



TRANSITION POLICY

Overview

This policy is built on the knowledge that transition to school from prior-to-school settings, through developmental stages and from primary school to secondary school is a critical time in the lives of all children. We know that a young person's future wellbeing is highly influenced by their success in completing school (Social Inclusion Board 2007). It is also clear from research that a child's *'adjustment to the first year at school and the patterns of behaviour and achievement established during this period, have important implications for the trajectories of future academic and social success'*. Dockett & Perry 2004b

Definition

"Transitions can be understood as key moments within the process of socio-cultural learning whereby children change their behaviour according to the new insights gained through social interaction with their environment." Volger, P. Crivello, G. Woodhead M; *early childhood transitions research: a review of concepts, theory & practice* 2008. Current research views transition itself as a far more complex and long-term process that involves a child's identity, the internalisation of leaving one setting and then developing a sense of belonging within the new setting.

Aims

This policy aims to specifically and carefully address site-level structures and processes which support all children and families to experience successful transitions to school, to new year levels, developmental transitions and transition to secondary school.

Strategies

Follow the six essential principles to guide practice. This six essential principles and guiding questions are:

- Acting intentionally – to what extent do we deliberately plan for transition?
- Being Responsive – how do we differentiate in response to each child and family?
- Pedagogy (and play) – how do we provide for optimum learning?
- Wellbeing for Learning – how do we support each child and family?
- Building partnerships – who has a say in what happens?
- Professional Collaboration – who else can contribute?

Procedures

Transition from prior-to-school settings to Primary School

In the context of the early years (birth to age 8), the term transition has long been used to refer to a series of visits to school prior to entry. While invaluable to a child's experience of transition to school, these visits are now viewed more as orientation to the new context and the process of transition now incorporates a range of different experiences that help with the more complex and long term process of developing a sense of belonging in the primary school environment.

- Acting Intentionally : Staff at Linden Park Primary School intentionally plan for transition into the school environment by offering a range of experiences for children and families. These include school tours, an orientation visit, open-to-play sessions, visits to JB Cleland Kindy, sharing child portfolios, library and assembly experiences, welcoming new students and families to the school. Staff read prior-to-school reports that have been sent to them by DECD prior-to-school settings or by parents. Kindergarten staff bring students to visit the school.
- Being Responsive: In special circumstances e.g. when a student is on a negotiated education plan (NEP) or disability support plan (SWD), Linden Park Primary School is responsive to the needs of individual children and families, liaising further with the prior-to-school setting, the parents of the student and DECD disability support staff to establish and or confirm the special needs requirements for the transition and differentiates transition experiences for the child and family accordingly.



Linden Park Primary School

- **Pedagogy and Play:** Reception teaching pedagogy incorporates a mixture of play based learning with more formal academic curriculum that is engaging and developmentally appropriate for students. This helps provide greater alignment between prior-to-school services and the school curriculum, with a more gradual introduction to the more formal structures of academic learning, ensuring a smoother transition for the students. The use of the Walker Learning Approach engages students in a quality play experience. The play based environment enables teachers to make evidence based decisions about children's learning and to personalise formal learning through differentiation, optimising learning.
'Children who engage in quality play experiences are more likely to have well-developed memory skills, language development, and are able to regulate their behaviour, leading to enhanced school adjustment and academic learning'. Bodrova, E. & Leong, D.J. 2005
- **Wellbeing for Learning:** Linden Park Primary School's core values of Respect, Responsibility, Creativity and Diversity support the social and emotional development of each child. The Walker Learning Approach places an emphasis upon relationships between teacher and child and family. *'It views the child holistically and values emotional and social life as important as the academic.'* (Earlylife.com.au, 2016) Through the Walker Learning Approach children's wellbeing for learning is addressed by intentionally planning for the children's Social, Emotional, Physical, Cognitive and Language development.
- **Building Partnerships:** Building strong partnerships between parents, school staff, students and the wider community is an important part of children's successful transition to school. Leadership at Linden Park attend morning teas at JB Cleland Kindergarten to begin to establish relationships with prospective parents, offer school tours and parent information sessions. Governing Council members also share information with new families about ways they can become involved in the school community. Feedback is sought from families regarding the strengths of the transition process and is incorporated as part of an improvement process.
- **Professional Collaboration:** Linden Park Primary School and JB Cleland Kindergarten staff meet once per term to engage in professional dialogue, discussing pedagogy and practice to build consistency across the two settings. They plan for the children's orientation visits and transition experiences in the school environment to enable children and families to experience successful transitions.

Transition between year levels

Information from students and parents is requested regarding important friendships for their child, student learning considerations and any other information that parents wish to have considered in the class placement process for their child.

This information is then collated and is taken in consideration when balancing the complexities of creating new classes for the following year. Once the classes have been finalised, parents are informed via letter from the school. Students have an orientation visit in Week 9 of Term 4. This enables students to visit their new classroom and meet new classmates. Where possible this visit is with their teacher for the following year. Acquaintance nights /Parent information sessions are held early in the school year so that families can develop relationships with staff and establish open lines of communication between home and school.

Transition to High School

The Year 7 to 8 Transition process is centrally coordinated by the Office for Education, and Data Management and Information Systems with Primary and Secondary Schools liaising with parents regarding the transition process and the DECD School Enrolment Policy. Each year DECD provides schools with a timeline that informs the transition process for students transitioning from year 7 to year 8. Linden Park PS disseminates the enrolment to high school forms (ED 176 form) to parents for zoned schools in term 2. ED176 forms are returned to Linden Park by Week 4 term 2 (approximately - depending on DECD calendar). Linden Park SSO staff complete an electronic collection of this data in week 6 of term 2. The schools, both primary and secondary receive information about student placement in



Linden Park Primary School

week 2 of term 3. Secondary schools then provide enrolment acceptance packs to primary schools and these are distributed to parents on Friday of week 4, term 3. These forms are returned to secondary schools by families. Once secondary schools have received student enrolment forms from families they notify Linden Park Primary School about the dates for parent information sessions and transition school visits for year 7 students. Linden Park Primary School disseminates this information to parents via the school newsletter and letters from the high schools. Parents are encouraged to visit secondary schools in which they are interested. Information regarding visiting dates and times can also be obtained from the individual secondary school's website or by contacting schools directly. Linden Park Primary School year 7 staff receive student information forms requesting relevant student information to ensure a successful and smooth transition process. These are completed by year 7 teachers and are collected by the student liaison officer and forwarded to the relevant high schools.

In special circumstances e.g. when a student is on a negotiated education plan (NEP) or disability support plan (Students With Disability - SWD) it may be necessary for Linden Park Primary School leadership staff to liaise further with the secondary school, the parents of the student and DECD disability support staff to establish and or confirm the special needs requirements for the transition.

Monitoring and Review:

To ensure this policy is effective, it will be monitored and evaluated as part of the schools regular two-year cycle of policy review. Feedback will be sought from staff, professional partnerships, and the school community about the efficacy of transition procedures. Amendments may be made and the policy will be re-submitted to the Governing Council. Changes made will be communicated to the school community.

Other information that may be of interest:

- *Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework* (DEEWR, 2009)
- *Australian Curriculum for schools* (ACARA)
- *Teaching for Effective Learning (TfEL) framework* (DECS, 2010)
- *Reflect Respect Relate: Assessing for learning and development in the early years* (DECS, 2007)

To access these resources, visit <https://www.decd.sa.gov.au/doc/transition-guidelines-early-childhood-booklet>

- <http://www.earlylife.com.au/walker-learning>
- www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/
- www.kidsmatter.edu.au