

CHANGES TO SCHOOL ADMISSIONS CODE OF PRACTICE FOR
ADMISSION OF CHILDREN BELOW STATUTORY AGE

A government review recommended that 4 year olds should start school in the September following their fourth birthday. A revised School Admissions Code will come into force on 10 February 2010, and will require all admission authorities to provide parents with this choice of a school place for entry from September 2011. The changes affect two paragraphs of the current Code, which are detailed below:

Admission of children below compulsory school age

2.65 For admission to the 2011-12 school year, and subsequent years, admission authorities for primary schools must provide for the admission of all children in the September following their fourth birthday. When determining the arrangements for primary schools the admission authority must make it clear that:

- a) the arrangements do not apply to those being admitted for nursery provision including nursery provision delivered in a co-located children's centre;*
- b) parents of children who are admitted for nursery provision must apply for a place at the school if they want their child to transfer to the reception class;*
- c) attendance at the nursery or co-located children's centre does not guarantee admission to the school;*
- d) parents can request that the date their child is admitted to the school is deferred until later in the school year or until the child reaches compulsory school age in that school year;*
- e) parents can request that their child attends part-time until the child reaches compulsory school age.*

Deferred entry to primary schools

2.69 Admission authorities must allow parents of children who are offered a place at the school before they are of compulsory school age to defer their child's entry until later in the school year. Where entry is deferred, admission authorities must hold the place for that child and not offer it to another child. The parent would not however be able to defer entry beyond the beginning of the term after the child's fifth birthday, nor beyond the academic year for which the original application was accepted. This must be made clear in the admission arrangements for the school.