The law in England and Wales says that children must be receiving a full-time education by the start of the school term after their 5th birthday. In this local authority there are 6 school terms and the school year runs from 1st September to 31st August with varying start and finish dates depending on the school.

A child is of ‘compulsory school age’ on the 1st January, 1st April, or 1st September following their 5th birthday as illustrated in the below table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month of Birth</th>
<th>Become of Compulsory School Age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September to December</td>
<td>Beginning of Term 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January to April</td>
<td>Beginning of Term 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May to August</td>
<td>Beginning of September in the next academic year</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Applications for a school place are made to the School Admissions Service in the Local Authority you live in. For more information about applying for a school place in Bristol please see our website following the link below.

https://www.bristol.gov.uk/schools-learning-early-years/school-admissions

For a number of reasons parents/carers may feel that their child is not ready to go to school in the September of the school year in which they reach the age of 5. For example, your child was born in the summer months (between 1st April and 31st August) and will be 4 years and a few weeks old when due to start school, or your child was born prematurely and if born nearer the expected due date would attend school the following school year.

If you think your child is not ready to start school, you may have heard about the option to ‘defer’ or ‘delay’ your child taking up a school place.

We have written this leaflet to help explain what these terms mean and help you decide what is best for your child.
Schools take children of 4 and 5 years old with a whole range of abilities at the beginning of the school year, starting in the Reception class. Teachers are used to adapting the school day and all activities and learning involved in the first year at school to meet a range of children’s needs, including those that are the youngest in the year group. If you want to know more about a particular school then arrange to meet with the school and ask what they will do to ensure your child settles well.

By giving the school all the necessary information about your child in advance, sharing in your child’s experience of school and keeping in close contact with your child’s class teacher throughout the first terms, your child should settle happily into school.
Deferred School Place
This is when a child, usually whose birthday is in the summer, starts school in the Reception Class but in January or April (usually after Easter) rather than at the start of the school year in September.

For a **Deferred** school place you need to apply for a school place for your child in the normal way. When you are informed by the Local Authority which school has a place for your child you need to inform the school in writing that you have accepted the school place and wish to defer your child’s start to January or April depending on your child’s month of birth. The school place will be reserved for your child until either the beginning of Term 3 or Term 5.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month of Birth</th>
<th>Become of Compulsory School Age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September to December</td>
<td>Beginning of Term 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January to August</td>
<td>Beginning of Term 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Things to think about……..**

• If you are worried about your child not being ready for school it is useful to know that learning in the Reception Class has a more play-based curriculum and that as a matter of course teachers will be adapting the activities and routines in the classroom for a wide range of children with differing abilities and ages, including those you are young in the year. Children in the Reception Class follow the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) curriculum which is also followed in nurseries, preschools and by child minders.

• Speak to your preferred school(s) before applying for a school place about how they tailor provision for the younger children in the Reception Class, both in the Reception year and future years, as your child moves through the school. The school may be able to allay your concerns about your child’s readiness for school.
• By starting a term or two later than most of the other children in the Reception Class your child may miss a range of activities designed to help the children settle and become familiar with the school’s routines.
• By starting a term or two later than most of the other children in the Reception Class your child will be joining an already established year group of children. Social groups and friendships may already be taking shape before your child joins the class.
• If you think your child has or may have special educational needs, this may not necessarily be a reason to defer entry to school. You may wish to discuss admission to school with the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) of your child’s early years setting before making a decision.
Delayed School Place
This is when, for a specific and individual reason, a child starts school in September but a year later than usual. The child could be admitted a year late into the class with children of the same chronological age, so would start school in Year 1 and miss the Reception Year, or the child could be admitted into a class with children who are a year younger than his/her chronological age and start in a Reception Class.

If a child has additional needs and has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), or is being assessed for an EHCP then a decision about delayed school entry will be made during the assessment process, or through a review of the EHCP. The decision will be made at a Statutory Special Educational Needs Team Panel.

So, if the above does not apply, but your child was born in the summer months (between 1st April and 31st August) and you have reasons to believe that your child should be considered for a delayed entry to school, you should apply for a school place for your child in the normal way and tick the box requesting ‘delayed entry’.
You will need to make an application to your home local authority by the closing date of 15th January 2019. Please also forward with your application a letter from the Head Teacher(s) of your preferred school(s) outlining their response to your request to delay your child’s entry to school.

When contacting your preferred schools please advise your reasons why the request to delay entry to school should be agreed. Please submit any professional evidence such as a letter or report from a medical professional working with your child with your application.

The admission authority for the school will consider all the submissions and make a decision to agree or decline the request to delay admission to school based on the best interests of your child.

If your request is agreed, your application will be withdrawn and you will need to make a fresh application for the following school year by 15th January 2020. Please note if your request to delay entry is not agreed there is no right of appeal against the decision.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of School</th>
<th>Admission Authority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academy and Free School</td>
<td>Academy/School Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community or Maintained School</td>
<td>Local Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foundation School</td>
<td>Governing Body</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voluntary Aided School</td>
<td>Governing Body</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voluntary Controlled School</td>
<td>Local Authority</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please remember schools take children with a whole range of abilities at the beginning of the school year, starting in the Reception Class. Teachers are used to adapting activities and learning involved in the first year of school to meet a range of children’s needs, including those that are young in year of those who struggle with some day to day tasks.
Schools will offer support to help your child settle into school. If you feel your child is struggling to settle, ask to speak to the Class Teacher, or other members of staff such as the Special Educational Needs Coordination or Head Teacher.

**Things to think about ...**
- Delaying starting school for a year and going into Year 1 class with the same chronological age children.
- If your child is starting school a year late and going straight into Year 1, your child might need to stay for another year with a Nursery, Preschool, or Childminder for what would have been the Reception Year.
- If your child is starting a year later than normal and going straight into Year 1 you will need to make an in-year school application from May onwards for a Year 1 place in the following September. There is no guarantee that a Year 1 place will be available for your child to start the next school year even if a place was offered previously when applying for a Reception Class place some time ago.
- By starting a year later than other children who have been together for a year in the Reception Class your child will be joining an already established year group of children. Social groups and friendships will already be established when your child joins the class.

**Delaying starting school for a year and going into Reception Class with younger children**
- If your child is starting school a year late and going into Reception Class, your child might need to stay for another year with a Nursery, Preschool, or Childminder.
- Your child will be at school in the year below their chronological age (with children younger than them).

If your child changes school, for example transfers from primary to secondary education at the end of Year 6, or transfers from infant to junior education at the end of Year 2, your child may at the discretion of the receiving school be placed in their chronological age group.
This could mean your child will have to miss a year of the national curriculum.  
• A delayed transfer into a school is agreed with the existing Head Teacher; so if there is a change of Head Teacher in the existing school the replacing Head Teacher may not agree to continue the delayed arrangement. Your child would have to join their chronological year group missing a partial or a whole year of education.  
• If your child is at school in the year below their chronological age (with children younger than them) your child may become more physically and socially mature than his/her peers as he/she progresses through school.  
• If your child is at school in the year below their chronological age they would legally be allowed to leave school the term after their 16th birthday, a full year before other young people in their year group. This may well be before any examinations are taken.

How to find out more:
For general enquiries about the school admissions process and what to do next please contact School Admissions by email.

Email: school.admissions@bristol.gov.uk

For impartial information and advice if your child has any additional needs contact Supportive Parents
Email: support@supportiveparents.org.uk
Website: www.supportiveparents.org.uk