

Cohort Entry at

Shirley Primary School



At Shirley Primary School we are deeply committed to ensuring children have the best possible start to school life, and experience a positive transition from Early Childhood Education.

The early years at school are so important and for this reason, we use a cohort entry approach.

We look forward to being part of your child's journey!

What is cohort entry?

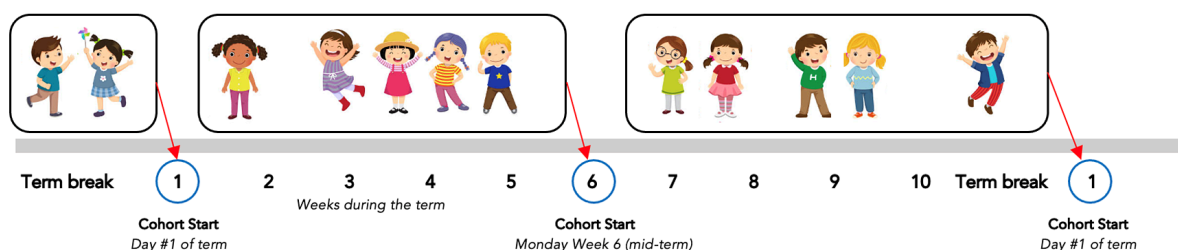
Cohort entry is when new entrant children start school in groups through the year rather than on their fifth birthday. The Ministry of Education and Education Review Office are encouraging schools to take this approach.

How does cohort entry work?

New entrants start school in cohorts but only after they have turned five.

There are two entry points per term, one on the first day of term, and one at a mid-point during a term (usually the Monday of the 6th week). These dates are notified to schools on the Ministry of Education website.

This image below shows how children turning 5 become a Cohort group, and start school together:



What are the 2025 Cohort Entry Dates?

Term	Start of Term Date	Mid-Term Entry Date	End of Term
1	03/02/2025 Cohort 1	10/03/2025 Cohort 2	11/04/2025
2	28/04/2025 Cohort 3	26/05/2025 Cohort 4	27/06/2025
3	14/07/2025 Cohort 5	18/08/2025 Cohort 6	19/09/2025
4	06/10/2025 Cohort 7	10/11/2025 Cohort 8	16/12/2025

Pre-visits and parent information sessions will be scheduled prior to a child starting and we encourage attendance at these. Our office team will confirm these pre visit dates and times.

Please contact the office at info@shirleyprimary.school.nz if you have any queries.

What are the benefits of Cohort Entry?

In short, cohort entry helps children settle into school life and routines better.

The Education Review Office found the following benefits of Cohort Entry:

- Supports the emotional wellbeing of young children as they start school in groups, sometimes with friends from early learning. For

some children, this meant they felt like they belonged at school, were less anxious, and settled quickly into school routines.

- Supports learning for new children as teachers can teach without the constant interruption of new students arriving any time during the year.
- Helps whānau connect with other whānau and the school as school visits and activities can be scheduled so parents can come together in groups.
- Helps schools to plan children's transitions from early childhood to school, making the experience better for children and whānau.

Full ERO Guide Here:



ERO: A Guide for Parents Sending their Child to a Cohort Entry School:



Starting School Together: A Guide for Parents Sending their Child to a Cohort Entry School

Children in Aotearoa have usually started school on or just after their fifth birthday, but these days not every school does this. Since 2018, schools have had the option of cohort entry, where small groups of children start school together, at specific times during the year. This can change how and when your child starts school.

This short guide for whānau and parents draws on ERO's new report, *Starting Schools Together: What Do We Know?* to provide insights about what cohort entry means for how your child transitions from early learning to a cohort entry school. This guide will help you understand:

- what cohort entry is
- how many schools are using cohort entry
- why schools are choosing cohort entry
- what you need to know about if your child starts at a cohort entry school.

What is cohort entry?

Until recently, children in Aotearoa started school on their fifth birthday, or on any school day after that, as long as they started school by their sixth birthday. Recent changes by Government have given schools another way to enrol children, called cohort entry. This approach reduces the days children can start school to eight times a year, twice per term.

How many schools are using cohort entry?

At the start of 2022, 7 percent of schools around Aotearoa had adopted cohort entry.

Although these schools are more likely to be higher decile, urban, and have rolls of more than 100 students, ERO also found cohort entry in schools in rural areas, lower decile communities, and small schools. This means there could be a cohort entry school in your area.

Why are schools moving to cohort entry?

Schools told ERO they adopted cohort entry because it would benefit new entrants and their whānau. Cohort entry:

- supports the emotional wellbeing of young children as they start school in groups, sometimes with friends from early learning. For some children, this meant they felt like they belonged at school, were less anxious, and settled quickly into school routines
- supports learning for new children as teachers can teach without the constant interruption of new students arriving any time during the year
- helps whānau connect with other whānau and the school as school visits and activities can be scheduled so whānau can come together in groups
- helps schools to plan children's transitions from early childhood to school, making the experience better for children and whānau.

Interestingly NZ is the only OECD country that allows new entrants to begin school on any day of the week.

2025 dates for schools implementing cohort entry

TERM	START OF TERM DATE	MID-TERM START DATE	END OF TERM DATE
1	7 February 2025	10 March 2025	11 April 2025
2	28 April 2025	26 May 2025	27 June 2025
3	14 July 2025	18 August 2025	19 September 2025
4	6 October 2025	10 November 2025	19 December 2025

2026 dates for schools implementing cohort entry

TERM	START OF TERM DATE	MID-TERM START DATE	END OF TERM DATE
1	9 February 2026	9 March 2026	2 April 2026
2	20 April 2026	1 June 2026	3 July 2026
3	20 July 2026	24 August 2026	25 September 2026
4	12 October 2026	16 November 2026	18 December 2026

Source:

<https://www.education.govt.nz/school/school-terms-and-holiday-dates/more-information-about-setting-term-dates/#cohort>

FAQ's

My child turns 5 the day after a cohort entry date, can they begin a day earlier with the cohort?

Unfortunately not. Children in New Zealand can't start school until they are 5 years old.

Will this affect my ECE funding (20 free hours)?

No, Children can remain at their ECE until the cohort entry date after their fifth birthday and they will continue to receive funding to attend ECE until they start school.

It is important to communicate with your early learning service so they know the school enrolment date. Please refer to the cohort entry dates.

Will my child start as a Year 1 or Year 0?

Children enrolling during Term 1 (at start of term or midterm cohorts) are considered Year One students for the year.

Children enrolling from the start of Term two onwards are generally Year Zero for the remainder of the year and become Year One students the following year. As always, whānau discussion is had at transition points to determine best year level going forward taking into account academic and social elements.

How can I best prepare my child for school?

Our new entrant teachers are warm and friendly and our school is a supportive and welcoming environment. Although it can feel daunting sending your child off to school, there are some things you can do to help with the transition.

There is no set list of what a child should be able to do when they start school, but supporting your child to develop social/emotional and self-management skills is one of the best things you can do to help:

Social and Emotional Skills

Treating themselves and others with care - using good manners - taking turns/sharing/waiting - listening to others, speaking respectfully - confidence to have a go/try something new.

Self-Management/Personal Independence

Tidying up after themselves - taking responsibility for their belongings - carrying their own school bag (start when they are at pre-school) - opening lunch-boxes/food packets by themselves - using the toilet properly, blowing their nose - dressing themselves, putting shoes on/taking shoes off.

Transition Timeframe (shared with whānau on enrolment):

1. Enrolment meeting with Principal
2. Coffee and Intro with NE kaiako in the class space before school (Sandra will organise a time)
3. 3 transition visits (See below)

Visits: 2 weeks before start date

Thursday Week 1; Monday and Thursday Week 2

- Visit 1: 8:30am - 11am
- Visit 2: 8:30am - 11am
- Visit 3: 8:30am - 12:30pm