Starting School

The process starts earlier than you think!





- When to apply for a school place
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- Compulsory School Age
- Information for Summer Born Children

for more information.
Bracknell Forest residents only.

Bracknell Forest Council

Starting School

Each year applications are processed for an academic year – that is for children whose dates of birth fall on or between 1 September to 31 August the following year. This means that there will be nearly a year's difference between the children, but they will be in the same year group.

Child's Date of Birth		When to Apply		Offers Sent	Start School
From	To	From	To		From
01 Sep 2020	31 Aug 2021	Nov 2024	Jan 2025	April 2025	Sep 2025
01 Sep 2021	31 Aug 2022	Nov 2025	Jan 2026	April 2026	Sep 2026
01 Sep 2022	31 Aug 2023	Nov 2026	Jan 2027	April 2027	Sep 2027
01 Sep 2023	31 Aug 2024	Nov 2027	Jan 2028	April 2028	Sep 2028
01 Sep 2024	31 Aug 2025	Nov 2028	Jan 2029	April 2029	Sep 2029

When do I need to apply for a school place?
Above is a date of birth table to show when you will need to apply for your child.

Who do I apply to for a school place?
To make it easier for parents to find a school place there is a central point for all applications to be made; your home local authority (LA). You must apply to your home local authority no matter what school you wish to apply for.

When will my child be able to start school?
Your child will be given the opportunity to start school the September following their 4th birthday, this will be an option between full time or part time education - until they become compulsory school age (CSA)

Full time education
You will be given the opportunity to start your child at school full time in the September following their 4th birthday.

Part time education
You will be given the opportunity to start your child at school part time in the September following their 4th birthday. However, your child must start full time at school once they become CSA.
You will also have the right to defer your child's entry to school. Meaning they will not start school until they become CSA. Further information regarding deferred entry is provided within this booklet.

When must my child start school?
Your child must be in education, full time once they become CSA.

When will my child become CSA?
Your child will become CSA the term following their 5th birthday.

Using the example given and the graph detailed below, you should be able to determine when your child will become CSA.

EXAMPLE: A child born on 01 September 2022 will apply at the appropriate time: from November 2026 to January 2027. - Details on when to apply are included in the previous table.

In April 2027 they will receive an offer of a school place, with the opportunity to start from September 2027. However, the child does not become CSA until the term following their 5th birthday, this would be January 2028.

The parent/ carer can therefore choose to start their child part time at school from September 2027 or defer the child's start to school until January 2028.

CSA from January
• (A) Children born between September - December
CSA from April
• (B) Children born between January - March
CSA from September
• (C) Children born between April - August * Summer born children

(A) If your child's birthday falls on or between 1 September and 31 December they will become of compulsory school age on the 1 January, which is defined as the start of the spring term. They will start in a reception class where they will spend two terms before starting in a Year 1 class in the following September.

(B) If your child's birthday falls on or between 1 January and 31 March they will become compulsory

school age on 1 April, which is defined as the start of the summer term. They will start in a reception class where they will spend one term before starting in a Year 1 class in the September.

(C) * If your child's birthday falls on or between 1 April and 31 August they will become of compulsory school age on the 1 September, which is defined as the start of the autumn term. If you choose for your child not to start until their compulsory age, you would be required to reapply in the July prior to becoming CSA using the In Year process.

* ***Summer Born Children:*** *Please note for summer born children processes regarding deferred entry and their start to school differ to other children. Some of the below information does not apply in your case. Please therefore refer to the further information provided under 'Summer Born Children'.*

How do I defer my child's entry to school?

Once a school place has been allocated and accepted the school should provide you with a 'starting school form'. This asks parents/ carers to confirm when you would like your child to start school, if this is full time from September, part time, or if you are choosing to defer your child's entry.

If you choose to defer your child's entry the Headteacher of the school may wish to discuss if this is in the best interest of your child. They may consider factors such as, taking into account your child's age, experience in early years settings, how ready your child is for school and the arrangements put in place by the school for the new reception intake.

The Headteacher may suggest you consider part time education until your child is CSA. However, the Headteacher cannot refuse your decision to defer your child's entry, this is a parental right.

Will my school place be withdrawn if I defer my child's start to school?

No, the school place will not be withdrawn should you choose to defer your child's entry.

However, you cannot hold onto or be allocated multiple school places. Meaning that should you apply for another school place, and that school place is offered the original school place allocated which you have deferred your child's start for will be withdrawn.

What if my child doesn't start school at CSA?

If your child fails to start at the allocated school (once they become CSA) then your details will be passed to Education Welfare.

It is important to note that if your circumstances change prior to starting school such as you relocate or make alternative arrangements for your child's education such as home educating or admission to a private or independent school, that you inform The School Admissions Team of these arrangements. Failure to do so will result in your details being passed to Education Welfare when your child fails to start at the allocated school.

*Summer Born Children

If your child is born between 1 April and 31 August, they're classed as a "summer born" child.

All the questions above, 'when do I need to apply for a school place', 'when will my child be able to start school', 'when must my child start school', 'when will my child become CSA' and 'what if my child doesn't start school at CSA'. All apply to summer born children.

Only the below information regarding deferred entry and delayed entry differs for your child.

How do I defer my child's entry to school if they're summer born?

You have the same right to defer your child's entry to Reception as any other parent/ carer.
However, your child is not CSA until the September following their 5th birthday and by this time your child's chronological year group (the year group their date of birth falls within) will be starting the new academic year of Year 1.

If you choose to defer entry until your child is CSA, you cannot hold your school place for the entire academic year (until the beginning of Year 1) and must start your child by the April, in order to retain the offered place. You also cannot automatically gain admission into Reception for when your child becomes CSA. Admission into Reception is a completely different cohort to your child's chronological year group and admitting your child into Reception at CSA is classed as a 'delayed' entry. This must be requested and is not guaranteed to be agreed.

The options available to you regarding deferred entry are:

Option 1

Defer your child's entry until the beginning of the January or April term (April at the latest), this allows you to keep the school place offered to you.
You will be able to send your child to school full time, or if you prefer, part time, for the remainder of the academic year. This will allow them to build friendships with their peers within their chronological year group whilst easing into the education setting. Your child will then begin full time education with their peers once they reach CSA (Year 1).

Option 2

Defer your child's entry until the they become CSA, the Reception school place offered to you will be withdrawn and you will be required to apply for a Year 1 placement by completing an in-year application for the new academic year. You must apply for Year 1 no sooner than 20 school days before you need the placement. To do this, you need to make an in-year application.

It is important to note that when applying for a school place via in-year admissions you are applying for admission into a year group which already holds a cohort of children. School places are limited in availability, and you may not necessarily gain admission at your preferred school(s), or the school previously allocated to you for the Reception intake.

You should contact the School Admissions Team for further advice on school places available before you apply.

What if I want my child to be admitted into Reception when they become CSA (Delayed Entry)?

If you do not wish to send your child to school until the September following their fifth birthday, you may request that your child is admitted out of their chronological year group to Reception rather than Year 1 when they reach CSA. We refer to this as a request to delay your child's entry to school.

Delayed entry involves placing a child outside their chronological year group which is a significant educational decision.

If you are considering this option, think about both the short-term and long-term affects this may have on your child's educational journey.

When should I make my request to delay entry?

Your request must be made at the time you would apply for a Reception school place (as per your child's date of birth range). Please see 'when do I apply'. Your request must be submitted before the relevant closing date.

How do I make my request to delay entry?

Should you wish to proceed to make a request to admit your child into Reception instead of their chronological year group, Year 1, please visit our website for further information.

Click here to visit our website

There are many factors you need to consider before submitting a request.

Please ensure you follow the procedures detailed on our website.

Contact the School Admissions Team
Email: School.admissions@bracknell-forest.gov.uk
Phone: 01344 354023
Phone lines are open from 8:30am – 12:00pm

Visit our website www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/schooladmissions

Bracknell Forest Council