

## Statement from Gavin Williams - Summer Born Children

### Guidance

#### **Statement for local authorities, schools and admission authorities on the admission of summer born children to school, from Gavin Williamson, Secretary of State for Education**

Updated 27 May 2021

We previously committed to legislate, when the opportunity arises, so that summer born children can automatically be admitted to a reception class at age 5 where that is what their parents want, and to remain with that cohort throughout their education.

In the meantime, I welcome the results of [our latest research survey of local authorities](#) that show that most requests for delayed entry to reception continue to be approved, with almost 9 in 10 approved each year. Whilst these figures are encouraging, our survey of parents and carers shows that individual experiences still vary widely, and I am concerned that some families find the process stressful. We also continue to receive feedback that some admission authorities do not fully understand the duties imposed on them by the school admissions code.

We published [updated guidance to admission authorities in September 2020 alongside new advice for parents of summer born children](#). Both documents provide the same description of the process for making and handling requests, so that admission authorities and parents have the same expectations.

It is for the parents or carers of a summer born child to make the decision on whether to send their child to school before they reach compulsory school age. This is their legal right. Where parents do decide to delay their child's start at school, it is currently for the admission authority to decide whether the child should be admitted to school with their chronological year group and start school in year 1, or, at the parent's request, allow the child to be educated outside of their normal age range and start school in reception. In reaching their decision, the impact of the child missing the reception year and the essential early literacy and numeracy that takes place during that year should be an important factor considered by admission authorities.

Parents have expressed concern about the uncertainty that is caused by having to reapply for their child to remain outside of their normal year group when applying for a secondary school place or moving schools. Admission authorities should take into account the fact that the child has been educated in a different year group to that point and, unless there are sound educational reasons to do otherwise, the assumption should be that the child remains outside of their normal year group.

I am grateful to the sector for responding positively to this issue. It is important that admission authorities provide a system that is easy for parents to navigate, apply a consistent approach across the country that is in line with the guidance and, crucially, make decisions in the best interests of children.