

Age Group & Grade Placement Policy

How Australian students are placed into SIMCC grade groups, when a lower grade may be requested, and how to apply.

Policy at a glance

- 1. Default placement:** Australian **Year N = SIMCC Grade N** (Year 4 = Grade 4, Year 7 = Grade 7, and so on). Placement follows the school year the student is currently enrolled in, not their birth year.
- 2. Competing in a higher grade** is always permitted. No application is needed — simply register at the higher grade.
- 3. Moving down one grade** is possible only by **formal application**, for students who meet the birth-year criterion in Section 4. Applications are assessed case by case, approval is not guaranteed, and **only one adjustment** is allowed per student.
- 4. Formal channel:** applications must be sent by **email** (an online form will follow). Messages on WhatsApp, WeChat or other chat apps are **not** accepted as formal requests. Current details are published at **simcc.org.au**.

1. Default rule: placement by current school year

Every student registers in the SIMCC grade that matches their current Australian school year. This is the official policy of SIMCC Australia and applies to all SIMCC contests run in Australia (mathematics, science, cyber and others).

Australian school year	SIMCC grade	Singapore equivalent
Year 1	Grade 1	Primary 1
Year 2	Grade 2	Primary 2
Year 3	Grade 3	Primary 3
Year 4	Grade 4	Primary 4
Year 5	Grade 5	Primary 5
Year 6	Grade 6	Primary 6
Year 7	Grade 7	Secondary 1
Year 8	Grade 8	Secondary 2
Year 9	Grade 9	Secondary 3
Year 10	Grade 10	Secondary 4
Year 11	Grade 11	JC 1 / Year 5
Year 12	Grade 12	JC 2 / Year 6

Students in Kindergarten / Prep / Foundation / Reception may enter Grade 1 contests where the contest offers a Grade 1 category.

2. Why we place by school year, not by birth year

Parents sometimes suggest that, because Singaporean children start Primary 1 at age 7 and Australian children start Year 1 at about age 6, every Australian student should automatically be placed one grade lower. We have considered this carefully and do not adopt it, for the following reasons.

- 1 Consistency with SIMCC's global rules.** In every participating country, students register in their current school grade; competing upward is open to all, and moving downward requires an approved application. School-starting ages differ across many SIMCC countries, and no country is given an automatic blanket downgrade. Applying one unilaterally in Australia would break the consistency that makes international results comparable.

- 2 **There is no single birth-year standard in Australia.** Each year level contains students born across a full 12-month window, and every state sets its own school-entry cut-off date (see Section 3). As a result, the Australian Year 4 cohort nationally spans roughly January 2016 to July 2017 for the 2026 contest year. A fixed rule such as “Year 4 = Grade 3” would misplace a large share of students.
- 3 **The age gap is smaller than a full year.** Singapore's Primary 4 (2026) is the 2016 birth cohort. Most Australian Year 4 students are also born in 2016; only those born in 2017 are a year younger than the Singapore cohort. A blanket downgrade would make the majority compete against students a year younger than themselves, which is unfair in the opposite direction.
- 4 **Families choose the year level.** Students who transfer to Australia, including from Singapore, decide with their school which year to enter. Placement by current school year respects that decision rather than second-guessing it.
- 5 **Integrity of Australian results.** Awards won by Australian students should carry the same weight as awards won anywhere else. A blanket downgrade would mean Australian results were earned in a lower grade than their school year, which devalues them. In the 2026 SIMCC global cyber contest, Australian Year 8 and Year 9 students entered the Year 12 category and won Gold.

3. School-entry cut-offs by state and territory

The table shows the age cut-off for the first year of school in each jurisdiction, and the typical birth window of a Year 4 student in the 2026 contest year. Students who started school a year later than the earliest permitted date (“held back”) are older than the window shown.

State / territory	Must turn 5 on or before	Typical Year 4 birth window (2026)
NSW	31 July of the entry year	1 Aug 2016 – 31 Jul 2017
VIC, ACT, SA*	30 April of the entry year	1 May 2016 – 30 Apr 2017
QLD, WA, NT	30 June of the entry year	1 Jul 2016 – 30 Jun 2017
TAS	1 January of the entry year	2 Jan 2016 – 1 Jan 2017
Singapore (reference)	Turns 7 in the Primary 1 year	1 Jan 2016 – 31 Dec 2016

* SA also offers a mid-year intake for children turning 5 between 1 May and 31 October. Cut-offs are summarised from state education department guidance and may change; the SIMCC Australia rule in Section 4 is based on calendar birth year and does not depend on the state.

4. Who may apply to move down one grade

A lower grade may be requested only where the student is **younger than the Singapore cohort** for their grade. The boundary is the **calendar year of birth**:

Eligibility rule

A student in Australian **Year N** may apply to compete in **Grade N – 1** only if they were born in the calendar year (**contest year – N – 5**) — that is, they turn **N + 5** years old during the contest year.

Example (2026): a Year 4 student born **in 2017** (turning 9 in 2026) may apply for Grade 3. A Year 4 student born in 2016 or earlier (turning 10 or older) is **not eligible** and competes in Grade 4.

Moving down by more than one grade is not available under any circumstances.

Australian school year (2026)	Default SIMCC grade	Eligible to apply for one grade lower if born in...	Not eligible if born in...
Year 1	Grade 1	Not applicable (Grade 1 is the lowest category)	—
Year 2	Grade 2	2019 (1 Jan – 31 Dec) → Grade 1	2018 or earlier
Year 3	Grade 3	2018 (1 Jan – 31 Dec) → Grade 2	2017 or earlier
Year 4	Grade 4	2017 (1 Jan – 31 Dec) → Grade 3	2016 or earlier
Year 5	Grade 5	2016 (1 Jan – 31 Dec) → Grade 4	2015 or earlier
Year 6	Grade 6	2015 (1 Jan – 31 Dec) → Grade 5	2014 or earlier
Year 7	Grade 7	2014 (1 Jan – 31 Dec) → Grade 6	2013 or earlier
Year 8	Grade 8	2013 (1 Jan – 31 Dec) → Grade 7	2012 or earlier
Year 9	Grade 9	2012 (1 Jan – 31 Dec) → Grade 8	2011 or earlier
Year 10	Grade 10	2011 (1 Jan – 31 Dec) → Grade 9	2010 or earlier
Year 11	Grade 11	2010 (1 Jan – 31 Dec) → Grade 10	2009 or earlier
Year 12	Grade 12	2009 (1 Jan – 31 Dec) → Grade 11	2008 or earlier

For later contest years, add one to each birth year (e.g. in 2027, a Year 4 student born in 2018 may apply for Grade 3). The highlighted row is the Year 4 example discussed in this document.

5. Application principles

All requests to move to a lower grade are handled under the following principles.

- 1 Eligibility first.** Only students who meet the birth-year rule in Section 4 may apply. Requests from students outside the rule will not be approved, regardless of the reason given.
- 2 Formal channel only.** Applications must be submitted by email to the official SIMCC Australia address published at simcc.org.au (an online application form will be launched shortly). Requests made through WhatsApp, WeChat, social media or verbal messages are not treated as formal requests and will not be actioned. No major competition in Australia processes category changes through chat apps, and SIMCC Australia follows the same standard.
- 3 Required information.** Student's full name as registered, school, current year level, date of birth, the contest(s) concerned, and the grade requested. Proof of date of birth and current enrolment (e.g. school report or enrolment letter) may be requested before a decision is made.
- 4 Timing.** Please allow **at least 3 working days** for a decision, and submit before the registration deadline of the contest concerned. Late requests may not be processed in time. Formal email requests received within 24 hours of a contest have previously been handled as urgent, but this cannot be guaranteed.
- 5 Case-by-case assessment.** Each application is assessed individually by the SIMCC Australia Organising Committee. Meeting the eligibility rule allows a student to apply; it does not guarantee approval.
- 6 One adjustment only.** A student may have their grade adjusted **once**. Once a grade has been adjusted, no further change (up or down) will be made for that student in the same contest year. Repeated requests to switch grades will not be considered.
- 7 Decisions are confirmed by email** and are final. Results and certificates reflect the grade in which the student actually competed.

6. Frequently asked questions

Q. My child is in Year 4 and was born in March 2017. Which grade?

Default placement is Grade 4. Because your child was born in 2017, you may apply by email for Grade 3. If you do not apply, your child competes in Grade 4.

Q. My child is in Year 4, born in October 2016, and finds the Grade 4 paper hard.

Your child is in the same birth cohort as Singapore's Primary 4 and is not eligible to move down. We recommend using the mock tests and preparation sessions offered before each contest.

Q. My child is strong and wants a bigger challenge.

Register directly at any higher grade. No application or approval is needed.

Q. We moved from Singapore and chose a year level for our child. Does that change anything?

No. Placement follows the Australian year level your child is enrolled in. If your child meets the birth-year rule, you may apply to move down one grade in the usual way.

Q. Can I ask for the change in the parents' WhatsApp or WeChat group?

No. Only email requests (or the online form, once launched) are treated as formal applications. Please check simcc.org.au for the current address.

Q. I applied and was approved. Can I change back later?

No. Only one adjustment is permitted per student per contest year.

Stay informed

The current version of this policy, the official application email address, and the online application form (when launched) are published at simcc.org.au. Please check the website before each contest season. This document is version 0.9 and may be refined as the application form is introduced.