



ROYAL
BALLET
SCHOOL

SETTING THE STANDARD

Appropriate Age of Entry and Year Group Placement for Full-Time Training

DECEMBER 2025

APPROPRIATE AGE OF ENTRY AND YEAR GROUP PLACEMENT FOR FULL-TIME TRAINING

Purpose

This policy sets out The Royal Ballet School's position on the appropriate age of entry and year group placement within the School's full-time training programmes. For clarity, The Royal Ballet School aligns its entry points with the standard UK school year dates. The policy ensures that all students join the School at a stage that reflects their physical, emotional, and social development, supporting their wellbeing, safety, and long-term success in training. This policy should be read alongside the Schools Admission Policy, Boarding Principles and Suitability Policy and Teaching of English as an Additional Language (EAL) Policy, where relevant.

Principles

The progression of ballet training must align closely with a student's developmental stage. Entry to a year group outside the typical age range could place undue physical, emotional, and academic demands on the student, and may disrupt the cohesion and developmental balance within the cohort.

Students who are outside the typical age range for a given group will **not normally** be considered suitable for entry.

This approach ensures that:

- Students train among peers of similar developmental stages
- Physical training is delivered in line with safe and age-appropriate progression
- Students can fully engage in academic, social, and pastoral aspects of School life
- The School maintains consistency across its training pathways

In certain circumstances, a student may be required to repeat a year of training, placing them outside of their usual school year group. This decision will only be made if it is deemed to be in the best interests of the student and their overall development.

A repeat year may be considered, for example, in cases of long-term injury or an extended period of absence from the artistic curriculum.

Any such decision will take into consideration the safeguarding of all students and the School's capacity to safely accommodate all pupils. This must be approved by the Artistic Director, the Academic and Pastoral Principal, Designated Safeguarding Lead, Assistant Principal (Pastoral and Welfare) and the Head of Healthcare and Performance Support.

Age of Entry

The following table outlines the expected age of entry for each year group as of **1 September in the year of entry**:

Year Group Typical Entry Age Range Notes

Year 8	12–12.11 years	
Year 9	13–13.11 years	
Year 10	14–14.11 years	
Year 11	15–15.11 years	GCSE completion year
Year 12	16–16.11 years	Entry to Upper School
Year 13	17–17.11 years	
Year 14	18–18.11 years	Final year of vocational training

Considerations for Exceptional Admission of International Students and Entrants via Internationally Recognised Competitions

In rare and demonstrable cases, the School may consider admitting a student outside the typical age ranges through competition entrants (e.g. Prix de Lausanne, YAGP).

An exceptional entry may only be approved where there is clear, documented evidence that:

- The student’s technical, physical, emotional, and social maturity is aligned with the target year group
- Entry does not pose an unacceptable risk to the student’s wellbeing, safety, or injury prevention
- In the view of the School, the student is likely to meet the appropriate academic, pastoral, and practical demands of full-time training, including language competency where relevant

A student may only be considered for entry as a year younger if it is deemed that an offer of placement in a lower year group would be detrimental to their own development and progression. Such a decision will never be considered solely on the request of a parent, guardian, or external teacher.

International students must either demonstrate a sufficient level of English proficiency or be provided with the necessary support to ensure they can:

- Engage safely and effectively with the School’s academic, pastoral, and safeguarding systems

- Participate in an (EAL) English as an Additional Language plan if English is not their first language, in order to achieve the level required for above

Competition winners, including those from Prix de Lausanne, YAGP or similar international platforms, are not automatically admitted. Any offer of a place remains subject to the same rigorous assessment and approval process outlined above, ensuring consistency, equity, and safeguarding for all students.

This process ensures that all students admitted under exceptional circumstances can:

- Integrate safely and effectively into the student community
- Access the appropriate academic curriculum
- Receive appropriate safeguarding, pastoral, and training support

Decisions for exceptional entry are made only after a thorough, multi-step assessment by the School's Artistic, Pastoral, Safeguarding and Healthcare teams and require approval from the Artistic Director, Academic & Pastoral Principal, Assistant Principal (Pastoral and Welfare), Designated Safeguarding Lead and the Head of Healthcare and Performance Support.