

Preschool to School Transition Policy and Procedures

This procedure is applicable to: all Department for Education employees at Paringa Park Primary School.

Document control

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Revision Record

Date	Version	Revision description

1. Title

Paringa Park Primary School Preschool to School Transition Policy and Procedures

2. Purpose

To provide documented shared agreements, beliefs and procedures that assist both parents and children commencing reception at Paringa Park Primary School.

3. Scope

This policy and procedure clarifies the principles of effective transitions, operating guidelines and the reception enrolment process.

4. Objectives

Principles of effective transitions

The Transition to School policy is grounded in the 6 principles of effective transitions as documented in *DECD Position Paper on Transition to School (2013)*. At Paringa Park Primary School (PPPS) we are continually striving towards sustainable and high levels across all principles. We implement collaborative mechanisms across prior to school settings and our site, to share pedagogy and practice and to know and understand children and learning. These levels are documented in our policy as follows:



1. Acting intentionally

We understand that transition is a process and plan to strengthen it, to ensure children are supported and their wellbeing enhanced.

Policies and plans:

At PPPS, leaders ensure that transition processes, policies and programs:

- are systematically and collaboratively developed and documented
- are evident and available for all community members
- involve educators at all levels as well as community members
- reflect and accommodate the diversity of the school community
- are embedded within the school culture and visibly implemented within the site
- are known, understood and talked about by staff, children and families.

Planning and review processes:

- At PPPS predictable, ongoing processes exist to purposefully and collaboratively plan and review transition processes, led by site leaders and involving all relevant stakeholders – educators, families and children.
- All relevant sites are represented and actively involved.
- Children's voices are authentically sought and considered as part of review processes.

Orientation programs:

- Transition is viewed as a complex process over a varying length of time which differs for each child and family.
- Orientation to School (OTS) program is flexible and extended and considers the individual needs of children and families. The program may look different for different children in content and length of time.
- We are aware children may attend school all day during the OTS Week (term 1 week 1) at parents request.
- PPS OTS program seeks to build on children's prior experiences, connect new and old settings, and focuses on children developing their own identity in school, developing supportive relationships and positive attitudes and dispositions.

2. Being responsive

Building on children's prior and current experiences helps children feel secure, confident and connected. Successful transition involves planned, professional conversations about each child in which the contributions of all parties are valued. Learning, development and wellbeing are central to successful transition.

Knowing and responding to the community:

- Our transition planning and processes reflects the diversity of the community and address equity, access and individual needs and the lived experience of families.
- Children's prior to school/family/community experiences and achievements are valued and used as a basis for the development of ongoing learning.

Knowing and responding to each child:

- PPS transition processes and planning respond to individual children and actively seek and act on relevant information from families and prior to school settings.
- Our transition planning and processes prioritise the development of a strong identity and sense of belonging within the school community.
- Planned opportunities exist for children to develop new friendships and relationships with relevant children and adults in a non-threatening way whilst maintaining confidence and self-esteem.

3. Pedagogy and play

Young children's play allows them to explore, identify, negotiate, take risks and create meaning. 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, DJ 2005)

Understanding of issues related to “transition”:

- Educators in our school recognise that children bring ways of belonging, being and becoming from their home and prior settings.
- Educators understand that transition is a complex and long term process involving a child’s identity and sense of belonging in the new context.
- Educators work together to ensure transitions for children are contextualised and promote success for each child.

Commitment to play based pedagogy:

- Leaders and educators at PPPS understand play is a major pedagogical process for learning.
- Leaders at PPPS ensure that educators are supported with resources and learning environments which facilitate quality play across the curriculum.
- Educators use play as an opportunity to make evidence based decisions about children’s learning and development.
- Play is used as a means to foster and attend to each child’s physical, cognitive, social, spiritual and emotional wellbeing in order to maximize their learning potential.

Understanding of curriculum frameworks:

- Educators in all sites have an understanding of each other’s curriculum frameworks and pedagogical approaches.
- As educators in school and prior to school settings we engage in a range of planned, collaborative professional activities.
- Educators work together to support connections and continuity of learning for children as they transition to school.

4. Wellbeing for learning

When we attend to children’s physical, cognitive, spiritual, emotional and social wellbeing, we foster their confidence, optimism, perseverance and resilience – they are more able to concentrate and so-operate, and their learning potential is maximised.

Positive engagement of children and families:

- Educators at PPPS understand the connection between wellbeing and learning and share a commitment to supporting and monitoring wellbeing.
- There is a shared commitment to processes which develop and extend children’s wellbeing and self-esteem.
- Respectful and reciprocal relationships with families are developed.
- Families have a strong and positive role in supporting children as they move to a new setting.

Belonging in a new context:

- PPPS staff and community jointly develop the school’s values and goals and work together to embed them in everyday practice
- Educators actively attend to the development of effective relationships which support the growth of identity and positive dispositions to school and learning.
- Families and children contribute as valid and valued members of the new site.

Monitoring wellbeing:

- As a school we have specific strategies and processes in place to monitor the learning environment as well as children's engagement and wellbeing at various stages of their transition process.
- Educators at our school work with families and also with colleagues across sites to maximise each child's wellbeing.
- PPPS educators respond to the identified needs of each child and adapt practice to ensure all children develop a positive sense of identity, agency and self-esteem in the school setting.

5. Building partnerships

Building genuine partnerships with families based on reciprocity and respect, is in the best interests of children.

Communicating across sites:

- Leaders and educators at PPPS ensure communication about individual children's learning is comprehensive, collaborative and informs practice.
- As leaders and educators we initiate and sustain opportunities to engage across settings to discuss the nature of curriculum content and pedagogy.

Communicating with families and children:

- Priority is given to meeting with families to discuss their perspectives and share their knowledge about the child.
- Children are involved in sharing their learning with educators using learning stories or similar records of learning.

Communicating with relevant professional support personnel and agencies:

- Planning includes the development of ongoing partnerships and working relationships with relevant support professionals.
- All stakeholders collaborate to inform decisions made to ensure a positive transition for all children.

6. Professional collaboration

Children and families are more likely to experience positive transitions when leaders and staff across sites and services collaborate. This collaborative engagement across the care, education, health and family services adds to the holistic approach in working together with families and children.

Professional conversations (within and across sites):

- Leaders and educators in school and prior to school settings commit to and engage in regular, planned, shared opportunities for professional dialogue and conversations about children, pedagogy and continuity of learning.
- Leaders and educators seek to maximise opportunities for meaningful professional conversations with families and relevant support personnel.

Shared professional understanding across settings:

- Educators across sites have a shared philosophy and understanding about children and pedagogy.
- Educators clearly articulate how their practices are driven by their philosophy and work collaboratively to maximise connections and consistency in practice across sites.
- Educators understand how different curriculum frameworks impact on practice and make conscious and obvious efforts to integrate those curriculum frameworks to maximise continuity of learning from the perspective of the child and family.

Joint professional learning:

- Educators across sites participate in active networks/Professional Learning Communities on a regular basis to strengthen and share understandings about teaching and learning for young children.
- Professional learning impacts positively on shared practice across sites.

5. Procedure detail

Operating guidelines

The following eligibility applies for enrolment:

- Children who turn 5 years of age BEFORE May 1 can start school at the beginning of the year.
- Children who turn 5 on or after May 1 will start school at the beginning of the following year.

Refer to Appendix 1 for Letter to Parents and Orientation to Schools (OTS) program.

Enrolment process

Paringa Park Primary School is zoned and this zoning is strictly adhered to. Enrolment is finalised and confirmed after the following documents are provided to the front office or at enrolment interview:

- Proof of age for your child (i.e. birth certificate or passport).
- Documentation proving your permanent address and that you have been living at this address i.e. contract of sale or council rates.
- If the parent/guardian is renting - provision of a rental agreement and bond receipt. The rental agreement needs to cover at least 12 months of the child's first year at school.
- A recent gas or electricity bill or connection statement stating residential address (not a business address) in the name of the enrolling parent/guardian.
- Copies of any family law or other relevant court order.

6. Roles and responsibilities

Party / parties	Roles and responsibilities
Principal	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• coordinate implementation of policy and procedure
Site leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• support implementation of parent workshops• conduct enrolment interviews with all families• support teachers, children and families in their transition to school
Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• implement shared agreements based around the 6 principles of effective transition as documented in this policy• implement actions as documented in the Orientation to School program

Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • engage with Orientation to School program as documented • be understanding, supportive of their child(ren) as they experience transition to school.
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7. Monitoring, evaluation and review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the reception team and changes approved by governing council as required.

8. Associated documents

Transition to School [Transition to School a DECD position paper](#)

Principles of successful transition [Principles of successful transition to school](#)

8. Appendix

Appendix 1 – Orientation to School Program

Appendix 2 – Starting School – parent letter

APPENDIX 1 - ORIENTATION TO SCHOOL PROGRAM RECEPTION STUDENTS

Activity	Date/Time	Children	Parents	Details
Being responsive - Prior to school setting visits	Reception and preschool educators from main feeder kindergartens meet with the purpose of gathering information about each child. This occurs in term 3 week 5.			
Professional collaboration	Reception educators will visit preschools to meet the children and gather information informally. This occurs in term 3 week 10.			
Building partnerships - Welcome to school family evening	Term 4 week 6	Involvement in various activities in classrooms and in the COLA.	Collect School Welcome Bag (including parent/educator conversation booking form, First Year at School book, lunchbox, Parent Handbook) Involvement in activities with children Meet school staff informally School Tours by Student Leaders Finalise enrolment Purchase uniforms Meet OSHC staff	Open afternoon involving all children, carers and current reception educators, pre-school staff and school & OSHC staff. Meet at the front of the school.
Building partnerships - School visit	Term 4 week 7	Introduction to school with reception educators.	Informal morning tea in the staff room with site leaders and school parents.	Parents take children directly to the gym. Children taken to classroom by reception educator. Please return Parent/ Educator Conversation form to finalise time. Parents join staff for morning tea.
Acting Intentionally; Wellbeing for learning; Play and pedagogy Orientation to school Week Term 1 Week 1	Monday 8.45-12.30pm	Morning routines and tour the school Classroom activities Eat recess and lunch inside Supervision during recess play	9-10.30am Parent Workshop in the Performing Arts Room: - Meet the Leadership Team and other relevant school and OSHC staff - School Introductory Information Workshop 1.30-5pm - Parent/Educator Conversations	Parents take children directly to their class then join the Principal in the staff room 9-10.30am. Children bring healthy snack, hat, water bottle, recess and lunch. Parents collect children from classroom at 12.30pm. Additional SSO support in all classes and at break times all week.
	Tuesday	Normal classroom program Eat recess and lunch inside class Supervision during recess play	9-10.30am Parent Workshop in the Performing Arts Room: Early Childhood development and learning. What does it look like? How can parents help? What does it mean in practice? 1.30-3pm - Parent/Educator Conversations	Parents take children directly to their class then join the Leadership Team in Performing Arts Room. Children bring healthy snack, hat, water bottle, recess and lunch, Parents collect children from classroom at 12.30pm.
	Wednesday 8.45-12.30pm	Normal classroom program Eat recess and lunch inside Supervision during recess play	9-11am Parent Workshop in the Performing Arts Room: - Volunteer Induction and RAN training 1.30-3pm - Parent/Educator Conversations	Parents take children directly to their class then join the Leadership Team in Performing Arts Room. Children bring healthy snack, hat, water bottle, recess and lunch, Parents collect children from classroom at 12.30pm.
	Thursday 18.45-1.30pm	Normal classroom program Eat recess and lunch inside. Supervision during recess and lunch play	No parent session 2-3pm - Parent/Educator Conversations	Parents take children directly to their class. Children bring healthy snack, hat, water bottle, recess and lunch, Collect from classroom at 1.30pm.
	Friday 8.45-1.30pm	Normal classroom program Children stay for supervised lunch play	Parent meeting with teacher in the classroom 1-1.30pm. How will the class operate? What are the expectations for children and parents?	Parents take children directly to their class Children bring healthy snack, hat, water bottle, recess and lunch. Parents attend meeting with reception educator 1-1.30pm. Collect children from classroom at 1.30pm

APPENDIX 2 – Starting school parent letter



PARINGA PARK PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Dear Families

Shortly your child will be starting Reception at Paringa Park Primary School. This is a transformational time of great excitement and change, but may also be a time that is highly emotional and given the over-abundance of information at our digital fingertips; it is easy, as parents, to feel overwhelmed, uncertain and often powerless. Also early childhood education is very different to what it was when you went to school! This letter is not only to welcome you (again) to our school, but to support you in understanding what beginning school may be like to you, your family and your child. We recognise that this is quite a lengthy letter but encourage you to read all the documentation provided as we have included some great tips and ideas to support you and your child.

At Paringa Park Primary School we acknowledge that starting school is not only a change for your child. Amid the excitement and preparation it can be important to take a moment to think about how this change affects you and your family. As you help your child to prepare for the changes ahead, it is important to monitor your own feelings. Having your child start school may lead to a new routine for you and your family. There may also be a period of adjustment as you begin to connect with the new school community and feel the loss of strong relationships formed at your child's kindergarten or childcare. Thinking a little about how things are going to change for everyone can help you to make sure the whole family is ready for starting school.

Mixed emotions

Starting school may bring about a range of emotions for you and your family. As your child reaches this milestone, you may be feeling a sense of loss as they are spending more time out of the family home and in somebody else's care. Or perhaps you are worried about how your child will settle into their new setting, cope with new learning tasks and make friends. You may also be feeling excited and proud as your child is growing up and starting a new phase in their life. It is important to monitor your own reactions and to recognise when you are feeling stressed and the potential causes. This will help you to respond appropriately and think about what else you might need to do to prepare for starting school. Your child is also likely to be aware of how you are feeling and this can influence their reaction to school. If you appear confident about the challenges ahead and express a positive outlook, this will help your child to feel confident about starting school.

A new family routine

As your child prepares to start school, take some time to think about how your family will adjust to the new routine. If you are a working parent, you may need to consider arrangements for before and after school care or you may be in a position now where you may need to allow more time in the mornings as you drop off one child at kindergarten/childcare and the other at school. If your primary role has been mainly at home looking after your child, there might be a period of adjustment as your child is away from you for longer hours. Your child may also feel exhausted with all the changes they are experiencing, and it may be helpful to hold back on after school activities.

Supportive relationships and building connections with our school

Supportive relationships can help everyone cope with challenging or difficult times. During your child's transition to school it can be really helpful to connect with other families as it is likely that they too are experiencing similar emotions! Sharing your concerns, hopes and experiences can be comforting and you may learn some useful tips or ideas. During your child's first week of school, we encourage you to engage in the range of workshops we have prepared and take the opportunity to meet with your child's class teacher for an interview one afternoon. Once your child has started school, there are many different ways you can continue to build connections. We encourage families to maintain regular communication with your child's teacher; to stay informed through attending information evenings and activities; look out for social opportunities where your family can build relationships with other families throughout the school year; take an interest in your child's learning by asking your child about their day and acknowledge their efforts in learning tasks; and take opportunities to share your knowledge, ideas and experiences through volunteering in the class and/or the school. Remember, everything you do makes a difference in supporting your child's learning and development, and building positive relationships within our school community.

Every child is different and special

Every single child has a unique blend of attributes and while they may be excelling in some areas they may be struggling in others. This is the nature of early childhood development. As early years educators we are experienced in supporting each child's physical, intellectual, social and emotional learning and work within the Early Years Learning Framework to provide continuity of learning for children as they make the transition from their prior to school setting.

We take our role as early childhood educators very seriously as children's development in the early years has been shown to be related to their success at school and into adulthood. Research indicates that there are 5 areas or domains of a child's development that are closely linked as predictors for this success and which are equally important in a child being "ready for school". These are:

Physical health and wellbeing – especially fine motor skills – good health, well fed, well rested, sitting, listening skills, able to grip a pencil, turn pages in a book, build with blocks, able to toilet themselves, feed themselves, dress themselves, some degree of focus to task, blow nose, wipe bottom, wash hands.

Social competence – primary need is to be able to get along with other children, cope with stress of new situation and new learning tasks, have healthy assertiveness, ability to play solo and with other children, have pro-social behaviour.

Emotional maturity – some ability to self-manage their emotions, be able to cope with minimal adult contact in large groups, develop friendships, able to separate from parents...even if gradually!

Communication skills and general knowledge – basic conversation skills, manners, ability to communicate needs, understanding of wider world – again this is a work in progress.

Language and cognitive skills – basic counting, follow basic instructions, basic thinking skills (*NB basic and this is no more important than any of the other domains mentioned here*).

As you can see there are *so many skills*, behaviours and capabilities that our young children need to be competent in other than just their capacity to count to 1000 and know their alphabet!

What can you do to help your child transition well?

In the next couple of weeks and as your child starts school we encourage you to take the opportunity to help your child with some of the basic skills needed to manage themselves. Essentially most of the key attributes are already listed above but especially start exploring some simple habits that can become normal, such as:

Helping your children separate from you – this is a biologically wired fear – to be separated from the safest grown-ups in your world. Consider building their predictability around being left with someone else (e.g. family member, friend). Once your child starts school, develop a positive goodbye routine together (e.g.

sharing a 'high five', special goodbye hug or a funny or loving gesture like a bear hug). Always say goodbye and reassure your child of when you will collect them as this helps build their trust and sense of security. Also avoid lengthy goodbyes as they may increase separation distress and talk positively and enthusiastically about what your child will be doing when they are away from you (e.g. "you will have a story", "you're going to have fun meeting new children"). Children will pick up on your cues if you are feeling nervous so try to be mindful of what you communicate about your own emotions.

Improving communication – help your child to be able to listen and follow directions.

Language marination – nothing beats reading to our children to prepare them to grow a vocabulary that will enable literacy later. So please keep them off technology and engage in real human to human verbal communication as much as you can – read signs, words on cereal boxes, singing songs, use lots of funny rhyming, ask them questions and really listen and set up some pretend play opportunities like shops, being a pilot, have a tea party or playing in a mud kitchen. Children will pretend they are grown-ups and tend to use grown-up language – pure gold!

Organisation – gradually encouraging our children to be more responsible with little things like drink bottles, their clothes, putting things away and tidying up. This can all happen in fun ways in the home, possibly with reminders! A visual checklist of jobs you expect your child to do can be a good strategy to help them remember without being told. Also ensure that you help your child to get a good night's sleep. Having a regular routine such as taking a bath before bedtime or reading a book may help your child to relax.

Avoid being too enthusiastic – please avoid being too enthusiastic about schooling with promises they will learn to read and become clever. Many 5 year olds come home very disillusioned after the first week because they haven't been able to learn to read yet. This is especially important for boys.

Nurturing the educator bond – to help children transition to another person as their safe grown-up, it can be helpful to talk about your child's teacher by name and in a positive manner. This gentle way of familiarising them can help however be careful not to overdo it. Never speak negatively about any educator in front of your child.

Owning anxiety as normal – chatting to your child about anxiety and that it is normal to be a little bit frightened of starting something new is really important. Tell them that you have been a bit anxious starting a new job or a new school and that in a few weeks that anxiety will disappear as everything becomes normal. Show them how to take deep breaths or do 'round and round the garden' in the palm of their hand.

Building friendships but don't over commit – the sooner your child finds a friend the better. For some children this is much easier than for others. Help your child to get to know other children and practice how to welcome and include friends in their play. However it is important to not overdo it! For some children, minimising after school activities/play dates is helpful as they will need some relaxing time after school – they will be tired even if they have been at all day kindergarten/childcare!

Life skills - the more things that your child can do for themselves the more confident and capable they feel. It does start with the little things like dressing themselves, washing their own hands and being able to toilet themselves. It is also allowing them to have autonomy to choose – would you like an apple or a banana in your lunch box? Building confidence and competence also takes place in the playground or your backyard. Allowing them to climb a little higher, swing a little farther or to try something they have never tried before are all risk-taking opportunities that are amazingly positive teachable moments – even when unsuccessful.

Little boys – please be especially careful when transitioning your little boy into a school environment because boys are emotionally quite sensitive and fragile and often have an inability to express how they are feeling, even if they are the most confident boisterous and outgoing boy!

Common behaviours during transition

Young children often have difficulty explaining in words how they feel. Instead they may show their feelings through their behaviour. Some behaviour may be easier to spot like tantrums and crying, while others may be more difficult to notice like being quieter than usual. During the transition to school you may notice the following behaviours emerge or increase in frequency:

clinging behaviour (e.g. not wanting to separate from you)
restlessness (e.g. difficulty settling at activities, easily distracted, fidgeting)
withdrawing (e.g. not participating in familiar activities, less engaged, less willing to persist)
being anxious (e.g. shyness, fidgeting, stomach aches, needing excessive reassurance around the routines or plans for the day)
refusing to comply (e.g. not wanting to follow rules and routines)
avoidance strategies (e.g. increased negotiations around participation)
planning and organisation difficulties (e.g. trouble getting started, remembering or finishing tasks)
increase in crying and tantrums (e.g. more often or in more situations)
changes in eating habits (e.g. loss of appetite, becomes fussy with food, overeating)
sleep difficulties (e.g. trouble falling or staying asleep, nightmares)
regression to younger behaviours (e.g. bedwetting, thumb sucking, baby talk)
aggressive behaviours (e.g. hitting, kicking, shouting).

These behaviours are examples of different ways children respond to challenging situations. They are very typical for children within this age group and you have probably already noticed some of these behaviours during other times of change. However, if the behaviours persist or are interfering with your child's daily life it is a good idea to get further help.

Please remember that as your child starts their schooling journey you are still their number one teacher – and coach. Also avoid comparing your child to other children – they are all unique miracles and growth and development together with learning is not a linear thing. It kind of happens in fits and starts – relax and allow Mother Nature to do what she has been doing since time began. The number one thing that helps children to thrive and flourish is to be strongly attached and bonded to people who love them unconditionally and ferociously no matter what.

Regards
Leanne Prior
Principal

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