

This model “transition” policy is designed to reflect the requirements of Public Act 23-208, as amended, and the transition for the 2026-2027 school year. It balances the state’s mandatory age cutoff with the district’s discretionary authority to provide a waiver through the required assessment process. Boards of Education that choose to allow waivers for the 2026-2027 school year are required to have a policy allowing such waivers.

Students

Kindergarten Enrollment and Early Entry Waiver (2026-2027)

I. Purpose

In accordance with the Connecticut General Assembly’s **March 2026 Emergency Legislation, §§26-27** and **Public Act 23-208**, this policy establishes the age requirements for enrollment in kindergarten and the specific, time-bound “transitional” waiver process available to families for the 2026-2027 academic school year.

The New Fairfield Board of Education adopts the following procedures for the 2026-2027 school year.

II. Eligibility for “Automatic” Enrollment

To be eligible for kindergarten, a child must have reached the age of five (5) on or before September 1.

Transitional Waiver (2026-2027)

The District recognizes that the shift in the state-mandated cutoff date (from January 1 to September 1) may place a hardship on families. Therefore, for the 2026-2027 school year, the District shall provide a waiver process for children who turn five between September 2, 2026, and December 31, 2026.

Note: A waiver is not a guarantee of enrollment; it is a request for an exception based on a determination of developmental readiness. However, students transferring to the District from other Connecticut districts and have been assessed in accordance with state requirements and subsequently granted a waiver for the 2026-2027 school year, shall be granted a waiver for the same academic year.

Waiver Application Requirements

To apply for a waiver, parents or guardians must complete the following steps:

1. **Written Request:** Submit a formal “Request for Kindergarten Waiver” to the Principal of the child’s assigned school. This request must be submitted no later than (insert District Deadline, e.g., May 1, 2026).
2. **Parental Questionnaire:** Complete a developmental history and social-emotional snapshot of the child to provide context for the school’s assessment.
3. **Mandatory Assessment:** Under state law, once a written request is received, the District shall conduct an assessment of the child. The child will be invited to a school-based screening where a certified staff member (e.g., kindergarten teacher, school psychologist, or early childhood specialist) will evaluate:
 - a. Social and emotional maturity
 - b. Communication and language skills
 - c. Physical and cognitive development

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Waiver Application Requirements (continued)

Determination

The Principal, in consultation with the assessment team, shall issue a written decision to the family. The decision of the Principal and the certified staff regarding whether early entry is “developmentally appropriate” is final and not subject to further appeal to the Board of Education.

Sunset of “Transitional” Waiver

- **Effective Dates:** This policy applies to the 2026-2027 enrollment cycle.
- **Expiration:** The “transitional” waiver option described herein shall expire on (Insert Date, e.g., June 30, 2027). Future enrollment cycles shall be governed by the standing Board Policy on kindergarten admissions, which may be more restrictive as the state’s transition period concludes.

Legal References: Connecticut General Statutes
10-15c
Public Act 23-208 An Act Making Certain Revisions to the Education Statutes
2026 Emergency Legislation (SB 298), §§ 26 & 27 – Kindergarten Waivers