

Deferring School Entry

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS ON DEFERRED ENTRY TO THE RECEPTION YEAR
2023/24

What is deferring school entry?

All children are expected to start school in the reception year in September, if they will be five in that school year. Deferring school entry means that a child begins school later than September, but still joins their own age-peer group. The latest point that a child's entry can be deferred depends on when the child was born:

Your child was born between	Point until which entry can be deferred
September 2018-December 2018	January 2024 (Start of the Spring Term)
January 2019-August 2019	April 2024 (Start of Summer Term)

You can also request that your child attends reception part-time from September up until the latest date your child's entry can be deferred.

What if I am considering deferring my child's entry?

It is not uncommon for children to find starting school demanding and very tiring, particularly for the younger children in the year group. However, this should not necessarily be a reason for you to consider deferring your child's admission to reception. Although research tells us that children very much benefit from high quality education in either a nursery or reception setting, the early years provision in Tower Hamlets should ensure that deferring a child's reception entry is carefully considered and in the child's best interests.

The Local Authority would view a child's circumstances as being exceptional if there is a significant developmental delay, which means that they have not yet gained the knowledge, skills and understanding required to benefit from the next phase of their education. If your child is already in a nursery or other early years setting it is most likely that the school would have already discussed any concerns about your child's school readiness with you.

If there is no concern about your child's school readiness, but you think they would benefit from staying longer in nursery, you should first discuss this with the nursery headteacher as well as the headteacher of the primary school at which your child has been offered a place.

Some things to consider before reaching a view would be:

- **Your choice as a parent** – are you happy with your child's progress in nursery, and do you think your child would be better off staying in nursery for an additional period? If your child has a summer birthday, would he/she benefit from being one of the older children in nursery for a term, rather than one of the youngest in reception? Or do you want your child to start at the beginning of the academic year (September) in reception?
- **Ongoing medical conditions** – Does your child have significant medical needs? Do the healthcare professionals advise you that this means that your child should spend more time in nursery before moving to reception?
- **Settling in** – Changing provision can be unsettling for some children, so if your child has recently joined a nursery or playgroup, is this the right time to consider another change?

Settling in procedure

Primary schools will want to ensure children have an effective transition from nursery, play groups or home to the beginning of their primary education which may mean children have a period of attending on a part-time basis. However, the Local Authority recognises that even with this level of flexibility some children are simply not ready to attend primary school. The new school will therefore be keen to assist you and your child and find the best way to help them settle in. Please discuss the settling in procedure with the headteacher of the Primary School.

Who else can I contact for advice?

As well as contacting the Admissions Service on Tel: 020 7364 5006, you may also want to contact the Parents Advice Centre 020 7364 6489. This organisation offers information, advice and support to parents and carer's of children and young people with special educational needs (SEN).

When do I need to decide whether to defer my child's admission to the Reception year and, how do I arrange this with schools?

You should download a 'Deferring School Entry form 2023/24' from www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/schooladmissions or contact Pupil Services. You must get the form signed by the headteacher of the school at which your child has been offered a reception place and by the headteacher of your child's current nursery school (if applicable).

You must return the form to the Admissions Service by **5th May 2023**. Without the form signed by the headteacher of the primary school it will not be possible to arrange for child's deferred admission.

Will my child lose their reception place if I decide to defer their entry?

No. Where entry is deferred the reception year place will be kept available for your child, up until the date by which they are required to take it up.

In what circumstances should I not defer my child's admission to reception?

You should not defer your child's admission to one school because you are awaiting a place at another.