

Compulsory school age

Starting school

In England and Wales, most local authorities have a policy of accepting children into school at the beginning of the term during which the child becomes five. However, the child does not have to attend school until the beginning of the term following their fifth birthday.

In **Northern Ireland**, a child who is four years old on or before 1 July in any year must start primary school on 1 September that year.

In **England**, from the school year beginning **September 2011**, local authorities must accept children into primary school in the September following the child's fourth birthday. However, parents may request that their child does not start school until later in the year or until reaching compulsory school age. A parent will also be able to request that a child attends school part-time until compulsory school age.