

SECTOR CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAM

SCHOOL EXEMPTIONS



Information in this resource is based upon the NSW Department of Education's guidelines. This document is designed for community preschools other than KU preschools. A version specific to KU preschools is available through the KU intranet.

By law, all children in NSW must be in compulsory schooling by their 6th birthday. It is expected and desirable that children will begin school at the start of the school year. In very rare circumstances, where conditions exist that deem it necessary or desirable to delay enrolment for a year, an exemption can be applied for and may be granted. Any child not attending school by their 6th birthday must have a school exemption certificate.

What are the cut off dates for school exemption?

- ▶ A child who turns 6 on 1st October or later in a school year, could apply for and may be granted an exemption from being enrolled at and attending school on the basis of age.
- ▶ Children who turn 6 prior to the 1st of October can only apply for an exemption on the basis of disability, health, learning or social needs.

Process for applying for an exemption

- ▶ Families may apply as needed for an exemption from attendance at school (100 days or less) or exemption from enrolment at school. Within the exemption from school procedures, there are reasons listed that may be considered for granting exemptions.
- ▶ Families need to begin the process by approaching their local school to discuss their child's support needs with the Principal and any benefits or otherwise of applying for an exemption. Families should be encouraged to initiate contact with the school as early as possible in the year before their child turns 6. It is also possible for the family to link with a Wellbeing Officer within the Department of Education. This process could lead to a collaborative approach which enables the school's readiness to include the child following a school transition process.
- ▶ School exemptions are submitted by the Principal of the child's local school and are approved by the Department of Education, if it is deemed in the child's best interests to remain for another year at preschool.
- ▶ The Department of Education exemption from school procedures state that the family may be requested to provide evidence of full or part time preschool enrolment for the year that the child is turning 6. Please note where preschool enrolment is being requested by a family for a full operational year, that the preschool will also require evidence of an exemption certificate from the Department of Education prior to the child's 6th birthday for attendance at preschool to continue.
- ▶ In some instances, the school may seek documentation relating to the child's developmental support needs such as a written diagnosis, individual learning plan or a letter from a paediatrician or psychologist.

For further information on the school exemption process, please contact the child's local school or the local Educational Services team. Your local Educational Services team can be contacted on 131 536.

Links to further information about school exemption and starting school:

- ▶ https://policies.education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/associated-documents/exempt_gui.pdf
- ▶ <https://education.nsw.gov.au/public-schools/going-to-a-public-school/primary-schools/starting-school#When1>

SCHOOL EXEMPTIONS

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Implications for Preschools:

Preschool High Learning Support Needs (HLSN) funding for children 6 years old and above

- ▶ Where a child is 6 years old and above, an exemption from school must be in place for the child to be eligible to receive annual HLSN funding.
- ▶ For children who turn 6 before 1 October in that preschool year, this documentation must be uploaded with the child's application.
- ▶ For children who are in the process of obtaining a school exemption certificate, HLSN applications will be reviewed each quarter until a school exemption certificate is provided. Application reviews are submitted as a variation through the ECCMS portal.
- ▶ When an exemption is obtained, a copy of the exemption certificate needs to be submitted as a variation through ECCMS within two weeks of the preschool receiving it.
- ▶ All other HLSN application, variation and spending rules apply as detailed in the Disability and Inclusion Program guidelines.

Priority of access for preschool is outlined by the NSW Department of Education Start Strong guidelines:

- ▶ <https://education.nsw.gov.au/early-childhood-education/operating-an-early-childhood-education-service/grants-and-funded-programs/start-strong/start-strong-guidelines>

You can talk with your Preschool Inclusion Consultant about more detailed questions around school exemptions.