

Admissions Policy 2021-2022



Appendix: The admission of summer born children

CONTEXT:

In December 2014, the Department for Education (DfE) published new guidance regarding the admission of summer born children (those born between 1 April and 31 August). The DfE's guidance is available to view on their website. In response to this guidance and the new statutory requirements in the revised School Admissions Code, The Belham Primary School updated its Admissions Policy with this Appendix, to address the options available to parents of summer born children and to answer the frequently asked questions.

The Belham Primary School is permissive of decelerated admission (a child starting school the year after they would normally be admitted with their peers), to Reception for summer born children, where the parent has provided reasons that demonstrate they believe it is in their child's best interests.

Therefore at this stage, The Belham Primary School is not making changes to the current policy and procedures until there is a change to the Admissions Code.

When will my child reach statutory school age?

Children must be receiving full-time education by the start of the term following their fifth birthday.

- For children born between 1 September and 31 December, they reach compulsory school age on 31 December and must be receiving full-time education at the start of the Spring term (i.e. after the Christmas holidays, in January)
- For children born between 1 January and 31 March, they reach compulsory school age on 31 March and must be receiving full-time education by the start of the Summer term (i.e. after the Easter holidays, in March or April)
- For children born between 1 April and 31 August, they reach compulsory school age on 31 August and must be receiving full-time education at the start of the new school year (i.e. after the summer holidays, in September)

What options do I have available?

In Southwark there is admission of all children in the September following their fourth birthday. Parents of non-compulsory school age children (four year olds) may request a pattern of part-time attendance or deferment if that best suits the needs of their child. Parents will be offered the opportunity for their child to:

- start Reception in September on a full-time basis from their first day of attendance or on a part-time basis up to the point of reaching compulsory school age;
- defer the date their child is admitted to the school until later in the school year, but not beyond the point at which they reach compulsory school age and not beyond the beginning of the summer term of the school year for which the offer of the school place was made.

And for summer born children (those born between 1 April and 31 August) only, further options are:

- delay their child's entry to school until they reach compulsory school age and be admitted at the start of Year 1 with their chronological peers. This means that a summer born child would not start school at all during the academic year after their fourth birthday.
- delay their child's entry to school until they reach compulsory school age and be admitted to Reception rather than Year 1 with their chronological peers (deceleration). Again this means that a summer born child would not start school at all during the academic year after their fourth birthday.

Applying for entry to Year 1

Before deciding to apply for entry directly to Year 1, or to decelerate your child's admission to Reception, you should first contact the Belham Primary School.

We will explain the provision on offer to children in Reception, how it is tailored, if necessary, to meet the needs of summer born children and how those needs will continue to be met as the children move up through the school. We may also be able to allay any concerns that you may have about your child's readiness for school.

If you still wish to delay your child's entry and apply for admission at the start of Year 1, you must complete an 'in year' application form prior to the September in which your child is due to start Year 1. You are strongly advised to also make an application as part of the main admission round for the year group that your child would normally be admitted to school, as we cannot guarantee that a place will be available in Year 1 due to children having automatically moved on from the Reception year.

Applying to decelerate admission to Reception

If you wish to decelerate your child's admission to school, **you must seek approval from the Belham Primary School**: The Charter Schools Educational Trust is the Admissions Authority.

In addition, you must make an application as part of the main admission round for the year group that your child would normally be admitted to school. You will also need to complete the Southwark form 'Request for admission outside of a child's normal age group', available from the Southwark website.

Each child's circumstances are considered on a case-by-case basis and a decision will be made in the best interests of the child. We will convene a panel of governors including the Executive Head Teacher/Head of School to consider the evidence presented.

You will receive a response in writing to your request before National Offer Date setting out clearly the reasons for the decision.

If your request to decelerate is approved, you can simply withdraw your application for the normal age group. You will then need to make a new application as part of the main admission round for the following year.

If your request to decelerate is refused, you will need to decide whether to accept the offer of a place for the normal age group, or to refuse it and make an in year application for admission to Year 1 for the September following the child's fifth birthday.

Do I need to provide medical evidence or reports from an educational psychologist?

You may provide evidence to support a request for decelerated admission if you wish but it is not compulsory.

Will the Trust agree to my child's deceleration?

Not necessarily. As an Academy Trust and our own Admissions Authority, we cannot be required to honour a decision of another school or of the borough's admissions team.

Am I guaranteed a place?

Any agreement to decelerate your child's admission to Reception does not guarantee a place at the Belham Primary School for the following academic year, nor does it provide any additional priority for a place. Your application to the school will be considered alongside all other applications in accordance with the school's published admission criteria.

Can I appeal?

Parents who are refused a place have the right of appeal to an independent appeal panel. Further information on appeals can be found in the policy. As the purpose of the appeals process is to consider whether a child should be admitted to a particular school, parents do not have a right of appeal if they have been offered a place and it is not in the year group they would like. However, they may make a complaint about an admission authority's decision not to admit their child outside their normal age group using the school's complaints procedures.

What happens when my child transfers to the next level of schooling (either to junior school or secondary school)?

Ideally, your child will remain with the cohort they have been taught with, but this is not guaranteed: at each point of transfer, your request for deceleration will be reassessed. Therefore, when your child's natural cohort (the year group above) are applying to transfer to junior or secondary school, you will need to speak to the admission authority of your preferred school(s) to obtain their agreement to continue your child's deceleration. If agreed, you would then apply the following academic year (when the other children in your child's class are applying to transfer). If considering decelerated admission, parents should think carefully about the 'knock-on effect', throughout their child's schooling.

Does decelerating my child's admission impact on when my child can leave school?

If your child has been decelerated, he/she will no longer be of compulsory school age during Year 11 of secondary school and will therefore be able to leave school before completing examinations.