



<b>Policy Name: School Starting Age for Reception and Year I in Government Schools</b>	
<b>Policy Code:</b>	<b>ED17</b>
<b>Approved in:</b>	<b>May 2013</b>
<b>Next Review in:</b>	<b>May 2016</b>
<b>Cross References:</b>	
This policy should be cross-referenced with the following: Education Law (2010 revision); DES Admissions Policy; Early Childhood Assistance Programme (ECAP) Funding Policy (2013); SEN Code of Practice;	

**INTRODUCTION:**

The Education Law (2010 revision) serves to establish the minimum age at which students may be admitted or retained in Reception and Year I:

“In relation to government schools no pupil shall be admitted to or retained in -

- a) a reception class before he has obtained the age of three years and nine months or a primary school before he has attained the age of four years and nine months”

(Education Law (2010 revision) Part III Admission of Pupils, p. 10)

Prior to the 2012/13 school year, students were allowed to begin school at the minimum ages set within the Education Law (2010 revision). A transition to increase the age of entry into Reception and Year I to the age of four and five before 1 September, respectively, began in 2012/13.

Research (see appendix 2) supports the case that countries with a later compulsory school starting age have higher standards of achievement within their education systems, particularly when this is supported by high quality pre-compulsory school care and education programmes. In an effort to provide the best possible opportunities for children in the Cayman Islands education system and to ensure age-appropriate learning environments, this policy serves to formalise the change of age within the parameters established by the Education Law (2010 revision). An associated benefit of this change is that it facilitates fairer comparisons with the many other education systems where compulsory education starts at 5 years.

For the purpose of this policy a reception class means a class in a government school providing one year of pre-compulsory age care and education.

### **Aims:**

This policy aims to establish a revised starting age for compulsory schooling and Reception (where available) in the Government schools.

### **Policy statement**

#### **1. Compulsory school starting age**

- To be eligible for entry into a Year 1 class in a Government school, that is to begin their compulsory school education, a child must have attained the age of 5 years before 1st September in the year of intended entry.
- The Registration Officers and related personnel at the Department of Education Services require legal evidence of the prospective child's date of birth as well as all other required documentation for school registration in order to process applications.
- Registrations will not be processed until the parent has provided all the required documentation.

#### **2. Early entry into compulsory schooling**

In exceptional circumstances, applications from the parent of a student who may benefit from an early entry into compulsory schooling will be considered. Early entry must align with the parameters established in:

- The Education Law (2010 Revision).
- The SEN Code of Practice.

(See the Administrative Procedures below)

In a case where early admission to Government schools is considered appropriate, a child must meet the following criteria:

- Intellectual potential which exceeds two standard deviations (I.Q. = 130) above the mean for same- age peers.
- Evidence of prevailing social or emotional factors which would argue for early admission.

This policy supersedes the Early Admissions to Government Schools Policy (2011).

### **3. Reception starting age**

- To be eligible for entry into the reception programme in a Government school, a child must have attained the age of 4 years before 1st September in the year of intended entry.
- The Registration Officers and related personnel at the Department of Education Services require legal evidence of the prospective child's date of birth as well as all other required documentation for school registration.
- Registrations will not be processed until the parent has provided all the required documentation.

### **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:**

#### **The Ministry of Education will:**

- Establish policy in relation to the admission of students into Government schools
- The ECCE Unit and any other Unit will provide guidance and support for the DES admissions process as required

#### **The Department of Education Services will:**

- Publish media notification of the opening and closing dates of registration for Reception and Year 1 by 31 March each year
- Develop and administer registration processes, procedures and templates in line with policy and approved by the Chief Officer
- Monitor completed forms for accuracy, and compliance
- Assign students to schools according to published criteria
- Provide reports to the Ministry as required on registration progress and data

#### **The parents will:**

- Register their child at the Department of Education Services within the specified time frames
- Complete and submit a registration form to the Registration Officers at the Department of Education Services together with relevant documents
- Update the Registration Officers of any subsequent changes regarding initial information submitted

**Schools will:**

- Provide parents with copies of registration documents on request
- Liaise with the Registration Officers at the DES and collect the completed and approved registration documents for the children who will be starting at their school
- Contact parents and inform them of their child's place in the school
- Arrange for children to have the appropriate medical checks on first entry to school
- Hold parent meetings, with the support of the Ministry of Education and SSIOs, to induct children and their parents to school

## **ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES**

### **Early Entry to Government Schools**

In exceptional circumstances, applications from the parents of students who may benefit from an early entry into compulsory schooling will be considered. Early entry must align with the parameters established in:

- The Education Law (2010 Revision):  
“In relation to government schools no pupil shall be admitted to or retained in -
  - a reception class before he has obtained the age of three years and nine months or a primary school before he has attained the age of four years and nine months”  
(Education Law (2010 revision) Part III Admission of Pupils, p. 10)
- The SEN Code of Practice (2011)

### **Procedure**

- The parent applies in writing requesting that their child is considered for early entry.
- After reviewing the request, the Chief Education Officer (CEO) may direct the Senior School Improvement Officer for Special Education Needs to request a psychological assessment for the child.
- The CEO, in consultation with the Ministry of Education, and by delegation of the Education Council, will consider the results of the psychological assessment and make the final determination for early admission.
- This determination will be communicated to the parent in writing within 60 days from the written parent consent for the psychological assessment, as per the SEN Code of Practice.
- The parent may appeal the decision of the CEO, in writing, to the Education Council.

## Appendix I

### Registration Guide

<b>Reception Entry</b>				
Age range	Entry	Information	Action	Contact people
Under 4 years of age on 1 September	No entry to Government schools	ECAP funding can be offered to those who meet the age and income criteria	Supply parents with the ECAP form if their child is eligible	ECCE Unit 244-5724
4 years of age before 1 September in catchments with reception	Reception	No ECAP funding available where there is a place available within the catchment area or within a nearby school	Supply parents with registration forms and support them to complete	Registration/admission staff
4 years of age before 1 September in catchments without reception	Reception where space permits in the nearest school with reception	ECAP funding can be offered to those who meet the age and income criteria if no placement within a government school Reception programme can be provided.	Supply parents with registration forms and support them to complete these  Supply parents with the ECAP form if their child is eligible	ECCE Unit 244-5724  Registration/ admission staff
<b>Year 1 Entry</b>				
5 years and older 1 September	Y1 entry			Registration/ admission staff

## Appendix 2

### Research related to the benefits of a later school starting age

1. Bedard, Kelly and Elizabeth Dhuey. 2006. "The Persistence of Early Childhood Maturity: International Evidence of Long-Run Age Effects," *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 121(4): 1437-1472.
2. Datar, Ashlesha. 2006. "Does Delaying Kindergarten Entrance Give Children a Head Start?" *Economics of Education Review*, 25: 43-62.
3. Elder, Todd and Darren Lubotsky. 2009. "Kindergarten Entrance Age and Children's Achievement: Impacts of State Policies, Family Background, and Peers," *Journal of Human Resources*, 44: 641-683.
4. Puhani, Patrick, and Andrea Weber. 2007. "Does the Early Bird Catch the Worm? Instrumental Variable Estimates of Early Educational Effects of Age of School Entry in Germany," *Empirical Economics*, 32, 359-386.
5. Smith, Justin. 2007. "Can Regression Discontinuity Help Answer an Age-old Question in Education? The Effect of Age on Elementary and Secondary School Outcomes," *University of Manitoba Working Paper*.
6. Fredricksson, Peter and Björn Öckert. 2006. "Is Early Learning Really More Productive? The Effect of School Starting Age on School and Labor Market Performance," *Institute for Labour Market Policy Evaluation Working Paper*, 12.
7. Dhuey, Elizabeth and Stephen Lipscomb. 2008. "What Makes A Leader? Relative Age and High School Leadership," *Economics of Education Review*, 27(2): 173-183.
8. Crawford, Claire, Dearden, Lorraine and Meghir, Costas. 2007. "When You Are Born Matters: The Impact of Date of Birth on Child Cognitive Outcomes in England," *Institute for Fiscal Studies Research Paper*.