

Admission of Reception Pupils - Notes of Guidance

In the past advice has been given to those schools that admit reception children that Article 13 (3) of the Education (NI) Order 1997 imposed a duty on the Board of Governors to admit a child where there are vacant places in the school at the time that the application is considered with the result that schools are required to admit children up to the admissions number.

Legal advice has been reviewed and is as follows:

Article 13 (1) (c) states that *'paragraphs (4) and (5) apply to an application for the admission of a child who is not in the relevant age group'*.

'the relevant age group' is a reference to the age group in which the majority of children below the upper limit of compulsory school age are normally admitted to the school (usually Primary 1 /Year 8).

With regard to P1 admissions the majority of children are compulsory school age i.e. 4 on or after 2 July, whereas Reception applicants are in the minority. Consequently Paragraphs (4) and (5) of article 13 apply. These state:

(4) Where an application to which this paragraph applies is made, the Board of Governors shall –

- (a) If, at the time the application is considered, there are vacant places at the school
 - (i) Admit the child to the school, if the total number of such applications falling to be considered at that time does not exceed the number of vacant places;*
 - (ii) In any other case, apply the criteria drawn up under article 16(1) to select for admission to the school a number of children equal to the number of vacant places and admit, or refuse to admit, the child to the school accordingly;**
- (b) If, at the time, there are no vacant places at the school, refuse to admit the child to the school.*

(5) The Board of Governors may refuse to admit a child to the school in the circumstances mentioned in paragraph (4) (a) (i) or (ii) where it is of the opinion that the admission of the child to the school would prejudice the efficient use of resources.

What does this mean for consideration of reception applications?

Reception children cannot be admitted to a school until they turn four years of age, however applications should be considered and responded to within the timeframes of the primary admissions procedure.

Applicants whose birthdays are between 2 July 2014 and 31 August 2014

In the event of the admissions number not being reached with the applications of compulsory school age children, the Board of Governors will apply its criteria and admit applicants, as appropriate (See Sample letter 1 for Reception children). These children will commence reception class in September.

Applicants who become 4 years of age after 31 August 2018

Applications which meet the school's criteria should be dealt with on the basis of the date on which the child becomes 4 years of age (See Sample letter (2) for Reception children). Whilst a school can consider the application in advance of the child's 4th birthday, any offer of a place issued at the formal close of the primary admissions procedure should be conditional; i.e. should the place be required to admit a child of compulsory school age then the reception child would be displaced. This will potentially require schools to confirm the offer of a place whenever the child turns four years old.

This approach will ensure that children of compulsory school age are given priority in the primary admissions procedure. Should you require advice on refusing a child admission to Reception please contact the Primary Admissions Office.

The EA will advise the parents of unplaced reception children to consider applying for a funded pre-school place if they have not already done so.

Primary Admissions Office Contact details



028 3741 0082



primaryadmissions@eani.org.uk



3 Charlemont Place, The Mall, Armagh, BT61 9AX