



NZSTA
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Governance support resources

Cohort Entry Consultation

Schools may adopt and introduce a cohort entry policy to manage the start date of new entrants into the school. If adopted, this policy applies to ALL students aged 5 years who have not previously enrolled at a school and ensures that they may only be enrolled on a date determined by the policy. At a school where a cohort entry policy has been adopted a student may be enrolled after their fifth birthday on either a term start date, or a mid-term start date, according to the policy.

Introduction of cohort entry:

Before introducing cohort entry, school boards will need to develop a policy. [The Education and Training Act 2020 s65](#) requires that boards must take all reasonable steps to discover and consider the views of the parents and whānau of current and prospective students, employees of the board and local early childhood services, about the proposed policy and whether it is generally acceptable.

There is no prescribed way to consult with the school's community. The board should actively seek and genuinely consider the views of its community, incorporating local tikanga Māori and cultural factors. This does not necessarily mean 'resolution by agreement', however, the board takes account of stakeholders' opinion when making decisions which best support the engagement, progress, achievement and wellbeing of the school's students.'

This means boards must:

- Identify the stakeholders
- Consider the best approach (considering tikanga and cultural aspects) in consultation to allow and gain the most feedback
- Prepare a consultative document that adequately outlines cohort entry provisions and it's intended policy and includes an appropriate method of responding
- Consult with reasonable time for response
- Receive and deliberately consider all viewpoints
- If necessary, contact responders for further information or clarification
- Weigh the responses against what will benefit the school's students
- Make decisions and communicate them to all stakeholders

Possible ways to communicate include:

- Letter and paper-based survey
- Electronic note and survey
- Letter and seek written submissions
- Hui with whānau, hāpū or iwi
- Fono with Pasifika community
- Community meeting, or
- A mixture of above as is appropriate to each party

When adopting a cohort entry policy the board must take all reasonable steps to give notice of at least 1 term to the Secretary of Education (via its local MoE office), the parents and whānau of current and prospective students,

employees of the board and local early childhood services before the policy takes effect.

Removal of cohort entry

If a board currently has a cohort entry policy are considering whether to revoke the policy, the board must take all reasonable steps to discover and consider the views of the stakeholders, as above. It is essentially the same process for the board to undertake in reverse.

When revoking a cohort entry policy the board must take all reasonable steps to give notice of at least 1 term to the Secretary of Education (via its local MoE office), the parents and whānau of current and prospective students, employees of the board and local early childhood services before the policy ceases to have effect.

Useful links

Ministry of Education: [Cohort entry in schools](#)
[Cohort entry term dates](#)