

## Public schools

All cities and towns in Massachusetts must provide public education starting with kindergarten, and each city and town has its own public school system. Public schools are funded in large part by their own communities and are governed by local school committees. Because of this local authority, there can be significant differences among school systems.

The age for admittance to kindergarten varies among communities. For the following school year in the following towns, a child must be five years old (except where otherwise noted) by:

- [Arlington](#)  
8/31  
781-316-3501
- [Belmont](#)  
9/1  
617-484-2642
- [Boston](#)  
3 years old by 9/1 for K–0 (limited enrollment)  
4 years old by 9/1 for K–1 (limited enrollment)  
5 years old by 9/1 for K–2  
617-635-9000
- [Brookline](#)  
9/01 (Parents can make an early-exception request for children turning 5 years old between 9/1 and 10/15). May be tested for early entrance.  
617-730-2403
- [Cambridge](#)  
4 years old by 3/31  
617-349-6551
- [Newton](#)  
8/31  
617-559-6100
- [Somerville](#)  
8/31  
617-625-6600
- [Watertown](#)  
9/7  
617-926-7700



For other school systems, call the town or city's school superintendent's office.

Information, including school profiles, is available from the Massachusetts Department of Education at 800-297-0002 and [www.doe.mass.edu](http://www.doe.mass.edu).

### **Charter schools**

Charter Schools were created in 1993, when the Education Reform Act was signed into law. Charter schools may be established by parents, educators or corporate and nonprofit organizations. They remain separate administratively and are financially independent from any school district and are free and open to all school-age children on a space-available basis.

### **Massachusetts School Choice Program**

The Massachusetts School Choice Program is available in selected communities. It allows parents to choose a school outside of their immediate school district. This program is free of charge. More information is available online at the [MSCP web site](#).