

Exhibit 2: National Policies on Age of School Entry and Promotion

Reported by National Research Coordinators

| Country | Official Policy on Age of Entry to Primary School | Parental Discretion on Age of Entry to Primary School | Changes to Age of Entry Policy Within the Past 10 Years | Policy on Promotion and Retention in Grades 1–4 |
|-------------------|--|---|---|---|
| Albania | Children must be 6 years old by the end of August to begin school in September. | Most children begin school at age 6, but some begin at age 7 because their parents feel they will benefit from being more mature. | No change | No policy |
| Australia | Varies by state, but generally children begin school by age 6. Children in all states are expected to begin a pre-primary or Foundation Year (variously referred to as Preparatory, Transition, Kindergarten, Reception, or Preprimary) from between 4 years and 5 months and 5 years by January 1. Thus, minimum age at entry to primary school (Year 1) ranges from 5 years and 5 months to 6 years (as of January 1) across the states. | Most children begin school in the year following attainment of the minimum age, but children among the youngest in their cohort (born in the first 4–6 months of the calendar year) may start a year later based on either advice from preprimary staff or the judgment of their parents. | All states now include a full year of preprimary education within the primary school setting. Prior to 2014, children in South Australia began Year 0 (Reception) in the school term after their fifth birthday. Beginning in 2014, all children start at the beginning of the school year if they are 5 years old in the first half of the year (by June 30 in Western Australia and May 1 in other states). The Northern Territory has also moved to a single point of entry at the start of the school year. Queensland introduced Year 0 (Preparatory) in 2007 and made it compulsory in 2017. Western Australia introduced Year 0 (Preprimary) in 2002 and made it compulsory in 2013. | Varies by state, but generally automatic promotion for Grades 1–4. |
| Austria | Children begin school if they are 6 years old before September 1. A clause for prematurely born children exists; the calculated due day may be used instead of the actual date of birth if parents insist on later schooling. | Parents may contact school authorities for earlier/later admission, but school authorities ultimately make this decision (in some cases because of medical or psychological attestations). | No change | Beginning in the 2020–2021 school year, automatic promotion for Grade 1. Dependent on academic progress beginning in Grade 2. |
| Azerbaijan | Children begin school at the age of 6. | Children typically begin school at age 6, but children who are age 8 by the end of the academic year may also begin the first grade. Enrollment of children older than 8 is determined by rules established within individual schools. | As of July 2021, children who reach the age of 6 between September 16 and December 31 may begin school in that academic year at the request of their parents. Until now, children were admitted to school based on the opinion of special commissions. | Generally, automatic promotion in primary education. The only reasons for the retention of primary school students are long-term illness or truancy. Promotion based on exam performance at the end of Grade 3. |
| Bahrain | Children begin school if they are 6 years old by September (the month which marks the beginning of the academic year). | Follows policy | No change | Automatic promotion for Grades 1–3. The minimum required score to pass from Grade 3 to Grade 4 is 60% in the core subjects. |
| Belgium (Flemish) | Children begin school in September of the calendar year of their sixth birthday. | Parents can enroll children in school at the age of 5 or 7. A recommendation from the class council is required for children to begin school at age 5. At age 7 all children can start without any additional advice or consent. | Previously only age was taken into account when determining school entry; later the participation in Flemish preprimary education became a condition. The schools' class council can also decide that the pupil is not ready for primary education. Beginning in the 2020–2021 school year, the starting age of compulsory education changed from age 6 to age 5. | No system level policy; decisions made by individual schools. |
| Belgium (French) | Children begin school during the calendar year of their sixth birthday. | Parents can extend preschool by 1 year or enroll the child in primary school 1 year earlier after consulting with the Center for Psychological, Medical and Social Services and the head of the school. | No change | No policy |

A dash (–) indicates data not provided.

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|----------------|--|--|--|---|
| Brazil | Children must enter school during the school year in which they turn 6 years of age according to Article 32 of the National Education Guidelines and Framework Law (Lei de Diretrizes e Bases da Educao Nacional – LDBEN). | States may authorize school enrollment for children younger than 6 based on families' requests. | Enrollment of children at age 4 in Basic Education became mandatory in April 2013. The Early Childhood Education stage extended the period of compulsory schooling by 2 years. | Varies by federative entity. |
| Bulgaria | Children begin school during the calendar year of their seventh birthday. | Students may begin school at age 6 with parental/guardian discretion if they completed the required preschool education. | No change | Automatic promotion for Grades 1–3, dependent on academic progress for Grades 4–12. |
| Canada | Varies by province, but most children begin school between the ages of 5 and 7. | Varies by province. Some parental discretion or choice is generally permitted. Parents may enroll their child a year early or later, depending on the child's maturity. While Kindergarten is not mandatory in many provinces, most parents choose to enroll their children. | Varies by province. In some provinces and territories, policies have changed to include optional Kindergarten. | Varies by province. Retention is not generally recommended. |
| Chinese Taipei | Children must be 6 years old by September 1 in the year of enrollment to begin school the following September. | Children with physical or mental disabilities or health conditions certified by a public medical institution can postpone enrollment. | No change | Automatic promotion for Grades 1–9. |
| Croatia | Children who are 6 years old by April 1 of the current calendar year must begin primary school in September of that year. | Parents of children who are slightly younger than 6 during school enrollment may ask for a special decision to enroll their child. School enrollment can also be postponed (usually in the case of medical conditions). Both situations must be approved by an expert committee. | No change | Promotion is dependent on academic progress. Schools must organize additional classes for students with unsatisfactory progress in 1 or 2 subjects. If sufficient progress is not demonstrated in extra classes, students can complete an exam to be promoted. Students are retained if they are not successful on the examination. |
| Cyprus | Children can begin primary school only if they turn 6 by September 1 of the enrollment year (effective September 2021). | Parents can apply to the Director of Primary Education to delay enrollment for 1 year. | The policy for the age of enrollment in primary school has changed since September 2021: the child should complete the age of 6 before September 1 of the enrollment year. Previously, the respective age for enrollment was 5 years and 8 months. | Promotion is dependent on academic progress. |
| Czech Republic | Children must be 6 years old to begin school in September. | Parents/guardians can postpone school attendance for 1 year based on the recommendation of a specialist. | No change | Promotion in all grades is dependent on academic progress and minimum attendance requirements. Students may repeat only 1 grade at the primary level. |
| Denmark | Children begin school the calendar year of their sixth birthday. | Parents may request a delayed school start if they feel their child is not mature enough. Parents may also enroll their child in Grade 0 a year early if the child turns 5 by October 1. | No change | Generally automatic promotion. In special circumstances students may be retained due to immaturity (not academic skills). |
| Egypt | Children must be 6 years old by the end of September to begin school the following October. | Follows policy | No change | Automatic promotion. |

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|-----------------------|--|--|---|---|
| England | Children can begin primary school in the September term following their fourth birthday. However, children are not required to start school until the start of the term following their fifth birthday. | Children born between April 1 and August 31 may begin school the September after they turn 5 by parental request. Parents can also request that their child is admitted outside of their normal age group if the child is gifted and talented or has experienced ill health or other problems. | The current policy has been in place since 2011. Before that, most local authorities had a policy of admitting children into school at the beginning of the term during which the child turned 5. | No policy |
| Finland | Children begin school in August during the calendar year of their seventh birthday. | Parents may enroll children 1 year earlier or 1 year later than the official policy for psychological or medical reasons. | No change | Automatic promotion for Grades 1–9 and retention only in extreme situations (usually related to academic progress). |
| France | Children must begin elementary school at the beginning of the school year (September) in the calendar year of their sixth birthday. | In rare cases, parents and/or teachers may request early enrollment for academically advanced and mature children or request a 1-year delay in enrollment for immature children. | Before 2019, instruction was compulsory for 6 year old children. Since the start of the 2019 school year, education is mandatory from the age of 3. | Promotion is dependent on academic progress. A school's teachers, including the principal, meets late in the year to decide on the further education of each student. |
| Georgia | Children must be 6 years old by September 15 to begin school. | Follows policy | School entry age was defined as 6 years old in April 2014. | No policy |
| Germany | Varies by federal state. The cut-off dates are nationwide between June 30 and September 30. Children must be 6 years old by the cut-off date to enroll in school that year. | Exceptions to policy vary by federal state. Parents can apply to local education authorities for a one-year delay in their child's enrollment for medical or psychological reasons. | The policy changed in individual federal states, for example in Baden-Württemberg and North Rhine-Westphalia. In these federal states, the changes involved the postponement of cut-off dates or parental involvement in school enrollment decisions. | Varies by federal state. In general, promotion is based on academic progress. |
| Hong Kong SAR | Children are eligible to participate in primary education if they are 5 years and 8 months old by September 1. | – | No change | Generally automatic promotion with occasional exceptions for educational reasons at the discretion of school heads. |
| Hungary | Children begin school if they are 6 years old by August 31. | Parents may request that their child spend one extra year in preschool. Approval is granted by the local educational authority. Parents may also request that their child begin school before the age of 6 if warranted by the child's development. | School age of entry (6–8 years old) was defined in 2011. | Automatic promotion in Grades 1–4. |
| Iran, Islamic Rep. of | Children must be 6 years old by September 21 to begin school. | Children must be 7 years old to enroll in some private schools. | No change | Promotion is dependent on academic progress for Grades 1–6. |
| Ireland | Children may start school from their fourth birthday, and must start before by sixth birthday. Children complete two grades of early primary education (Junior Infants and Senior Infants) before they begin Grade 1. Consequently, children are typically aged between 6 and 8 when they begin Grade 1 (First Class). | In recent years, the percentage of children beginning school at age 5 has increased, while the percentage beginning at age 4 has decreased. The expansion of the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) program has contributed to this change. | No change | Automatic promotion in most cases. Children should only repeat a year for educational reasons and in exceptional circumstances. |

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|------------|--|--|---|---|
| Israel | Children begin school during the calendar year of their sixth birthday. | Parents may apply for a delay in beginning schools if they feel their child is not ready. Ideally, the kindergarten teacher, an educational psychologist, and parents all agree about these decisions, but the parents have the final say. | No change | Automatic promotion in most cases, though students may be retained in exceptional circumstances. |
| Italy | Children begin school during the calendar year of their sixth birthday. | Parents can choose to have their child begin school earlier if they reach age 6 by April 30 of the relevant school year. | No change | Automatic promotion except for extraordinary cases with parental support. |
| Jordan | Children must be 5 years and 8 months old by September 1 to begin school. | Follows policy | No change | For Grades 1–3, students who fail Arabic language or mathematics may repeat a grade with parental consent. For Grade 4, promotion is dependent on academic progress. Students cannot repeat Grade 4 twice. However, students who are absent for more than 20% of the school year without a legal reason will repeat the Grade 4, regardless of their total number of repetitions. |
| Kazakhstan | Children must begin school during the calendar year of their sixth birthday. | Children with special education needs can begin school between the ages of 6 and 10. | Beginning in 2019, children must begin schooling during the calendar year of their sixth birthday. Before the amendment parents could choose to enroll their child in school between 6 or 7 years of age. | Automatic promotion for Grade 1 students. Promotion dependent on academic progress for students in Grades 2–11. |
| Kosovo | Children begin school during the calendar year of their sixth birthday. | Follows policy | – | No policy |
| Latvia | Children begin school during the calendar year of their seventh birthday. | Children may start Grade 1 at age 6 or 8 according to the wishes of the parents, based on the opinion of a family doctor. | No change | Promotion is dependent on academic progress. |
| Lithuania | Children begin school during the calendar year of their seventh birthday. Children who attended a preprimary program 1 year earlier can begin school at age 6. | Follows policy | No change | Decisions dependent on academic progress may be made at the school level for students in Grades 1–4. |
| Macao SAR | Children must be 6 years old by December 31 to begin school in September of that calendar year. | Follows policy unless a case is authorized by the Education and Youth Development Bureau (DSEDJ). | No change | Automatic promotion for Grades 1–4 unless parents and school agree that retention would be beneficial for the student's development or the student's attendance does not meet requirements. |
| Malta | Children begin primary school in the calendar year of their fifth birthday. | Follows policy | No change | Automatic promotion during compulsory education. Students are only retained in exceptional cases with parental consent. |
| Montenegro | Children begin school during the calendar year of their sixth birthday. | Parents may request to enroll their child before age 6 or request a one-year delay in enrollment. A commission comprising a pediatrician, a school psychologist, and an educator or a teacher must approve all requests. | No change | Automatic promotion for Grades 1–4. Promotion dependent on academic progress for Grades 5–9. |
| Morocco | Children must be 6 years old by the end of March to begin school in September. | Most children begin school at the age of 6 but some parents can choose to enroll their children at the age of 7 as allowed. | No change | Promotion is dependent on academic progress. |

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|------------------|--|--|--|--|
| Netherlands | Children must begin kindergarten on the first school day of the month after their fifth birthday. Most children are 6 years old when they begin Grade 1. | Most children start preprimary school (ISCED Level 0, kindergarten year 1) the day they turn 4 years old. | No change | Automatic promotion for Grades 1–4. However, schools can make decisions about promotion or retention of students depending on academic progress and in consultation with parents. |
| New Zealand | Children must attend primary school from their sixth birthday, but they have the right to be enrolled in school from the age of 5. | While most parents enroll their child at age 5, some delay until the child's sixth birthday when the parent is legally required to enroll their child. Once enrolled regular attendance is required regardless of starting age. | Since January 1, 2020 state and state-integrated schools can, after consulting with their teachers, parents, and local early learning services, enforce a "cohort entry policy." There are 2 entry points per school term: one on the first day and one at the mid-point of the term for schools implementing this policy. Schools can still choose to have continuous entry whereby children begin on or near their fifth birthday. | Automatic promotion. Retention in special circumstances with both schools and parents involved in making the decision. |
| North Macedonia | Children begin school during the calendar year of their sixth birthday. | Follows policy | No change | Automatic promotion for Grades 1–5. Promotion dependent on academic progress for Grades 6–9. |
| Northern Ireland | Children who turn 4 between September 1 and July 1 must begin school the following September. | There is no current process to defer a child's school starting age. Officials are, however, currently examining options around deferral of school starting age with a view to bringing forward legislation. | No change | Generally automatic promotion. |
| Norway (5) | Children start school during the calendar year of their sixth birthday. | Parents of children who turn 5 between January 1 and March 31 can ask for early enrollment. It is also possible to ask for delayed enrollment. The decisions are made on the basis of recommendations from kindergarten and the municipal pedagogical psychological services. | No change | Automatic promotion for all grades. |
| Oman | Children should be 5 years and 8 months old by the end of August to begin school in September. | Children may be registered in Grade 1 up until they are 7 years old. | No change | Automatic promotion for Grades 1–4. |
| Poland | Children must start school during the calendar year of their seventh birthday. | Parents may request early enrollment for 6-year-old children who have completed a one-year preparatory preprimary program or hold a school readiness certificate from a counseling and guidance center. Parents may also request approval from the principal to defer enrollment for 1 year or more with a certificate recommending education for children with special needs. | In 2015, the age of school entry was lowered to age 6. In 2016, it was raised back to age 7 with an option to enroll at age 6. Currently, 6-year-olds attend one year of preprimary education. | Automatic promotion for Grades 1–3. Pupils may repeat a year only in exceptional cases where this is justified by the level of their development, achievements or health condition. Dependent on academic progress for Grades 4–8. Students who receive up to 2 unsatisfactory marks can take retake exams. In principle, if they fail in the retake, they are not promoted to the higher grade. However, the teaching council of the school may conditionally promote a pupil who has received the unsatisfactory mark in 1 subject only. |
| Portugal | Children begin school during the calendar year of their sixth birthday. Children must be 6 years old by mid-September to begin school that September. | Parents or legal guardians can ask for conditional enrollment in primary school. | No change | Automatic promotion from Grade 1 to 2, and dependent on academic progress from Grades 2–4. |

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|--------------------|---|--|---|---|
| Qatar | Children begin school during the calendar year of their sixth birthday. | Even though the official policy is that students can begin school in the year when they turn 6 years old, children may begin primary school later because their parents feel they will benefit from being more mature. | No change | No policy |
| Russian Federation | Children must be 6 years old by March 1 (or 6.5 years old by September 1) to begin school. | Parents are allowed to choose when to enroll their child, but the child should not be older than 8 years old. Children who will be under the age of 6.5 by September 1 may be admitted after a request from parents and consent from the school principal. Parents have the right to send their children to school at 7 years old and older if they want the child to be more mature upon entry, or for health reasons. | No change | Automatic promotion for Grade 1, dependent on academic progress for Grades 2–4. |
| Saudi Arabia | Children must be 6 years old by the first day of school year. | Follows policy | No change | Students in Grades 1 and 2 are assessed using formative assessment tools and are promoted to the next grade if they meet 75% of the evaluation criteria in each subject. Students in Grades 3 and higher are assessed using formative and summative assessment tools and must meet 50% of the evaluation criteria in each subject to be promoted to the next grade. |
| Serbia | Children must be 6.5–7.5 years old by September 1 in the year when they begin school. | Children can begin school 1 year earlier, but only with approval from a school psychologist and pedagogue. Children can postpone beginning school for one year, based on the opinion of the interdepartmental commission (psychologists, special needs teachers, and social workers), who may support the need to delay and propose measures of additional education and social support for the child. | No change | No policy |
| Singapore | Children begin school if they are 6 years old by the day before the first day of school (e.g., January 2). Children who turn 6 years old on January 2 through January 1 the following year begin school the next academic year. | Parents may decide to delay their child's entry if the child has been medically assessed and deemed not ready at the legal age of admission or professionally diagnosed as having special educational needs or a developmental delay. Parents of children with birthdays on January 1 (who may therefore enter school 1 year earlier than peers born in the same year) may request to delay entry for 1 year if they feel the child will benefit from being more mature. | No change | Generally automatic promotion for Grades 1–4. However, the principal has discretion, in consultation with the students' parents, to retain a student if there are extenuating circumstances (e.g., prolonged absence from school due to illness). |
| Slovak Republic | Children must be 6 years old by August 31 to begin school in September, unless granted a postponement. | Enrollment may be delayed or advanced based on psychological evaluation and professional recommendations, which may be initiated by parents. | No change | Promotion is dependent on academic progress. |

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|----------------------|---|---|--|---|
| Slovenia | Children begin school during the calendar year of their sixth birthday. | Enrollment may be delayed by no more than 1 year upon parents' or doctors' recommendations. The final decision is made by the head teacher at the recommendation of a committee (including counsellors, school physicians, and teachers). | No change | Generally automatic promotion for Grades 1–6, but retention may occur due to poor academic progress, illness, moving, or other reasons. Retention is proposed by parents and confirmed by school agreement. When parents do not agree, the teachers' board can decide to retain due to poor academic progress. |
| South Africa | Children must begin school in the calendar year of their seventh birthday. | Follows policy | No change | Promotion is dependent on academic progress. Students who do not meet the requirements for promotion can progress to the next grade in order to prevent the student being retained in the Foundation Phase for longer than 4 years, excluding Grade R. A student who is not ready to perform at the expected level and who has been retained in the first phase for 4 years or more and who is likely to be retained again in the second phase for 4 years or more should receive the necessary support in order to progress to the next grade. |
| Spain | Children begin school during the calendar year of their sixth birthday. | Follows policy | No change | Promotion is dependent on academic progress. In Grades 1–6 students may repeat only 1 grade. |
| Sweden | Children begin school during the calendar year of their seventh birthday. Children begin preschool class during the calendar year of their sixth birthday. | Children may begin first grade in the year when they turn 8 years old, if there are special reasons or needs. Parents have to make a request of deferred school attendance and the issue must be examined by the municipality. Parents may also request for their child to start school in the year when she or he turns 6 years old. | In the 2018–2019 school year it became mandatory for children to attend preschool class. About 95% of all 6-year-old children in Sweden have attended preschool class for many years, so policy change has not impacted practice much. | Automatic promotion for Grades 1–9. In special cases, the principal can decide about promotion or retention for a certain student. |
| Türkiye | Children can begin school if they are at least 5.75 years old by September 30. | Children may begin school at age 5.5 if requested by parents. Children older than 5.75 can also postpone enrollment based on recommendation of the principal and parents. | No change | Generally automatic promotion in primary school. However, students who have not reached the desired level of proficiency can be retained once during the primary school at the written requests of their parents. |
| United Arab Emirates | Children enrolling in primary (First Stage) Grade 1 must be six years old on or before August 31, for schools starting in September. Children enrolling in Grade 1 in schools starting in April, must be six years old on or before March 31. | Any parental discretion on the age at which a student enters primary school requires permission from the school's education regulator at the federal/local level. | Changes to the age of entry policy have been made according to the Ministry of Education Ministerial Resolution No. (24) for the year 2021, concerning updates to the age of acceptance of students into public and private schools. | Generally automatic promotion for students in Grades 1–4. Promotion to a higher grade is made after the student meets all the school's assessment, and attendance, requirements. |
| United States | Varies by state, but each state requires children to begin school between set ages (typically 5–8). | Children typically begin kindergarten at age 5, but parents can postpone start of school until the state mandated compulsory school age. | No change | Varies by state and district. Some states require test-based retention in Grade 3 for students who do not meet grade-level requirements in reading. Some districts set their own requirements. |
| Uzbekistan | Children can begin school during the year in which they turn 7. | Follows policy | Before May 2020, children could begin school at age 6 or 7. | No policy |

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|----------------------------------|--|--|---|--|
| Benchmarking Participants | | | | |
| Ontario, Canada | Children must attend school in September if they turn 6 on or before September 1. Children with sixth birthdays before December 31 may also begin school in September. | Parents may choose to enroll their children in the publicly funded education system in year one of Kindergarten (commonly known as Junior Kindergarten) in September of the calendar year in which they turn 4 years old. Parents may also choose to enroll their children in year two of Kindergarten (commonly known as Senior Kindergarten) in September of the calendar year in which they turn 5 years old, regardless of whether they attended year one of Kindergarten. Some students may start school in year one at 3 years old if their birthday is between September 1 and December 31. | No change | No policy |
| Quebec, Canada | Children who reach the age of 6 before October 1 of the current school year. | Although official policy states that children may enter school the year they celebrate their sixth birthday (first year of elementary school), the vast majority of parents in Quebec enroll their child in kindergarten at 5 years of age. | No change | No policy |
| Moscow City, Russian Federation | Children must be 6 years and 6 months old by September 1 to begin school, with the exception of children with medical conditions. | At the request of a child's parents (or legal representatives), the founder of the educational organization has a right to allow a child's enrollment in educational programs for primary general education at an earlier or later age. Children generally begin primary school at age 7. | No change | Promotion is dependent on academic progress. Students must pass an assessment at the end of each grade. Students with unsatisfactory performance can complete remedial work within a certain period of time. If the remedial work is not completed, the student may be retained. |
| Abu Dhabi, UAE | Same as United Arab Emirates | | | |
| Dubai, UAE | Same as United Arab Emirates | | | |