

Supporting the transition of EAL/D learners

Rationale

Our Plan for NSW Public Education commits schools to improve support for students at all transitions through school. Students learning English as an additional language or dialect (EAL/D), including newly arrived students and students from refugee backgrounds, require support in transitions through school. These students enter Australian schools with varying levels of prior education and experiences of formal schooling. Well-planned and explicit transition procedures support EAL/D learners to build a sense of belonging which can improve educational and wellbeing outcomes. This document has been prepared to provide schools with guidance on supporting EAL/D student transitions.

Audience

This document is for all staff who are involved in supporting the transition of EAL/D learners into Kindergarten, Year 6 into Year 7, from an IEC into high school, from high school into post school options or the transition of an EAL/D student into a NSW public school at any time of the year.

Transition to school for new students (all stages)

Schools should:

- Provide parents with access to translated enrolment application forms and other [translated documents](#). Encourage parents to indicate home and community languages in the application.
- Interview families whose children may require EAL/D support as part of the enrolment process, organising an interpreter if required via [Interpreting and](#)

[Translations](#) webpage. Arrange for an EAL/D teacher to be present in the interview or notified immediately so that support planning can be initiated if required.

- Explore sensitively with families and caregivers of students from refugee backgrounds what resources are needed to attend school. This might include uniforms and stationery packs. Consider links to additional services within the school that might support student need such as breakfast clubs, lunch programs or homework support. Provide opportunities for families to network with external agencies such as migrant resource centres or [STARTTS](#). For more information, please refer to [Supporting refugee students](#) or contact the [EAL/D Education Leader in your Operational Directorate](#).
- Access the Department of Education's [Engaging Communities](#) and [Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Strategy 2023-26](#) resources to support family-school partnerships.
- Use the Welcome Program as an orientation guide to support students primary and secondary students to have a smooth transition to school. The Welcome Program can be particularly supportive for students transitioning from an IEC to high school.
- Organise an assessment of the student's English language proficiency using the [Kindergarten EAL/D Learning Progression](#) and [ACARA F- 10 EAL/D Learning Progression](#) to identify their language needs and the English language support required.
- Ensure all newly arrived secondary school students in metropolitan Sydney, Wollongong or Armidale, who require support to learn English, attend an IEC for a high school student language assessment.
- Remember that any Year 6 students assessed on the ACARA F-10 EAL/D Learning Progression as Beginning or Emerging have the option to attend the local [Intensive English Centre \(IEC\)](#), if they meet the age and enrolment requirements and the family considers this setting appropriate. Students are eligible to enrol in an IEC if they have been in Australia for less than six months and are aged between 11 and 17. The [IEC podcast](#) is an additional resource to provide information to parents and caregivers.
- Provide opportunities for staff to engage in professional learning to strengthen their enrolment and transition support for students from refugee backgrounds such as [Refugee education professional learning](#) and [Opening the School Gate](#).

- Identify children who may need additional support to make a successful transition and, where appropriate, develop a personalised transition support plan in consultation with the child, family, and early childhood service as the first step in a personalised learning plan using [Planning EAL/D Support](#) and [Multicultural Plan 2024-2027](#).

Transition into Kindergarten

Schools should:

- Complement the Kindergarten Best Start Assessment process by utilising the [Kindergarten Best Start Bilingual Assessment](#) in the student's home language if support is available in the school.
- Design an orientation program to familiarise parents and caregivers with the Australian schooling system. Parents may be apprehensive about sending their children to a school system that does not resemble their prior experiences.
- Access the [Transition to School Digital Statement](#) for EAL/D learners if available via the preschool. This statement can provide valuable information including strengths, interests and preferred ways of learning.
- Share the [Time to Start School](#) translated documents with local preschool providers and families if needed.
- Create [social narratives](#) to support students to familiarise and settle into the school environment. These can be modified for kindergarten using photos from the school.
- Determine if students meet all of the eligibility criteria for [New Arrivals Program \(NAP\)](#) support. Apply for NAP support after the child is enrolled and in attendance at school.

Transition into Primary

Schools should:

- Design an orientation program to familiarise parents and caregivers with the Australian schooling system. Practical strategies for effective primary transition such as planning, implementing and reflecting transition practices are available on the NSW [Department of Education Transition to primary school](#) webpage and the

[NSW Government Transition to primary school webpage](#). Parents and caregivers may experience anxiety about sending their children to a school system that does not resemble their prior experiences.

- Determine if students meet all of the eligibility criteria for [New Arrivals Program \(NAP\)](#) support. Apply for NAP support after the child is enrolled and in attendance at school.

Transition into Year 7

Schools should:

- Establish an orientation and induction program for Year 7 students to support a smooth transition into high school, fostering a sense of belonging and familiarity with the school environment.
- Ensure that EAL/D Learning Progression phases on Maintain EAL/D in ERN are current and accurate in the primary school setting using the 3-6 EAL/D Learning Progression. High school settings should be notified if EAL/D learners have specific learning or support plans in place.
- Assess Year 7 students once they have settled in. All EAL/D learners must be assessed using the 7-10 EAL/D Learning Progression. Ideally, this should be completed in early Term 1 to enable meaningful analysis of external standardised assessments and to support teachers in differentiating teaching and learning according to each student's level of English language proficiency.
- Familiarise themselves with the [Enhancing the transition to high school for students](#) information and the [Transition to secondary school](#) webpage.

Transition to senior school

Schools should:

- Identify students who have not attempted the HSC minimum standard in Year 10, to assess their test readiness through a combination of their EAL/D Learning Progression phase and the practice tests. Provide targeted support to stage 6 EAL/D students through an individualised approach where needed.
- Familiarise themselves with the literacy and numeracy demands of the HSC minimum standard and explicitly teach these skills in the context of the curriculum.

- Access the resources on the Department of Education's [HSC Minimum Standard EAL/D](#) page and [Supporting EAL/D learners to meet the HSC minimum standard](#) resource.
- Provide guidance and support for EAL/D students in their Stage 6 subject selection, including the option to study their home language through the [NSW School of Languages](#) if it is not offered at the school.

Transition to post-school options

Schools should:

- Provide opportunities for students to engage with the school's careers advisor for current information regarding post school options inclusive of Pathways, TAFE, VET courses and undergraduate courses.
- Access the Department of Education's [Tertiary Pathways](#) resource to support the specific needs of students from a refugee background.

Support

For additional information and support, please contact eald.education@det.nsw.edu.au or your local [EAL/D Education Leader](#).

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