child is admitted to Reception for the following September, instead of Year 1, so they would be educated out of their chronological year group. In such cases the decision that must be made by the admission authority is whether it will be in the child's best interests to start in Reception or to miss Reception and to start in Year 1. Such requests will only be agreed in exceptional circumstances. Decisions will be made on the basis of the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child concerned.

A parent must consider that the child would generally remain out of their correct chronological age group throughout their schooling and consider how this could impact any future applications.

If you have reasons to believe that your child should be considered for a delayed entry to school out of chronological year group, you should apply for a school place for your child when you would normally be

expected to apply, but notify the local authority at the time of application that you wish to apply for a delayed entry and provide them with evidence to that effect.

The admission authority for the school will consider all the submissions and make a decision to agree or decline the request to delay admission to school based on the best interests of your child. Even where the admission authority is the same, different conclusions could be reached for different schools.

If your request is agreed, you will be notified by the admissions authority and your application will be withdrawn from that starting school application round and you will need to make a fresh application for the following school year in the subsequent round.

If your request is agreed, this does not mean your child has been, or will be, offered a place in the Reception year at your chosen school the following year. It remains possible that your child could be refused a place at our school the following year if there have been more applications received than there are places available at the school, and other applicants have been ranked higher based on the school's oversubscription criteria.

Parents whose request for delayed entry is refused have no statutory right to appeal. (The purpose of the appeals process is to consider whether a child should be admitted to a particular school, not the year group into which they should be admitted.)

Considerations for parents/carers regarding delayed entry for summer born children

- Government funded childcare - if your child is starting school a year late and going into Reception, your child might need to stay for another year with a Nursery, Preschool, or Childminder. Ensure that you have approached their current provision to ensure that they can keep their place with that provider for another year. If you delay your summer born child's start to school by a year, they will be eligible for government-funded childcare until they start school. All three and four year olds are entitled to 15 hours of early education provision per week for 38 weeks of the year. Some three and four year olds with working parents are entitled to 30 hours of early education per week for 38 weeks of the year. More information is available at <https://www.gov.uk/help-with-childcare-costs/free-childcare-and-education-for-2-to-4-year-olds>
- Moving back to the normal age group – once a child has been admitted to a school, it is for the Headteacher to decide how best to educate them. This may, on occasion, include deciding that a child should be moved to a higher or lower age group, including moving a child who has been admitted out of their normal age group, into their normal age group. This decision should only be made where there are sound educational reasons to do so and in consultation with the child's parents.
- Transfer to other schools - As children whose school start has been delayed move through the system, they will reach transition points. For children who have attended an infant school, this will be when they move up to junior school. For other children, this will be when they reach secondary age. The decision by one admissions authority* does not bind other admissions authorities. If you wish your child to remain outside of their age group when they transfer to a new school, you will need to apply once again for an outside normal year group place. It is possible that a new admissions authority will decide that it is in your child's best interests to return to their normal year group and so your child would miss a school year. Admission authorities must consider these requests in the same way as the original request, but must also take into account the fact the child has been educated in a different year group up until this point. For many children, it will be right for them to remain with their adopted year group, but it is possible that others may be better off joining their normal year group. All decisions should be made taking the circumstances of the case into account and considering all of the child's needs, including their social and emotional needs. You should make this request alongside an application for a school place and should do so when their child's normal year group are making applications for a school place. This means that a summer born child that started in Reception a year later than is usual, would apply for a secondary school place and for an out of year group place when they are in Year 5 rather than Year 6.

- Your child will be at school in the year below their chronological age (with children younger than them). As they grow and develop, your child may become more physically and socially mature than his/her peers as he/she progresses through school.
- National Curriculum Tests – children are assessed when they reach the end of each key stage, not when they reach a particular age. There are no age requirements as to when children must take their GCSEs or other assessments.
- Implications of your child turning 16 before Year 11 – a child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday of June in the school year they turn 16. They are not legally required to attend school after this point. A summer born child who has been educated out of their normal age group will normally cease to be of compulsory school age at the end of Year 10 (unless they have returned to their original year group during their time in education). This would mean that they will be under no obligation to attend school in Year 11 when most children take their GCSEs. The school will not ask your child to leave because they are no longer of compulsory school age, but they may not be able to enforce their attendance.

Who is the admissions authority for the school?

Hackbridge Primary School is a local authority maintained school. The admissions authority for our school is the London Borough of Sutton.

What should I do if I want to discuss one of these options with the school?

If you think your child is not ready to start school and you wish to discuss one of the above options with us, please contact the School Office at office@hackbridgeprimary.sutton.sch.uk and a member of the Senior Leadership Team will get in contact with you to discuss the options and determine with you which you wish to pursue for your child.

What if I decide that the school's available options do not suit the needs of my family?

This policy is discussed and agreed with the governing body each year. Please note that we are not in the position to discuss the possibility of any other variation of the available arrangements detailed within this policy.

We understand that some parents/cares may feel that the arrangements that we offer do not suit their needs. In such cases, parents/carers are advised that all schools make their own individual arrangements for part-time and deferred attendance, so parent/carers are within their rights to speak with other schools in order to see if another school can offer them a different approach. Parents/carers should then contact the admissions authority to ask for that school/those schools to be added to their child's primary 'starting school' application and the local authority would then advise whether those schools had vacancies or not.

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