

➤ Summer Born Children and start of school at Compulsory School Age

Your child must receive full time education from the start of the term after their fifth birthday. This is often called Compulsory School Age (CSA).

In Cumbria (and most counties) children normally start full time education before reaching statutory school age. They can enter a Reception class the September after their fourth birthday.

Some children have just turned four when they can start school and others are nearly five. Summer born children are those born between 1st April and 31st August. They tend to be the youngest in their classroom.

For Summer Born Children there is guidance issued by the Department of Education allowing parents / guardians to seek a place at Reception outside of their “normal age group” rather than Year 1. This would mean that the July or August born child, for instance, could start school just aged five, instead than just aged four.

This guidance is contained in pages 24 and 25 of the DfE’s School Admissions Code (Paragraphs 2.16 and 2.17).

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/389388/School_Admissions_Code_2014_-_19_Dec.pdf

Admission Authorities must make clear in their admission arrangements the process for requesting admission at CSA. Please note that “deferral” and requesting admission of a summer born child at CSA are different requests and both should be outlined separately.

Cumbria County Council, as a Local Authority, is the responsible admission authority for Community Schools and Voluntary Controlled Schools. A request to Cumbria County Council for a summer born child to start Reception at CSA at these schools, is an automatic yes.

Page 7 of the “Starting School in Cumbria” document (<https://www.cumbria.gov.uk/elibrary/Content/Internet/537/955/1052/17126/17143/17310/42993122635.pdf?timestamp=4342518616>) states that:

“Parents/carers of children born between 1 April and 31st August can delay their child’s admission until the following academic year, when they would enter Reception rather than their normal age group (i.e. year 1).

You will still have to make an application in the next admissions round before the closing date, and it will be considered alongside all other Reception applications for that year. A place in Reception would not be guaranteed at the preferred school.”

It is advised that you seek the views of the Head Teacher of your preferred school(s), and if your child is attending nursery, you are advised to check a place would still be available for them to continue in the next academic year.

If you decided to start your children in Reception at CSA the term following their 5th birthday, you will still be entitled to support with childcare costs, including 15 to 30 hours free child care (depending on your entitlement).

Academies, Foundation Schools, Voluntary Aided Schools or Independent Schools have their own admission authority boards and as such they will have their own admission policies in place covering these type of requests. As the School Admissions Code outlines in paragraph 2.17, this must be covered in their admissions policy.

In this situation there is a right to CSA start but no guarantee the school / headteacher will agree for your child to start in Reception but Year 1 instead. In these situations it is important to seek the headteacher's views via a meeting and in writing, and if it was suggested your child would start at Year 1 in the case of a CSA start request, you have a legal right to request a response in writing how this is thought to be in your child's best interest.

For more information please contact the School Admission Team on 01228 221582, or school.admissions@cumbria.gov.uk

Research information on summer born children and education can easily be accessed through google searches and there is an information and support group on Facebook called "Flexible Admissions for Summer Born Children".

Further information can also be found on <https://summerbornchildren.org/>