

DELAYED SCHOOL ENTRY

Background

The Vancouver School District acknowledges that every child enters the school system with a different set of skills, knowledge, and experiences. We believe that every child is capable of growth and achievement. A key underpinning is our commitment to supporting the continuous progress of each student based on their own individual needs, strengths, and interests.

There are typically two school entry points for children:

- Children may enter Kindergarten in September of the calendar year in which they turn 5 years old.
- As kindergarten is optional, some children may enter school for the first time in grade one, in September of the calendar year in which they turn 6 years of age.

This procedure provides guidance for school principals when a parent(s) is contemplating delaying their child's school entry.

Definitions

Delayed School Entry

Refers to students who wish to enter Kindergarten for the first time in September of the calendar year in which they turn 6 years old.

School Age

The age between the date on which a person is permitted under section 3 (1) of the *School Act* to enroll in an educational program provided by a board and the end of the school year in which the person reaches the age of 19 years.

Entry to educational program

Under the *School Act* 3 (1) Subject to subsections (2) and (3), a person who is resident in British Columbia must (a) enrol in an educational program [...] on the first school day of a school year if, on or before December 31 of that school year, the person will have reached the age of 5 years, [...] (2) A parent of a child referred to in subsection (1) (a) may defer the enrolment of his or her child until the first school day of the next school year.

Where parent(s) choose to defer their child's enrolment until the first school day of the next year, the student would enter grade one at that time, not kindergarten.

Calendar Year for School Entry

British Columbia uses a January-December calendar year to determine school entry. There will always be up to a one-year age range between students in the same cohort. Delaying school entry of a child who might normally be the youngest in the cohort now makes them the oldest in their cohort.

Procedures

1. The Principal of a school is responsible for administering and supervising the school including:
 - 1.1 the implementation of educational programs,
 - 1.2 the placement of students in the school
2. Under the *School Act* the principal is responsible for programming enrolled students.
3. During the typical Kindergarten registration period (when the child would be turning 5 for the following school year), principals are not to approve kindergarten entry for the following year when the child is turning 6. The District does not provide advance approval for delayed K entry because despite the parents' current wishes, they may ultimately decide to have their child start grade one the next year. Additionally, there may be a different principal at the school the following year or the family may end up going to a different school.
4. Parent(s) contemplating delaying their child's school entry and wishing to have their child enter kindergarten for the first time in September of the year they turn 6 years old, are advised to meet with the Principal of their regular catchment school to discuss their child's needs.
 - 4.1 The Principal is to meet with parent(s) to discuss their child's needs to ensure they are making the most informed decision for their child regarding school entry and that administrative and application procedures are followed appropriately.
5. Following meeting with the Principal, if the parent(s) decides to not enroll their child in Kindergarten and to delay school entry:
 - 5.1 The Principal will not issue any advance written or verbal guarantees of a kindergarten entry for the following September.
 - 5.2 The Principal will inform the parent(s) that they will need to arrange a follow-up meeting during the Kindergarten registration period of the following school year, when the child is turning 6, with the school's current principal (Between Nov 1- Jan 31)
 - 5.3 The principal will provide a written correspondence reflecting the parents(s) current request, a summary of the conversation, and document the requirement for the parents to arrange a further meeting the following September.
 - 5.3.1 A copy of this correspondence will be kept in the school records to be accessible for the following school year's organization.

- 5.4 The Principal will withdraw any application for kindergarten that may already have been made, and withdraw any entry made in MyEd.
- 5.5 The parent(s) will need to apply/reapply for school come the appropriate school year.
6. During the Kindergarten registration period of the following school year, when the child is turning 6, the parent(s) must meet with the regular catchment school's current principal (Between Nov 1- Jan 31). This meeting requirement applies also where the parent(s) did not previously consult with the District, assuming that the child would enter Kindergarten in the year they turned 6. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss the appropriate entry point for that September, based on the child's current developmental milestones. At that time, it will be determined whether it is appropriate to have the child enter grade 1 along with the children in their birth year cohort (age-appropriate placement), or whether entry into kindergarten is in fact appropriate for the child. The determination is made at the regular catchment school level, regardless of choice or cross-boundary applications pending.
- 6.1 As the District believe most learners are best placed with students of their own age cohort, administrative approval of a delayed school entry request is uncommon and should be done with thought and care.
- 6.2 Each situation will be examined on a case-by-case basis, bringing in other District departments when appropriate (i.e.. Learning Services) to determine the best educational placement for each student.
- 6.3 The final decision rests with the school principal and must be made based on the needs of the child.
- 6.4 Placement considerations to be discussed during parent meeting, as appropriate, might include:
- 6.4.1 Parent reasons for requesting delayed entry
- 6.4.2 Current learning and developmental profile of the child
- 6.4.3 Birthdate
- 6.4.4 Students with Identified Learning Needs
- 6.4.4.1 For children where there is a known developmental or learning need, Principals should consult with a VSB District Principal-Learning Services
- 6.4.4.2 School entry for students with a Ministry Designation may not be delayed without consultation with the Director of Instruction – Learning Services.
- 6.4.5 Range of development including behaviour and maturity

6.4.6 Any student safety/health concerns

6.4.7 Curriculum

6.4.7.1 The kindergarten curriculum presumes few pre-school skills and ability.

6.4.7.2 The current Kindergarten curriculum is strengths-based and features personalized learning meant to address each student's individual learning, social and emotional needs.

6.4.7.3 As Kindergarten is the first entry point for students and is optional, it is inappropriate to presume students enter school without any kindergarten readiness.

7. The principal has the authority and responsibility to make the final decision regarding educational program placements for students.

7.1 Where the student enrolls in a choice program such as French Immersion, or cross-boundary placement the principal of the regular catchment school will share the data reviewed to effect any preliminary decisions made regarding delayed school entry with the principal of the enrolling school. The enrolling school Principal has final authority regarding the students educational program and grade placement.

Reference: Section 3 School Act, BC School regulation 265 (Z)

Adopted: June 2023