



Admission Age Guide for KG and Grade 1 Students

December 2025

The Education, Human Development and Community Development Council has announced the adoption of a new admission age policy for enrollment in Kindergarten and Grade 1, following a recommendation from the Ministry of Education based on a detailed study. The decision will be implemented starting from the 2026-2027 academic year.

1: What has changed?

Under the new policy, the following has been approved:

Adoption of 31 December of the enrollment year as the date for calculating the admission age in schools and kindergartens whose academic year starts in August or September, based on the following:

- The student must reach 3 years of age by 31 December of the enrollment year → to register in Pre-Kindergarten
- The student must reach 4 years of age by 31 December of the enrollment year → to register in Kindergarten 1
- The student must reach 5 years of age by 31 December of the enrollment year → to register in Kindergarten 2
- The student must reach 6 years of age by 31 December of the enrollment year → to register in Grade 1

Continuation of adopting 31 March as the date for calculating the admission age in schools and kindergartens whose academic year starts in April, based on the following:

- The student must reach 4 years of age by 31 March of the enrollment year → to register in Kindergarten 1
- The student must reach 5 years of age by 31 March of the enrollment year → to register in Kindergarten 2
- The student must reach 6 years of age by 31 March of the enrollment year → to register in Grade 1

This change applies to Kindergarten and Grade 1 starting from the 2026-2027 academic year to:



Public Schools



Private Schools



Nurseries and Early Childhood Centers

2: Why was the admission cut-off age revised?

01

To achieve fairness and equal opportunities for all students

02

To support students' educational and social readiness

03

To ensure stability in academic progression and avoid disruptions to learning pathways

The decision was issued based on a recommendation from the Ministry of Education, as part of ongoing efforts to develop educational policies based on scientific methodologies. This followed a comprehensive technical and educational review that was based on:



Analysis of academic data for more than 39,000 students in schools



International benchmarking and studies of best practices



Extensive research on all aspects of children's readiness for early education



3: Who does the new cut-off apply to?

The new school admission age cut-off will take effect starting from the 2026–2027 academic year, and will apply to students who are not enrolled in the 2025–2026 academic year.

It will not apply to:

Students enrolled during the 2025–2026 academic year in schools, nurseries, or early childhood centers, whether public or private. Accordingly, students currently enrolled in the 2025–2026 academic year will continue in their existing grade without any change.

4: Enrollment Eligibility for Public and Private Schools Starting in August/September for the 2026 - 2027 Academic Year for Students Not Registered in Any School System

From Birth Date	To Birth Date	Ministry of Education Curriculum	American, Australian, Canadian & Other Foreign Curricula	British Curriculum**	French Curriculum
01/01/2023	31/12/2023	Not Applicable	Eligible for Pre-Kindergarten	Eligible for Foundation Stage 1 (FS1)	Eligible for Petite Section (PS)
01/01/2022	31/12/2022	Eligible for Kindergarten 1 (KG1)	Eligible for Kindergarten 1 (KG1)	Eligible for Foundation Stage 2 (FS2)	Eligible for Moyenne Section (MS)
*01/01/2021	*31/12/2021	Eligible for Kindergarten 2 (KG2)	Eligible for Kindergarten 2 (KG2)	Eligible for Year 1	Eligible for Grande Section (GS)
01/01/2020	31/12/2020	Eligible for Grade 1	Eligible for Grade 1	Eligible for Year 2	Eligible for Cours Préparatoire (CP)

Special Clarifications

*Children born between September 1st and December 31st 2021 who were not eligible for enrollment in 2025–2026 may register in either KG1 or KG2 in the 2026–2027 academic year.

** For Schools Following the British Curriculum (FS1 & FS2):

- Children born between September 1st and December 31st who do not turn three by the start of the school year may be assessed by schools, in consultation with parents, for readiness to join FS1. If not found ready, they may enroll in FS1 the following academic year. This applies annually starting from 2026–2027.

- For children born between September 1st 2022 and December 31st 2022, a one-time transitional measure applies in 2026–2027. Schools and parents may jointly decide whether FS1 or FS2 is the most suitable placement.

5: Enrollment Eligibility for Public and Private Schools Starting in April for the 2026-2027 Academic Year for Students Not Registered in Any School System

From Birth Date	To Birth Date	Eligibility
01 / 04 / 2021	31 / 03 / 2022	Eligible for enrollment in Kindergarten 1 (KG1)
01 / 04 / 2020	31 / 03 / 2021	Eligible for enrollment in Kindergarten 2 (KG2)
01 / 04 / 2019	31 / 03 / 2020	Eligible for enrollment in Grade 1

6: Transfer of Students Between Schools or Curricula

In cases of student transfers between different schools and curricula or coming from abroad, the appropriate grade level for the student is determined based on the last grade level successfully completed, in accordance with approved procedures for certificate equivalency in the UAE, ensuring educational continuity and preventing disruption to academic progression.



Frequently Asked Questions

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01 **When will the new admission age date (December 31) be applied?**

The new admission age will be applied starting from the 2026-2027 academic year.

02 **Will the new admission age apply to all public and private schools, nurseries, and early childhood centers?**

Yes. The new admission age applies to all public and private schools, nurseries, and early childhood centers in the UAE.

03 **Will the new admission age affect students currently enrolled in schools during the 2025-2026 academic year?**

No. The change applies only to students not currently enrolled in any school system, and it does not result in any changes to students enrolled in the 2025-2026 academic year.

04 **How will this decision affect children who were not previously eligible for enrollment because their birth date falls between September 1st and December 31st, 2021?**

For children who were not previously eligible for enrollment because their birth date falls between September 1st and December 31st 2021, the option will be available to their guardians to register them in KG1 or KG2 in the 2026-2027 academic year.

Registration in private schools are based on the school's assessment of the child's readiness and the availability of seats.

05 My child was born between September 1 and December 31 and will not turn three by the start of the school year. Can they join FS1?

In schools following the British curriculum, the child's readiness may be assessed in consultation with parents. If found ready, the child may join FS1. If not, they may enroll in FS1 in the following academic year.

06 My child was born between September 1st and December 31st 2022. Should they join FS1 or FS2 in the academic year 2027–2026?

For the 2027–2026 academic year only, parents and schools may jointly decide whether FS1 or FS2 is the most suitable placement for children born between September 1st to December 31st 2022, based on the school's readiness assessment.

07 Can children born between September 1 and December 31 enroll in school or change their grade during the second/third term of the current 2025-2026 academic year?

No, because the date of implementation of the new admission age cut-off will begin from the 2026-2027 academic year. This applies to the following two cases:

- Students currently registered in schools: they must continue in their current grades, and they are not allowed to move to a higher grade during the second/third term.
- Children not registered in schools during the 2025-2026 academic year: they are not allowed to enroll in schools during the second term, even if they meet the new admission age.

The new admission cut-off age is limited to students not registered in any school system, in order to avoid any impact on academic progression.

08 Can a guardian withdraw their child from school after the start of the academic year, with the aim of considering them not registered in any school system in the following year, to change their grade or skip a grade?

No. A student is considered registered in an educational system from the time of enrollment in school (the start of the academic year) and continues to be counted as such until the end of the academic year, regardless of whether the guardian withdraws them later. Withdrawal of the student from school is not allowed to be considered a means to change their grade or skip a grade in the following year.

09 Can I register my child in KG2 or KG1 if I feel they are not ready for Grade 1, even if they turn 6 years old during the enrollment year?

No. For children not previously registered in any school system, once the child turns 6 years old by December 31st of the admission year, they are eligible for and must be registered in Grade 1, following the approved procedures and the results of their assessment interview.

10 Can I register my child in KG1 instead of KG2 if they are 5 years old and have never been enrolled in any school system?

For children not registered in any school system, registration for Kindergarten stages is based on the child's age in the year of enrollment and the results of the approved assessment interview. In general, a child who has completed 5 years of age by December 31st of the enrollment year should be registered in KG2.

An exception is provided during the 2026-2027 academic year only for children born between September 1st and December 31st 2021 who have never been registered in any school system may be registered in either KG1 or KG2, following the approved procedures and the results of the assessment interview.

11 What happens if a child reaches the required age a few days after 31 December of the admission year?

The child will be eligible for enrollment in the next academic year. The admission age cut-off dates are applied consistently across all schools to ensure fairness, consistency, and clarity in implementation.

12 Does the 31 December cut-off date apply to schools whose academic year starts in April?

No. Schools whose academic year begins in April will continue to apply 31 March as the admission age cut-off date, in accordance with their approved system. The 31 December cut-off date applies only to schools whose academic year starts in August or September.

13 How is the new admission age cut-off applied to students transferring between schools, between different curricula, or coming from abroad?

In cases where students transfer between schools, move between different curricula, or arrive from outside the country, the appropriate grade placement will be determined based on the last grade successfully completed. This is done in accordance with the approved procedures for curriculum and certificate equivalency within the country, ensuring continuity of the educational pathway and adherence to academic progression rules.