



Cohort entry proposal - What are your thoughts?

Currently students are able to enter school as soon as they turn 5. This is known as a continuous entry. Cohort entry would mean that students begin school in groups, once they have turned 5.

For this change to take place we need to check in with our community to make sure that they understand the reasons, are aware of the impacts for them and the benefits and issues that we have considered for our tamariki.

SNBS is proposing that we change from a continuous entry to a cohort entry from Term 2 2020.

Below are the details to the changes in the Education Act surrounding this.

From 1 January 2020, changes made to the Act (through the Education Amendment Act 2019) take effect so that:

- children will be able to start school in cohorts but only after they have turned 5
- there will be 2 entry points per term, one on the first day of term, and one at a mid-point during a term.

If a school adopts a new cohort entry policy, only children over 5 will be able to start school on the first day of term, or at a mid-point during a term.

Our proposal is that we have 2 entry points for cohorts each term, the beginning of each term and mid term (making 8 entry points per year).

The possible dates for these would be as below:

2020 mid- term dates for schools implementing cohort entry

TERM	START OF TERM DATE	MID-TERM DATE*	END OF TERM DATE
1	7/02/2020**	9/03/2020	9/04/2020
2	28/04/2020	2/06/2020 (Tuesday)	3/07/2020
3	20/07/2020	24/08/2020	25/09/2020
4	12/10/2020	16/11/2020	18/12/2020

Benefits to Cohort Entry

Cohort entry is about helping children to settle better in school. There's evidence that starting school alongside other children helps children build relationships and supports a smoother entry to school life.

Schools that are already using cohort entry believe it offers their kids the best start to their school life. It can also mean fewer disruptions for new entrant teachers, who can prepare for groups of children arriving on a specific date, rather than on an individual and ad hoc basis through the year.

It can also be less disruptive for the children already in the classroom as they are not having interruptions to their learning on an almost daily basis while the new children learn the routines of the classroom. The teacher is often taking time to teach routines to the new children rather than having the time spent on the learning of the existing children already in the classroom.

Things to consider

This is a change to the way of thinking around beginning school in New Zealand. The current continuous entry is almost a 'right of passage' when a child turns 5 that they begin school. The changes with current brain development research and pedagogy has impacted this in recent years with some parents choosing to hold their child's enrolment back somewhat and not be in a hurry for their child to start as soon as they turn 5.

Childcare and OSCAR subsidies

Families are still eligible for Ministry of Education ECE subsidies, including 20 Hours ECE, until their child turns 6 or is enrolled in school.

Through the Ministry of Social Development, children over the age of 5 remain eligible for the childcare subsidy and children under the age of 5 are eligible for the OSCAR subsidy.

We are interested to hear from you with any thoughts, both for and against this proposal. Please email Krystyn (krystyn@snbs.school.nz) or Sue (principal@snbs.school.nz) by the end of November. You are welcome to talk to them about any questions or concerns this proposal raises for you.

Ngā mihi nui

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