Enrolling for Kindergarten in 2015

Families in the Westmead Public School local catchment area who have a child turning 5 years of age on or before 31 July 2015 are invited to lodge an application for enrolment from September this year.

To enrol, your child’s Birth Date is between 1 August 2009 and 31 July 2010 and you reside in our local catchment area – a map is available on the school website: [http://www.westmead-p.schools.nsw.edu.au/](http://www.westmead-p.schools.nsw.edu.au/).

Please come to the school office to discuss your child’s application to enrol. Also, if you know of a local family with school age children please let them know.

Our friendly office staff is available to assist you with the enrolment process Mondays to Fridays between 9:30am and 2:00pm during school terms.

Do you have a child born in May, June or July?

If your child turns 5 years of age next May, June or July this means he/she will be very young for the grade (see newspaper article included later in this newsletter) and therefore you will be required to attend an additional information session with our Principal to determine school readiness.


_Mrs M Bridekirk, Deputy Principal K-2 and Mrs Jenni Taylor, Assistant Principal – Kindergarten_

_The following article regarding school starting age may be of interest to you._
Principals call for a national standard school starting age of five-and-a-half

- by Bruce McDougall
- From The Daily Telegraph
- August 30, 2014 12:00AM

NSW children will wait up to an extra year before they can start school under a plan from the country's peak primary principals body to introduce a standard national starting age of five-and-a-half.

The Australian Primary Principals' Association wants the age to be standardised across all states and territories now a national curriculum has been developed.

In NSW there can be a gap of 17 months between the youngest and eldest in the classroom. Children are permitted to start as young as four years and six months, and no older than six.

Under the proposed new standard, children would be at least five years old at the start of kindergarten.

President Norm Hart said five-and-a-half was the association's preferred starting age but parents could be allowed discretion to send their child six months earlier or later.

Principals are dismayed that agreement on a nationally consistent school starting age has not been on the agenda since the Abbott government was elected last September.

Educators, politicians and bureaucrats have not even been able to agree on what to call the first year of schooling — kindergarten in NSW.

Experts warn children should not start school before they turn five because those who attend formal lessons too early often fall behind their peers.

There is an international push towards later entry and early childhood teachers believe many students are too young for the classroom.

States and territories determine how old a child must be before starting school and that age varies widely.

Mr Hart said there was evidence in favour of allowing children the maximum time before entering school so they could engage in play and social activity. But the issue was not clear cut, he said.

"Everyone says we should have a standard starting age and fall into line — we would like to see it happen but it appears there is little political will to address it," he said.

"In many high performing education systems around the world the kids start school as late as seven.

"We think it should be about five-and-a-half with flexibility of six months either side. There is always scope for parental decision-making."

Federal Education Minister Christopher Pyne said setting a school starting age was the responsibility of the states and territories.

"There is currently no move by the states and territories to set a minimum starting age but if they wished to raise this matter they could take it to the Education Council, made up of all Australian Education Ministers," he said.

Children in Finland, which regularly makes the top five in OECD rankings, begin nine years of compulsory study at seven.

There is an international push towards later entry and early childhood teachers believe many students are too young for the classroom.
Experts argue there is no evidence suggesting that starting school before age five is of any benefit to children.

In the UK more than 120 leading educators launched a "too much, too soon" campaign, calling for formal schooling to be delayed until children turn six or seven because most four-year-olds were not ready.

A uniform starting age would help families who move between states — particularly those with children sitting Naplan in Year 3 and Year 5.

The Australian Parents Council has also argued for a standardised age and title for the foundation schooling year.

The Abbott government is on record as supporting a national school starting age but has not pressed ahead.

Proponents of a later start to school often cite the Scandinavian experience as proof that waiting until six or seven is better for learning.

Children in Finland, which regularly makes the top five in OECD rankings, begin nine years of compulsory study at age seven.

They receive four hours of formal teaching daily with a 15 minute break every hour.

The NSW Department of Education and Communities says the starting age is a decision for parents and suggests they discuss it with their child's preschool teacher or doctor.

Merrylands East Public School principal John Goh said the starting age was not an issue for his community. "We take kids at any primary starting age. We focus on the children when they arrive and start their learning journey irrespective of their cultural background or their ability."