



Letter from the Chair of Admissions

Re: Deferred entry for summer born children.

In order to support our prospective families, we have put together this informative letter, to guide you through our process for deferred entry requests.

- If you are considering making such a request to the school, it must be addressed to the Chair of the Admissions and received no later than the 1st October to enable a reasonable amount of time for your request to be considered. All requests received after this date will not be processed.
- Requests will only be considered after a questionnaire has been completed and returned to the school office and an informal interview, with your child, has been arranged to visit the school and meet with the Head teacher.

The Chair of Admissions will then schedule a special meeting of the Admissions committee to discuss each case and consider the best interests of the child. This is in line with the current DoFE Admissions code, 2021, section 2.19 which states:

Admission authorities must make decisions on the basis of the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child concerned. This will include:

Taking account of the parent's views;

- information about the child's academic, social and emotional development,
- their medical history and the views of a medical professional;
- whether they have previously been educated out of their normal age group; and
- whether they may naturally have fallen into a lower age group if it were not for being born prematurely.
- They must also take into account the views of the head teacher of the school concerned.

When a decision has been made according to the above criteria the Admission authority will inform the parent(s), of their decision clearly setting out the reasons of their decision.

The DoFE have produced a guide to parents for summer born children and it is based on the Admissions code 2014. The guide does not update nor amend the current Admissions code 2021. Despite a letter from Nigel Gibb, the then Minister for Education, stating an intention to change the admittance procedure for summer born children, no further action has been made by the DoFE.

The Education act states that children who have attained the age of five must commence their primary school education. The acceptance or rejection of a deferred entry request is subject to the applicable year's Admissions policy and does not guarantee an offer of a place.

Parents have the right to withhold their child from starting school until their child reaches the age of five, however parents do not have the right to insist that their child commences school in the Reception year group. In practice this would usually mean that a child would start in the Year 1 class with their chronological age group and miss their Reception year.

At St Mary's we see each child as an individual and we tailor learning experiences and opportunities to meet the needs of each pupil. This is particularly the case during the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and we recognise that our children starting with us in Reception will have had varying experiences of pre-school and nursery settings and will be at different stages of their learning journeys with each child having different areas of strength and different areas of challenge.

This approach means that we are able to meet a wide range of needs and we feel there are only very limited circumstances where it would be in the best interests of a child to educate them outside of their chronological age group. Such circumstances may be where a child has significant Special Educational Needs (SEN) which will impact their learning development or a serious medical condition which may mean they have missed significant amounts of time from a pre-school or nursery setting.

It should also be noted that at the point of transition to secondary school, a child may be placed and educated within their correct chronological age group, potentially resulting in a pupil moving from Year 6 at the end of primary school straight into a Year 8 cohort. Furthermore, throughout children's primary and secondary schooling, pupils are often given the opportunity to take part in activities in their age categories eg under 11s, under 13s etc. Children who are in year groups different to their chronological age will therefore, sadly, have reduced opportunities to enhance their education as they will not be included along with their correct peer group, or will not take part in these activities along with their current friendship group.

St Mary's has also carried out some analysis of our last two, verified Year 6, SATs results to ascertain whether summer born children performed below those who are not summer born. The results of this analysis showed quite conclusively that summer born children performed as well, and in some instances, better than those born in the spring or autumn.

For example: Based on the 2019 & 2018 SATs papers

- In 2019, 50% of St Mary's Year 6 pupils were summer born;
- In 2018, 20% of St Mary's Year 6 pupils were summer born;

However, the 2019 SATs results (pupils achieving the expected level) were higher than the SATs results from 2018 – even though there were more Summer Born pupils in 2019 (as a proportion of the year group).

In 2019, in the Year 6 SATs tested areas of Reading, Writing and Maths, of pupils achieving the expected standard:

- 80% passed all three SATs papers. 48% of these pupils were Summer born, 48% were Spring born and 4% were Autumn born.
- In the areas of 'Greater depth' scores: 33% of the proportion of pupils were summer born, 33% were Spring born and 33% were Autumn born - mirroring the 2018 results.

None of these pupils were deferred entry pupils from their Reception year group. The pupils that joined St Mary's as a Reception pupil were all aged 4 years in the September that they started school.

I hope that this informative letter has been of use to you when making the right decision for your child.

Kind Regards,

Rob Twell

Mr Rob Twell
Chair of Admissions