

COMPULSORY EDUCATION APPLICATION TO DEFER COMMENCEMENT OF PRIMARY/JUNIOR ONE

1 The Compulsory Education (CE) Act 2000 came into force from 1 January 2003. The Act provides that a child born after 1 January 1996 and who is a **Singapore Citizen** residing in Singapore; has to attend regularly as a pupil at a national primary school¹, unless he/she has been duly exempted from CE. For instance, a Singaporean child born between **2 January 2015** and **1 January 2016**, both dates inclusive, will be due for Primary/Junior 1 admission on **3 January 2022**.

2 With effect from the 2019 Primary 1 cohort, children with moderate-to-severe special educational needs (SEN)² will be included within the CE framework established by the CE Act 2000. This means that children born after 1 January 2012 will no longer be exempted from CE on the basis of their SEN alone. Parents of these children can fulfil their CE obligations by having their child attend a Government-funded special education (SPED) school.

3 There may be situations whereby a child may not be ready for formal schooling due to his/her medical condition(s)/SEN, delayed/slower progression or other circumstances. In such a circumstance, the parent may want to seek deferment of the commencement of Primary/Junior 1 schooling for his/her child. In this case, the child will need to be professionally assessed, e.g.

- ❑ at the Child Development Unit (CDU), National University Hospital
- ❑ at the Department of Child Development, KK Women's & Children's Hospital
- ❑ at the Child Guidance Clinic (Institute of Mental Health or Health Promotion Board)
- ❑ by a qualified educational psychologist, specialist in child psychology/development etc; so that any necessary or due intervention can take place early.

4 Applications to defer admission to primary/junior education may be made by completing the prescribed form, with the necessary supporting document(s) (see attachment). The fully completed form is to be sent together with the relevant supporting document(s) to the Compulsory Education Unit, Ministry of Education, for consideration. Successful applicants will be notified via mail/email.

5 Please note that the application should be made between January and September of the year before the child is due to commence primary/junior education, e.g. between January and September 2021 for a child who is due to commence Primary/Junior 1 on 3 January 2022.

¹ National Primary schools refer to mainstream primary schools and Government-funded SPED schools.

² Children with mild SEN, who are able to learn in mainstream primary schools, are already covered under CE.

IMPORTANT NOTE

Where a child fails to attend regularly as a pupil at a national primary school and has not been granted exemption from Compulsory Education, each parent of the child shall be guilty of an offence. The Compulsory Education Act 2000 provides that any person who is guilty of such an offence shall be liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding \$5,000, or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 12 months, or to both.

