Cohort Entry at Queenstown Primary School / Te Kura Tuatahi o Tāhuna

We have reviewed when our New Entrant children begin school. Following this review, Queenstown Primary School (*Te Kura Tuatahi o Tāhuna*) will move to **Cohort Entry** from the beginning of **Term 1, 2026 (Monday 9th February)**. This means children will start with us either at the **beginning of the term** or at a **mid-term intake**.

We know that children who attend school visits and start alongside a group of peers experience a stronger sense of security, belonging, and connection from day one. For this reason, we are implementing Cohort Entry.

Benefits of Cohort Entry

- Smoother transition for children (tamariki)
- Stronger sense of belonging
- More effective teaching and learning
- Improved support for whānau (family)
- Increased administrative and operational efficiency
- Positive long-term learning outcomes
- A better start for children by establishing routines and expectations

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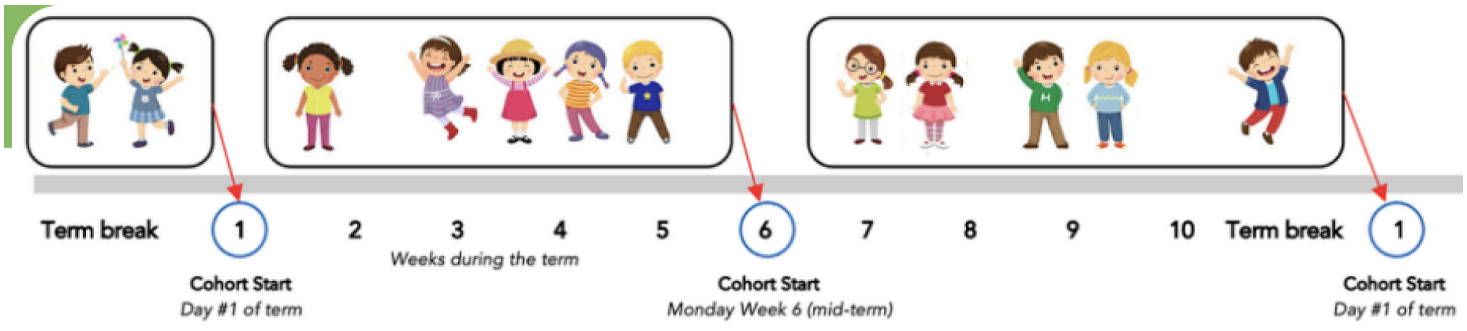
Please refer to the table below for **2026 Cohort Entry dates**.

Queenstown Primary School follows the New Zealand Ministry of Education's Cohort Entry policy. Children start school in groups, either at the **beginning** or **mid-way through each term**, as long as they have turned **5 years old before the intake date**.

Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4
○ **9th February 2026**	○ **20th April 2026**	○ **20th July 2026**	○ **12th October 2026**
○ **9th March 2026**	○ **2nd June 2026**	○ **24th August 2026**	○ **16th November 2026**



This shows how children are grouped based on when they turn five. It illustrates how they form a **Cohort group** with other children who have a birthday around the same time. Children will start school together as a group on the **Cohort entry date** following their fifth birthday.

Common Questions about Cohort Entry

Q: My child turns 5 after a cohort entry date. Can they start school on their birthday?
A: Unfortunately, no. Children can only start school on the next scheduled cohort entry date, not on their individual birthdays.

Q: My child turns 5 the day after a cohort entry date. Can they start a day earlier with the cohort?
A: Unfortunately, no. Children in New Zealand must be 5 years old before starting school and can only begin on the designated cohort entry date.

Q: Will this affect my Early Childhood Education (ECE) funding (20 free hours)?
A: No, your child can continue attending their early learning centre until the cohort entry date following their fifth birthday, and they will continue to receive funding until they officially start school. Please make sure to communicate your child's school start date with your early learning provider.

Q: When is the latest my child can start school?
A: In New Zealand, all children must start school by their 6th birthday. Please ensure that your child is enrolled before this date.

Q: My child is 5 and has been enrolled at another New Zealand school under a non-cohort entry policy. We're transferring to Queenstown Primary School. Do we need to wait for the next cohort entry date?
A: No, as your child has already been enrolled in another New Zealand school, they can start immediately at Queenstown Primary School.

Will my child start as a Year 1 or Year 0?

- Children who start during Term 1 (whether at the beginning or mid-term) will be classified as Year 1 students for that year.
- Children who start from the beginning of Term 2 onwards will be classified as Year 0 for the remainder of the year and will move into Year 1 the following year.

Preparing Your Child for School

Our dedicated teachers embody the values of Care, Respect, and Integrity in every interaction with your child. To support your child's transition to school, we encourage you to focus on developing their social, emotional, and self-management skills.

If you have any further questions, feel free to contact us.

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