

Exhibit 2: National Policies on Age of School Entry and Promotion

Reported by National Research Coordinators

Country	Official Policy on Age of Entry to Primary School	Based on Parental Discretion, Usual Practice on Age of Entry to Primary School	Changes to Age of Entry Policy Within the Past 10 Years	Policy on Promotion and Retention in Grades 1–8
Albania	Children must be 6 years old by August 31 to begin school in September.	Most children begin school at age 6, but some begin at age 7 because their parents feel they will benefit from being more mature.	No change	No policy
Armenia	Children begin school in the calendar year of their sixth birthday.	Follows policy	No change	No policy
Australia	Varies by state, but generally children begin school by age 6. Children in all states are expected to begin a pre-primary or Foundation Year (Preparatory, Transition, Kindergarten, Reception, or Preprimary) from between 4 years and 5 months and 5 years by January 1. Thus, minimum age at entry to primary school (Year 1) ranges from 5 years and 5 months to 6 years (as of January 1) across the states.	Most children begin school in the year following attainment of the minimum age, but children among the youngest in their cohort (born in the first 4–6 months of the calendar year) may start a year later based on either advice from preprimary staff or the judgment of parents, usually because of developmental reasons.	All states now include a full year of preprimary education within the primary school setting. Prior to 2014, children in South Australia began Year 0 (Reception) in the school term after their fifth birthday. Beginning in 2014, all children start at the beginning of the school year if they are 5 years old by May 1. The Northern Territory has also moved to a single point of entry at the start of the school year. Queensland introduced Year 0 (Preparatory) in 2007 and made it compulsory in 2017. Western Australia introduced Year 0 (Preprimary) in 2002 and made it compulsory in 2013.	Varies by state, but generally, automatic promotion in Grades 1–8.
Austria	Children begin school if they are 6 years old before September 1. For prematurely born children, the calculated date of birth may be used instead of the actual date of birth.	Parents may request earlier/later admission, but school authorities ultimately make this decision (in some cases, based on medical or psychological tests).	As of 2009, children must attend kindergarten the year before beginning primary school. This policy does not affect primary education but prolongs compulsory education.	Until 2018, promotion was automatic for Grades 1–3 and dependent on academic progress through upper secondary school. Beginning in 2019, promotion is only automatic for Grade 1, then dependent on academic progress.
Azerbaijan	Children begin school in September if they will be 6 years old by December 31.	Children typically begin school at age 6, but parents may delay enrollment until age 7.	Before June 12, 2018, children had to be 6 years old to begin school. Now children can begin school before age 6.	Promotion is automatic in the primary level (1–4) and the lower secondary level (5–9). No examinations are taken at Grades 1–9. Students may apply to finish school one year earlier at Grade 3, 8, or 10 and can apply only once in every school year. They need to meet 6 requirements to be approved, and the decisions will be made by the school principal, management, and teachers. No special examinations are taken for this process. If approved, the student will be at Grade 3, 8, or 10 in the first semester and at Grades 4, 9, or 11 in the second semester.
Bahrain	Children must be 6 years old by the start of the academic year to begin school.	Most children begin school at age 6. Children who enroll in school after age 6 take an examination for grade placement.	Since 2017, children born in November may begin school at the start of the academic year before their sixth birthday.	Automatic promotion for Grades 1–3. For Grades 4–8, students must achieve 60% in the 4 core subjects (mathematics, science, Arabic, and English) and 50% in the other subjects to progress to the next grade. In some cases, students who fail core subjects but pass Arabic may be promoted with a plan to ensure they pass the classes to which they are promoted.

Exhibit 2: National Policies on Age of School Entry and Promotion

Reported by National Research Coordinators

(Continued)

Country	Official Policy on Age of Entry to Primary School	Based on Parental Discretion, Usual Practice on Age of Entry to Primary School	Changes to Age of Entry Policy Within the Past 10 Years	Policy on Promotion and Retention in Grades 1–8
Belgium (Flemish)	Children begin school on September 1 of the calendar year of their sixth birthday.	Follows policy	In the past, children were required to attend at least 220 half-days in an accredited Dutch-language kindergarten before beginning school. Since the start of the 2018–2019 school year, children should attend at least 250 half-days. If a child does not meet this requirement, the primary school's class council decides whether the child begins school or remains in preprimary education for another year.	Promotion is dependent on academic progress across primary school and Grades 7–8. In primary school, students may repeat a maximum of 2 school years. If a student has obtained a certificate of primary education, they can go to the first grade A (Grade 7) or the first grade B of full-time secondary education. If students have not obtained a certificate of primary education by age 12, they may be automatically promoted to the first grade B. Grade B focuses on students with learning disabilities or students who are less apt at theoretical education and prefer practically-oriented education. When successfully finishing the first grade B, these students can either go to the prevocational year or to the first grade A (Grade 7).
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Children must be 6 years old by September 1 to begin school in September.	Entry may be postponed 1 or more years for children with psychophysical difficulties.	No change	No policy
Bulgaria	Children begin school during the calendar year of their seventh birthday.	Children may begin at age 6 at the discretion of their parent/guardian.	No change	Automatic promotion for Grades 1–4; promotion dependent on academic progress for Grades 5–12.
Canada	Varies by province, but most students begin school in the year they will be 6 years old.	Students in many provinces begin school before the compulsory age.	In 2013, Saskatchewan changed the compulsory age minimum from 7 years to 6 years to recognize current practices and to increase consistency with other provinces. The official policies in other provinces have not changed.	In most provinces, the decision to promote or retain students typically resides with the schools and school boards/districts, in consultation with parents/guardians, teachers, and school principals. However, in British Columbia, students are automatically promoted until Grade 10.
Chile	Children begin school in March if they will be 6 years old by March 31. School principals can admit younger children with sixth birthdays before July 1 of the corresponding year.	Parents may decide to delay enrollment. Teachers also may recommend that parents delay enrollment for children who are not yet ready for school.	No change	Promotion for Grades 2–11 is dependent on academic progress and attendance. Students must have a minimum grade point average of 4.0 of 7.0 and attend at least 85% of the school year. Promotion for Grades 1–2 and 11–12 is automatic, but in exceptional cases, principals may limit promotion for students who present a significant delay in reading, writing, and/or mathematics.
Chinese Taipei	Children must begin school in the fall of the year of their sixth birthday if their birthday is on or before September 1.	Legal representatives can apply for early enrollment for intellectually gifted children over age 5 or a 1-year delay in enrollment for 6-year-old children with disabilities. In either case, children must take an assessment provided by the committee responsible for their placement.	No change	Automatic promotion for Grades 1–8. Legal representatives of intellectually gifted students may apply for accelerated promotion in specific learning areas or all learning areas. Elementary schooling years can only be shortened to 5 years.

Exhibit 2: National Policies on Age of School Entry and Promotion

Reported by National Research Coordinators

(Continued)

Country	Official Policy on Age of Entry to Primary School	Based on Parental Discretion, Usual Practice on Age of Entry to Primary School	Changes to Age of Entry Policy Within the Past 10 Years	Policy on Promotion and Retention in Grades 1–8
Croatia	Children who are 6 years old by April 1 must begin school in September of that year.	Parents can request to enroll children who are slightly younger than age 6 on April 1 or to delay enrollment (usually for medical conditions). All requests must be approved by an expert committee.	No change	Promotion is dependent on academic progress. Schools must organize additional classes for students with insufficient marks in 1 or 2 subjects (10–25 hours per subject). Following additional classes, students in Grades 1–3 with 1 insufficient mark can still progress to the next grade, while students in Grades 4–8 must take a correction examination to determine their promotion or retention. In Grades 1–3, students can complete 2 grades in 1 school year if an objective assessment establishes that the student's knowledge is comparable or beyond that of students in the higher grade. In Grades 4–8, students can complete 2 grades in 1 school year if they take overall class examinations in prescribed subjects.
Cyprus	Children can begin school in September if they are 5 years and 8 months old by September 1.	Parents can apply to the Director of Primary Education to delay enrollment for 1 year.	No change	In primary school, students may be required to repeat a particular grade based on academic or socioemotional progress, or parents can request that their child completes an additional year of school. In secondary school, promotion is dependent on academic progress and minimum attendance requirements.
Czech Republic	Children begin school at age 6. Children with birthdays before September 1 begin at the start of the academic year, while children with birthdays September–December begin at the start of the following academic year.	Parents can request to delay enrollment for 1 year or to enroll children who will turn 6 years old by December 31, with proof of the child's pedagogical and psychological readiness.	No change	Promotion is dependent on academic progress. Repeating the same grade is allowed only once in Stage 1 (primary level) Years 1–5 and only once in Stage 2 (lower secondary level) Years 6–9.
Denmark	Children can begin school during the calendar year of their sixth birthday.	Parents may request early enrollment for mature children whose fifth birthdays are before October 1, with approval from the school principal. Parents also may request a 1-year delay in enrollment for developmentally challenged children, with approval from the municipal council.	No change	Automatic promotion for Grades 1–8.
Egypt	Children must be 6 years old by the beginning of October to begin school in September.	Follows policy	No change	Automatic promotion for Grades 1–9.
England	Children can begin school the September following their fourth birthday and must begin by the prescribed day (December 31, March 31, or August 31) following their fifth birthday.	Parents may delay their child's enrollment or arrange for the child to attend part-time until age 5. Children who turn 5 years old on August 31 are not required to start school until 1 full year after the point at which they could have enrolled. In such cases, parents may request enrollment out of the normal age group (reception rather than Year 1), which requires the approval of school admission authority.	No change	Generally, promotion is automatic for Grades 1–8. Head teachers may decide to educate a student in a year group higher or lower than that indicated by their age based on sound educational reasons.

Exhibit 2: National Policies on Age of School Entry and Promotion

Reported by National Research Coordinators

(Continued)

Country	Official Policy on Age of Entry to Primary School	Based on Parental Discretion, Usual Practice on Age of Entry to Primary School	Changes to Age of Entry Policy Within the Past 10 Years	Policy on Promotion and Retention in Grades 1–8
Finland	Children begin school in August during the calendar year of their seventh birthday.	Parents may request to enroll children 1 year earlier or later than the official policy for psychological or medical reasons.	No change	For Grades 1–8, promotion is dependent on academic progress. A student may be retained due to failing marks or if retention is considered appropriate from the perspective of the student's general academic success.
France	Children must begin school in September of the calendar year of their sixth birthday.	In rare cases, parents and/or teachers may request early enrollment for academically advanced and mature children or request a 1-year delay in enrollment for immature children.	As of September 2019, children must begin school at age 3.	For Grades 1–5, promotion is dependent on academic progress. The board of teachers, including the head of school, makes a recommendation for each child, and parental input is considered. Students may repeat or skip only 1 grade in primary school.
Georgia	Children must be 6 years old by September 15 to begin school.	Follows policy	Starting in 2014, the age of entry is defined as 6 years old.	No policy
Germany	Children begin school on August 1 if they are 6 years old before a statutory qualifying date set by the state (June 30–September 30).	Exceptions to the policy vary by state—children may enter early if their sixth birthday is after the statutory date, or defer enrollment and attend kindergarten instead. Parents can apply to the local primary school for exceptions to the enrollment policy. Generally, the school administration makes the final decision based on parents' preferences and the results of the school entry test.	Policy changes vary by state. Common changes include flexible school entry, school deferment, and school choice.	Policies vary by state. In all states, students must be promoted from Grade 1 to Grade 2, either through strict promotion, restricted retention, or the possibility of restriction. For subsequent grades, promotion is dependent on students' grades. In some schools, students who are not promoted may be granted a probationary promotion or retake an examination. It is also possible for students with superior performance to skip a year.
Hong Kong SAR	Children may begin school when they are 5 years and 8 months old.	Some parents choose not to send their children to school according to policy. In these cases, the Education Bureau contacts the parents or makes home visits to confirm that the child's educational needs are being addressed. If there is no valid reason, the Education Bureau may require the parents to send the child to school.	No change	Policies on promotion and retention across Grades 1–8 are school-based. However, the Education Bureau has prescribed a maximum retention rate with which schools in the public sector must comply.
Hungary	Children typically begin school during the calendar year of their sixth birthday if their birthday is before August 31.	A committee of experts may decide that a child should stay in preschool for 1 more year. This committee also may allow a child early entry at the request of their parents.	Before 2013, children began school during the calendar year of their sixth birthday if their birthday was before May 31. Enrollment could be deferred until the year of the child's seventh birthday, or even the year of their eighth birthday if their birthday is after August 31.	Promotion is dependent on academic progress for all grades.

Exhibit 2: National Policies on Age of School Entry and Promotion

Reported by National Research Coordinators

(Continued)

Country	Official Policy on Age of Entry to Primary School	Based on Parental Discretion, Usual Practice on Age of Entry to Primary School	Changes to Age of Entry Policy Within the Past 10 Years	Policy on Promotion and Retention in Grades 1–8
Iran, Islamic Rep. of	Children must be 6 years old by September 21 to begin school.	Parents may decide whether they want their children to start school at age 7.	No change	For Grades 1–6, students complete a descriptive evaluation and are promoted if they perform satisfactorily in all subjects. Students who fail to meet the standard for 1 subject once or twice during their primary education can complete remedial classes or teacher-assigned tasks to be promoted. Otherwise, students repeat the grade. Students who perform unsatisfactorily in mathematics and Farsi are not promoted. For Grades 7 and 8, students must receive at least 10 out of 20 in all subjects by June, or retake the examinations in those subjects in September. Students who do not meet the standard in September repeat the grade.
Ireland	Children must begin school by age 6 and may begin at age 4. The first 2 years of primary school are “infants” classes, which have a shorter school day and are classified as ISCED 0, but are part of the same primary schools.	In recent years, the percentage of children beginning school at age 5 has increased (75%), while the percentage beginning at age 4 has decreased (23%). The expansion of the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) program and school admission policies in over-subscribed schools have contributed to this change.	No change	For Grades 1–9, students can repeat a year only for educational reasons and in exceptional circumstances. The primary curriculum (Grades 1–6) is flexible and child-centered, and can be adapted to meet individual students’ needs.
Israel	In general, children begin school during the calendar year of their sixth birthday.	Parents who feel their child is not ready to begin school may apply to the authorities for delayed enrollment. Requests are discussed by the kindergarten teacher, an educational psychologist, and the parents. Decisions should be made on common agreement, but parents have the final say.	No change	Automatic promotion for Grades 1–8, but retention is possible in exceptional circumstances.
Italy	Children must be 6 years old by December 31 to begin school in the fall of that year.	Parents may request early entry for children who are 6 years old by April 30 of the academic year of reference or that children who pass an examination skip the first year of school and start with the second year.	No change	Automatic promotion for Grades 1–5, with the exception of cases justified with special reasons and the unanimous agreement of all teachers. For Grades 6–8, promotion is dependent on academic progress.
Japan	Children must be 6 years old by April 1 to begin school.	Follows policy	No change	No policy
Jordan	Children must be 5 years and 8 months old by September 1 to begin school.	Follows policy	No change	For Grades 1–3, students who fail Arabic language or mathematics may repeat a grade with parental consent. For Grades 4–10, promotion is dependent on academic progress. Students cannot repeat more than 2 grades or the same grade twice. However, students who are absent for more than 20% of the school year without a legal reason will repeat the grade, irrespective of their total number of repetitions.
Kazakhstan	Children begin school during the calendar year of their sixth birthday.	Follows policy	No change	No policy

Exhibit 2: National Policies on Age of School Entry and Promotion

Reported by National Research Coordinators

(Continued)

Country	Official Policy on Age of Entry to Primary School	Based on Parental Discretion, Usual Practice on Age of Entry to Primary School	Changes to Age of Entry Policy Within the Past 10 Years	Policy on Promotion and Retention in Grades 1–8
Korea, Rep. of	Children must be 6 years old by December 31 to begin school the following March.	Parents or guardians may apply for early entry or for a 1-year delay in enrollment. However, this is rare.	No change	Promotion is dependent on minimum attendance. Students must attend at least two-thirds of the school days to be promoted.
Kosovo	Children begin school during the calendar year of their sixth birthday.	Follows policy	No change	No policy
Kuwait	For public schools, private Arabic schools, and private English schools, children must be 6 years old by March 15 to begin school the previous September. For private American schools, children must be 6 years old by September to begin school.	Follows policy	No change	Promotion is dependent on academic progress for Grades 1–8.
Latvia	Children begin school at age 6 or 7.	Many children begin primary school at age 7 because their parents feel they will benefit from being more mature and psychologically prepared.	Previously, children began school during the calendar year of their seventh birthday with some exceptions (health status and psychological preparedness). Since April 2018, amendments to the law provide for a commensurate, balanced, and flexible transition to basic education from age 6.	Promotion is dependent on academic progress for Grades 1–8. Students may repeat the same grade only once.
Lebanon	Children must be 6 years old by January 31 to begin school in October of that academic year.	Children typically participate in optional preprimary education-kindergarten programs beginning at age 3.	No change	Promotion is dependent on academic progress for Grades 1–8.
Lithuania	Children begin school during the calendar year of their seventh birthday. Children who attended a preprimary education program 1 year earlier begin school at age 6.	Parents or guardians can request early enrollment or a 1-year delay in enrollment.	Since 2017, policy recommends that children enter school at age 6 when educated under the preprimary education program 1 year earlier.	No policy, but decisions dependent on academic progress may be made at the school level.
Malaysia	Children who are 6 years old by January 1 begin school in January of that academic year. The Minister of Education may exempt any student or class of students from compulsory education, either absolutely or under specific conditions.	Follows policy	No change	No policy
Malta	Children begin school in the calendar year of their fifth birthday.	Follows policy	No change	Automatic promotion for all compulsory grades. In exceptional cases, students may be retained with consent from their parents or guardians.
Montenegro	Children begin school during the calendar year of their sixth birthday, following a medical examination.	Parents may request to enroll their child before age 6 or for a 1-year delay in enrollment. A commission comprising a pediatrician, a school psychologist, and an educator or a teacher, must approve all requests.	No change	Automatic promotion for Grades 1–5. Schools are required to organize remedial instruction for students that do not meet grade-level standards.
Morocco	Children begin school at age 5.5 to 6.	Follows policy	No change	For Grades 1–6, promotion is based on teachers' continuous assessment of academic progress. For Grades 6–7, promotion is based on teachers' continuous assessment, a unified school midterm examination, and a unified final examination designed by the local directorate of the Ministry of Education. For Grades 7–8, promotion is based on teachers' continuous assessment.

Exhibit 2: National Policies on Age of School Entry and Promotion

Reported by National Research Coordinators

(Continued)

Country	Official Policy on Age of Entry to Primary School	Based on Parental Discretion, Usual Practice on Age of Entry to Primary School	Changes to Age of Entry Policy Within the Past 10 Years	Policy on Promotion and Retention in Grades 1–8
Netherlands	Children must begin kindergarten on the first school day of the month after their fifth birthday. Most children are 6 years old when they begin Grade 1.	Most children begin kindergarten at age 4 and are 6 years old when they begin Grade 1. Some children start Grade 1 later, if the school thinks that they would benefit from being more mature. Parents are involved in this decision, but the school has the final say.	No change	Automatic promotion for Grades 1–6. After Grade 6, schools decide the promotion and retention of students. Students are assigned to a track based on their previous academic progress, advice from teachers, and scores on a national assessment, and they may be assigned to a lower track or not be promoted to the next grade if they are not doing well.
New Zealand	Children may begin school following their fifth birthday and must begin school by their sixth birthday.	Nearly all children begin school on or soon after their fifth birthday. Parents may delay their child's entry until the beginning of a later term or until age 6.	Starting in 2020, schools, with consultation from their community, can opt to have new entrants start in groups at the beginning of each term after their fifth birthday. Only a small number of schools have indicated plans to use this option.	Promotion is typically automatic but can be subject to parent or principal discretion.
North Macedonia	Children begin school during the calendar year of their sixth birthday.	Follows policy	No change	Automatic promotion for Grades 1–5; promotion dependent on academic progress for Grades 6–9.
Northern Ireland	Children who are age 4 by July 1 begin school in September of that year. Children with fourth birthdays July 2–August 31 begin school in September of the next year, when they are 5 years old.	Follows policy	No change	Automatic promotion for all compulsory grades.
Norway	Children begin school during the calendar year of their sixth birthday.	Follows policy	No change	No policy
Oman	For public schools, children typically begin school when they are 6 years old (or at least 5 years and 8 months). For private schools, children begin school between 5 years and 2 months and 7 years and 2 months.	Children enrolling in public schools over age 7 and private schools over 7 years and 2 months are enrolled in the grade above, with special remedial plans implemented by the schools.	Before 2012, children began Grade 1 between ages 6 and 8.	Automatic promotion for Grades 1–4; promotion dependent on academic progress for Grades 5–8.
Pakistan	Children must be 6 years old by March 31 to begin school the following April.	Children can begin school up to age 7.	No change	Promotion is dependent on academic progress.
Philippines	Children are eligible to begin school when they have completed a kindergarten program (Department of Education accredited or another program) or have not attended kindergarten, but are at least 6 years old by August 31 of the school year they will enroll.	Follows policy	No change	Promotion dependent on academic progress for Grades 1–8. Students are promoted if they have a final grade of at least 75 in all learning areas or do not meet expectations in no more than 2 learning areas, but pass remedial classes for the learning areas with failing marks. Otherwise, students must repeat the grade.

Exhibit 2: National Policies on Age of School Entry and Promotion

Reported by National Research Coordinators

(Continued)

Country	Official Policy on Age of Entry to Primary School	Based on Parental Discretion, Usual Practice on Age of Entry to Primary School	Changes to Age of Entry Policy Within the Past 10 Years	Policy on Promotion and Retention in Grades 1–8
Poland	Children must begin school by age 7.	Parents may request early enrollment for 6-year-old children who have completed a 1-year preparatory preprimary program or hold a school readiness certificate from a counseling and guidance center. Parents may also request approval from the principal to defer enrollment for 1 year or more with a certificate recommending education for children with special needs.	In 2015, the age of entry was lowered to age 6. In 2016, it was raised back to age 7 with an option to enroll at age 6. Currently, 6-year-olds attend 1 year of preprimary education. With these changes, Polish schools now use a 2-level system consisting of primary and secondary schools.	Automatic promotion for Grades 1–3, with the exception of exceptional cases justified by the students' development, achievements, or health condition. For Grades 4–8, students must receive positive marks for all compulsory subjects by the end of the school year to be promoted to the next grade. Students with up to 2 unsatisfactory marks may retake examinations. In principle, students who fail a retake will not be promoted to the higher grade, but the school teaching council may conditionally promote students with an unsatisfactory mark in only 1 subject.
Portugal	Children must begin school during the calendar year of their sixth birthday—enrolled by June 15—and turn 6 years old by the beginning of the school year (mid-September).	Parents or legal guardians can request enrollment for children with sixth birthdays September 16–December 31.	No change	Automatic promotion for Grades 1–2; promotion dependent on academic progress for Grades 2–8.
Qatar	For public schools, children may begin at age 6 and must begin by age 8. For private schools, children may begin at age 5 and must begin by age 7.	Follows policy	No change	Promotion is dependent on academic progress. Students must achieve an average of 50% or higher across their first and second semester examinations to progress to the next grade.
Romania	Children begin school when they are 6 years old at the start of the school year.	Parents or guardians can submit a written request to enroll children with sixth birthdays before the end of the calendar year; the request may be accepted if the child's psychosomatic development is deemed appropriate.	Before 2012, children began school at age 7. Since 2012, children start school at age 6.	Automatic promotion for Grades 1–4; promotion dependent on academic progress for Grades 5–8.
Russian Federation	Children must be 6.5 years old by September 1 to begin school.	Parents and school administrators may decide that a child begins school between ages 6.3 and 6.9. Parents may also delay their child's enrollment until age 7 for maturity or health reasons.	No change	Automatic promotion for Grades 1–8, but conditional promotion for students with unsatisfactory academic performance. These students have to show improvement within a specified time frame, or the parents may ask for retention or enrollment in an adaptive or individual program.
Saudi Arabia	Children must be 6 years old by 90 days after the first day of school to begin school.	Follows policy	No change	Promotion dependent on academic progress for Grades 1–8.
Serbia	Children must begin school when they are 6.5–7.5 years old by the beginning of the school year.	In exceptional cases, enrollment may be postponed for 1 year.	No change	For Grades 4–7, students who have the lowest mark in 2 subjects at the end of the second semester and do not pass or take the remedial examination will repeat the grade. Talented students may progress through specially organized educational programs.

Exhibit 2: National Policies on Age of School Entry and Promotion

Reported by National Research Coordinators

(Continued)

Country	Official Policy on Age of Entry to Primary School	Based on Parental Discretion, Usual Practice on Age of Entry to Primary School	Changes to Age of Entry Policy Within the Past 10 Years	Policy on Promotion and Retention in Grades 1–8
Singapore	Children begin school if they are 6 years old by the day before the first day of school (e.g., January 2). Children who turn 6 years old on January 2 through January 1 the following year begin school the next academic year.	Parents may decide to delay their child's entry if the child has been medically assessed and deemed not ready at the legal age of admission or professionally diagnosed as having special educational needs or a developmental delay. Parents of children with birthdays on January 1 (who may therefore enter school 1 year earlier than peers born in the same year) may request to delay entry for 1 year if they feel the child will benefit from being more mature.	No change	In general, promotion is automatic for Grades 1–4. However, a principal has the discretion, in consultation with a student's parents, to retain the student for extenuating circumstances (e.g., prolonged absence due to illness). A Grade 5 student may also be considered for retention if in the professional judgment of the principal, the student's academic progress indicates that the student will likely benefit from repeating the grade. For Grades 6–8, promotion depends on meeting a set of academic standards on the national examinations and school-based examinations (for promotion to Grade 8 or 9).
Slovak Republic	Children who are 6 years old by August 31 must begin school on September 1, unless granted a delay.	Children may begin school early or after an approved delay based on psychological tests and professional recommendations. Delays must be approved by the headmaster of the school in which the child is supposed to enroll. When approved (approximately 10% of all children), parents decide whether the child returns to kindergarten or begins Grade 0; when denied, the child is obliged to begin school.	No change	Promotion is dependent on academic progress. If a student receives a final grade of 5 (insufficient) in 1–2 subjects, the student must pass a correction examination to progress to the next grade. Students who fail the correction examination or receive a final grade of 5 in more than 2 subjects must repeat the grade. Students with special educational needs do not receive a grade of 5 in subjects that are directly influenced by their handicap.
South Africa	Children must be 5 years old and turning 6 years old by June 30 of the next year to begin Grade 1 by mid-January.	Parents may delay enrollment to age 5 turning 6 for Grade 0 or age 6 turning 7 for Grade 1.	No change	Promotion is dependent on academic progress. Students must meet the minimum required level of achievement per subject in each grade and comply with the promotion requirements described in the National Policy Pertaining to the Programme and Promotion of the National Curriculum Statement Grades R–12. Students may be retained only once in each phase—foundation (Grades R–3), intermediate (Grades 4–6), and senior (Grades 7–9). Exceptions are made for immigrant students and students with disabilities (cognitive or physical impairment).
Spain	Children begin school during the calendar year of their sixth birthday.	Follows policy	No change	Promotion is based on academic progress. In Grades 1–6, students may repeat only 1 grade; in Grades 7–10, students may repeat 2 grades, but not the same grade twice.
Sweden	Children begin preschool class in the fall of the calendar year of their sixth birthday and primary school in the fall of the calendar year of their seventh birthday. It is mandatory for children to attend preschool class before primary school.	Parents may request to delay primary school entry to the year of a child's eighth birthday with special reasons or needs that must be approved by the municipality. Parents may also request that their child start primary school in the year of their sixth birthday.	In 2018, preschool class became mandatory. In practice, 95% of all 6-year-old children have attended preschool class for many years, so this policy has not substantially impacted practice.	Automatic promotion for Grades 1–9.

Exhibit 2: National Policies on Age of School Entry and Promotion

Reported by National Research Coordinators

(Continued)

Country	Official Policy on Age of Entry to Primary School	Based on Parental Discretion, Usual Practice on Age of Entry to Primary School	Changes to Age of Entry Policy Within the Past 10 Years	Policy on Promotion and Retention in Grades 1–8
Turkey	Children must begin school if they are at least 5.75 years old by September 31.	Parents may request to enroll children with who will turn 5.75 by December 31. Parents may also request a delay in enrollment for children who are not developmentally ready.	In June 2019, the age of entry was increased from 5.5 years old to 5.75 years old.	In general, promotion is automatic throughout primary school. However, students who have not reached the desired level of competence, upon the written request of the parents, can repeat 1 grade. At the recommendation of a parent or teacher, students in Grades 1–3 that have demonstrated above grade-level competence may take an examination 1 month before the beginning of the school year to be promoted to a higher class.
United Arab Emirates	Children can begin school at age 6.	Follows policy	Before 2013, children could begin school at age 5.5. Since 2013, children must be 6 years old by December 31 of the year they enroll.	Automatic promotion for Grades 1–3; promotion dependent on academic progress for Grades 4–8. Students with low performance in more than 3 subjects will be retained in the same grade. Students can take a make-up exam if they do not pass 3 or fewer subjects.
United States	Varies by state, but each state requires children to begin school between set ages (typically 5–8).	Follows state policies	No change	Varies by state. Some states require examinations for grade promotion and/or graduation from high school. Many states have retention policies from Grade 3 to Grade 4 based on students' reading proficiency.
Benchmarking Participants				
Ontario, Canada	Children must begin school in September if they turn 6 years old on or before September 1. Children with sixth birthdays before December 31 also may begin school in September.	Parents may enroll their children in school before age 6.	No change	Promotion from Grade 8 to secondary school is dependent on academic progress. In cases where promotion is in question, the decision to promote or retain a student is typically made by the principal in accordance with school board policy. If promotion is denied, there is an appeal process.
Quebec, Canada	Children must be 6 years old by September to begin school in August of that year.	Follows policy	No change	Promotion is based on students' final report cards and rules of passage established by the school or the school board, according to their respective responsibilities. In primary and secondary education, the threshold for success is 60% for each subject.
Moscow City, Russian Fed.	Children must be at least 6.5 years old and no more than 8 years old by September 1 to begin school in September of that year, with the exception of children with medical conditions.	Children typically begin school at age 7 because their parents feel they will benefit from being more mature. Parents or legal guardians may ask the founder of the educational organization for early or delayed entry.	No change	Promotion dependent on academic progress. Students must pass an intermediate assessment at the end of the school year to progress to the next class. Students who do not pass are transferred to the next class conditionally and must complete remedial work within a certain period determined by the school. If they do not, they may repeat a grade or transfer to training on adapted educational programs and individual curricula.
Gauteng, South Africa	Same as South Africa			
Western Cape, South Africa	Same as South Africa			
Madrid, Spain	Same as Spain			
Abu Dhabi, UAE	Same as United Arab Emirates			
Dubai, UAE	Same as United Arab Emirates			