

Information and actions for principals of opportunity classes — Year 5 entry in 2024

Important dates	
Thursday 23 March 2023	Application information sent to schools and updated on the website
Thursday 30 March 2023	Applications open. Parents/carers apply online at: Opportunity classes – Year 5
From Thursday 30 March 2023	Principals can view lists of candidates as they apply in the SHS and OC schools' site
Thursday 30 March to Monday 15 May 2023	Advertising campaign across radio, social media and print
Monday 15 May 2023	Applications close
From Wednesday 17 May to Friday 2 June 2023	Principals asked to supply information about candidates online (government schools only) in the SHS and OC schools' site Non-government principals complete the 'Principal's page for provision of information' about the applicant and send it to the Unit.
Thursday 13 July 2023	Test authority advice available to parents/carers in application dashboard and to schools in SHS and OC schools' site
Thursday 27 July 2023	Opportunity Class Placement Test
Thursday 3 August 2023	Last day for parents/carers to submit illness/misadventure requests
September 2023	Selection committee meets
Friday 20 October 2023	Placement outcome expected to be released
Late October/November 2023	Principals arrange orientation day for students with accepted offers
Friday 27 October 2023	Last day for parents/carers to submit appeals online
Thursday 7 December 2023	Appeals panel meets
Monday 11 December 2023	Appeals outcome advised to parents/carers
Friday 19 January 2024	'Authority to attend' letter available to parents/carers accepting offers

What you need to do

Parent/carer enquiries

- Respond to parent/carer enquiries about opportunity classes referring to [Opportunity classes – Year 5](#).

Promoting opportunity classes

- Provide information about opportunity classes on your school website, including links to relevant pages of the department's website: [Opportunity classes-Year 5](#)
- Notify parents/carers of eligible students of the online application period for opportunity class placement in at least two newsletters (or equivalent) and prominently on the school website, social media and school noticeboard.
- Encourage parents/carers to seek the principal's view on the suitability of opportunity class placement for their child (the principals should not attempt to cull unsuitable applicants or predict the likelihood of receiving an offer).

Orientation & enrolment

- Invite students with offers, and possibly those high up on the reserve list, to [orientation days](#).

- Notify the Unit if a parent/carer contacts the school to decline a place, having initially accepted it.
- Continue to inform the Unit of Year 5 vacancies as they occur until at least the end of Term 1, Year 6. After this time principals have discretion not to fill Year 6 vacancies.
- Check all documentation relating to NSW residence or the citizenship or permanent residency of students before enrolling them.

Note: Temporary visa holders are not eligible to enrol in an opportunity class unless an appeal on this matter has been upheld.

First day of school

- Check that all students present their 'Authority to attend' letter on the first day of school.
- Notify the Unit of any students who do not attend on the first day of school (unless a later start date has been negotiated with and approved by the school).

What you may be asked to do

- Nominate yourself to be on the centralised selection committee, and/or (in rare cases) represent the selection committee after the initial selection committee has been held.
- Officiate on an appeals panel.

What you need to know about the placement process

Application criteria and rules

Criteria for entry, rules governing selection, and other application procedures not covered in this document are outlined at: [Opportunity classes – Year 5](#).

The downloadable document 'Information for applicants' is also available to parents/carers at [Opportunity classes – Year 5](#). It outlines the key dates and rules for the placement process.

Residency

Students entering an opportunity class must be citizens of Australia or New Zealand or hold a visa granting permanent resident status in Australia. Permanent or temporary residents of New Zealand and temporary residents of Australia are ineligible.

Information on Australian citizenship is available on the Department of Immigration and Border Protection website at: <http://www.border.gov.au/Trav/Citi>. Official evidence of Australian citizenship may be obtained by the issue of a Certificate of Evidence of Australian Citizenship.

See the list of visas students can hold to be eligible for opportunity class placement at: [Visa subclasses and enrolment](#).

Applicants who do not meet these residency requirements at the time of applying are allowed to apply and sit the test. They will have to show evidence that they meet all residency requirements when first round offers are made in late October before being offered a place. Students can be reinstated on reserve lists if they meet residency requirements after that time, while reserve lists remain open.

Applicants who qualify for entry on academic grounds but do not meet the residency requirements, including those who hold diplomatic visas, will have the opportunity to appeal for special consideration through the appeals process if they have well-documented extenuating circumstances.

Parents/carers are informed that offers will be cancelled if placement is made based on false or misleading information.

Residential address

The student's family must be living in NSW by the beginning of the school year. If parents/carers normally live in NSW but are temporarily out of the state, they must return before the student is enrolled in an opportunity class. Applications from parents/carers who continue to live outside NSW after the school year begins will be considered only if there are vacancies after all suitable applicants from NSW have been placed. Notify the Unit if parents/carers cannot provide proof of residence in NSW at the beginning of the school year.

Application information

All primary schools must inform parents/carers of the opportunity to apply online.

Parents/carers apply online at [Opportunity classes – Year 5](#) between 30 March and 15 May 2023. Applications must be made by the closing date.

If parents/carers have no internet access, they are advised to use the internet at a public library or seek assistance from the current school.

Schools with opportunity classes may consider assisting parents/carers of students in non-government schools to apply online if they do not have internet access. Parents/carers should contact the Unit for assistance with applying if they have a disability that prevents them using a computer.

Advertising

The opportunity to apply for Year 5 placement in an opportunity class in 2024 will be advertised at [Opportunity classes – Year 5](#), social media and across other media as identified in our marketing plan (this may include radio, print, and other channels). You may advertise the availability of places at your school at your own discretion and cost.

Selection committees

A centralised selection committee considers students to be offered a place or a reserve list position for each school with an opportunity class. They make decisions using the results obtained in the Opportunity Class Placement Test, information provided by schools and the information supplied by parents/carers. Committees give special consideration to students in equity pools for Aboriginality, disability, low socio-educational advantage and geographically isolated groups.

There are only 5% of places available at any opportunity class for students who have been unable to sit the test.

The selection committee will include at least two principals of schools with opportunity classes and two Directors, Educational Leadership. The selection process is streamlined by the automation of placements where students fall within the accepted range of scores.

Selection committees make placement decisions for students who are designated for selection committee attention. These could include students who do not fall within the usual age or Year range. They also include students presenting on alternative scores if they have been unable to take the placement test.

Principals of schools with opportunity classes will be invited to participate in the selection committee meetings which are expected to be held from **19-21 September 2023** (inclusive) at the Parramatta office.

The Unit will provide the selection committee with guidelines, instructions and access to the selection lists. Unit executive officers will guide the committee through the process and provide advice as required.

Selection committee members sign declarations of confidentiality where they agree to keep the outcome of selection committee meetings confidential and they declare any potential conflict of interest such as having a relative or the child of a close friend applying for one of the schools the selection committee is due to consider or having links with a coaching college.

Notification of placement outcome – Outcome reports

After the selection committee has met and all decisions have been ratified and checked, the Unit will notify parents/carers of the outcome of their application overnight on **Friday 20 October 2023**. The placement outcome advice will show whether students have been offered a place, have been placed on the reserve list or were unsuccessful.

A [Performance report](#) shows students' achievement on the tests in bands. No scores are released to parents/carers. Information about the scores of students and their inclusion in equity groups is not released to parents.

The Unit makes available reports listing students' placement outcomes to primary schools, and schools with opportunity classes at [SHS and OC schools' site](#).

Outcome reports are updated as changes occur. The outcome report contains parent/carer contact information to help you send enrolment forms and invite parents/carers to your orientation day. Near the end of the school year you will have access to a report with score component details for all students who have accepted placement at your school.

The Unit makes all offers for Year 5 entry. If parents/carers notify the school that they are accepting or declining the offer, please email the correspondence or verbal advice to the Unit. Please do not attempt to offer places directly to any parent/carer, even if you have difficulty getting sufficient applicants.

Appeals

Parents/carers can appeal against the placement outcome if they believe they have valid grounds. Appeals will generally not be considered by the appeals panel if the grounds for appeal are not considered valid or if no adjustment option is available.

The Unit may consult primary principals during preparation for the appeals panel. The appeals panel is scheduled for **Thursday 7 December 2023**. Principals of primary schools with opportunity classes and selective high schools will be invited to participate. Directors, Educational Leadership may also participate.

Enrolment

Schools send orientation information and enrolment documents to parents/carers listed in the outcome reports.

It is the responsibility of the principal of each opportunity class to ensure that original documentation, such as a Certificate of Evidence of Australian Citizenship or permanent residency visa, is checked for each student before enrolment can be finalised by the school.

Deferment of enrolment

Before enrolling their child, parents/carers must negotiate with the school if they intend the student to start attending later than the first day of Term 1.

Enrolment cannot be deferred beyond **Friday 23 February 2024**. Where parents/carers request deferment after schools have closed for the year the Unit will make the decision whether or not to grant the deferment. Please inform the Unit of any students who do not arrive on the first day of school without notice and without first seeking approval from the principal.

Enrolment policy

Principals have the responsibility to assess and manage any risk of harm to staff or students and are obliged to identify students who may pose a risk to other students or staff. Parents/carers have been told that their children must meet the eligibility requirements applicable to all NSW Government schools in addition to qualifying academically.

Orientation information

The Unit sends placement outcome information to all applicants but they do not send specific information about your school.

Principals are required to:

1. advertise orientation information for Year 5 opportunity class entry prominently on the school's website
2. send orientation information directly to the parents/carers with offers using the parents'/carers' contact details contained in the outcome report. Principals may consider sending a separate invitation to those parents/carers with reserve placement as long as they understand that an offer is not guaranteed.

Orientation information should include:

- the date of the school's orientation day
- where uniforms may be purchased
- the school's starting day in 2024 for Year 5
- transport details
- school features and specialised programs such as music and drama
- any other significant information about the school.

As outcome reports are updated in real time, you should ensure that the parents of students receiving later offers are provided with this information.

Filling vacancies

New offers will be made in priority order from the reserve list as offers are declined. Appeals can result in changes to reserve lists. Students on a reserve list are assigned a reserve band which reflects how long it took in previous years for that place to receive an offer and if that place on the reserve list was reached before the end of the year.

After the placement outcome has been released, if students need to be considered because of an approved change of choice or similar unusual circumstance, the Unit will ask the opportunity class principal to approve the change on behalf of the selection committee.

What happens if a student leaves the opportunity class?

Schools must continue to advise the Unit by emailing ssu@det.nsw.edu.au of vacancies as they arise in Year 5 and at least up to the end of Term 1 in Year 6. The process of making further offers remains the responsibility of the Unit until the classes are filled or until there are no more candidates of the required standard.

What happens if a student does not show up on the first day of school?

It is essential that schools notify the Unit of any students who do not arrive on the first day of school. The Unit will send a reminder to principals to do this.

What happens if the reserve list for the opportunity class is exhausted and you still have vacant positions?

Principals have the discretion to fill these places with suitable candidates from their own school. The parents/carers must be informed that the placement is 'unofficial'.

In the unlikely event that a different parent/carer requests to transfer their child from an opportunity class to another due to relocation or other extenuating circumstance and the child qualifies for placement at the new school, the principal must make the place available for the child transferring. Parents/carers of students who are unofficially placed must be aware that this could occur and their child could be displaced.

Can parents/carers apply as late applicants for Year 5 or 6 placement in an opportunity class?

There is no provision to lodge a late application after the strict closing dates.

There is also no provision to apply for Year 6 entry only.

Where some schools with opportunity classes in rural and remote areas may have vacancies, the principal has the discretion to fill these vacancies with suitable candidates from their own schools. Vacancies filled this way are 'unofficial'.

What others need to do

The Selective Education Unit will:

- provide an online application site for parents/carers
- help applicants who are unable to use a computer to apply due to disability
- arrange an advertising campaign across radio, social media and print
- provide primary principals access to the SHS and OC schools' site for processing applications, messaging and placement reports
- manage the test (invigilation, test centres and student allocation, scoring, etc.)
- organise centralised selection committee meetings and appeals panel
- manage the placement of students
- answer enquiries from parents/carers and schools.

Primary schools (non-OC) will:

- notify parents/carers of eligible students of the online application period for opportunity class placement in at least two newsletters (or equivalent) and prominently on the school website, social media and school noticeboard

- encourage parents/carers to seek the principal's view on the suitability of their child for opportunity class placement (the principals should not attempt to cull unsuitable applicants or predict the likelihood of receiving an offer)
- direct parents/carers with no internet access to use a computer at a public library, or offer assistance to apply using school computers
- direct parents/carers to contact the Unit for assistance if they are unable to use a computer due to disability
- verify applicant information on the [SHS and OC schools' site](#) (public schools only) or the 'Principal's page for provision of information' (non-government schools only)
- provide details of all adjustments the student receives in the classroom to access the curriculum and assessment tasks
- provide extra information about candidates if asked by the selection committee or appeals panels
- inform parents/carers about the school's role in the placement process.

High schools will:

- be prepared for their schools to be designated as test centres for the Opportunity Class Placement Test and to keep test materials secure before and after the test.

Contact	
Selective Education Unit	
Message via Principals' site:	SHS and OC schools' site (principal's DoE login is required).
Email:	ssu@det.nsw.edu.au
Public Phone No:	1300 880 367 (IVR telephone system with recorded messages)
School staff and DELs only:	02 7814 3626 (Do not give this number to parents)
Selective high schools and opportunity classes shortened URL:	www.education.nsw.gov.au/shs-oc
Facebook:	Opportunity class placement