

POLICY AIM

When a child first attends school, there is a great change for that child and for their family. Sweetpeas believes that the child's parents are the most important link in this transition. The aim of this policy is:

- To outline the strategies our Sweetpeas services utilise to support this transition, including providing a caring environment for each child that encourages self-help skills, emotional wellbeing and social competence before going to school.
- To ensure all of our educators are aware of their responsibilities in regard to transition to school, and how all of our children can be supported.
- To support our families in guiding their children through this transition by providing them with advice, strategies, information and resources.

RATIONALE

Starting school is a big milestone for children and their families. The transition between learning environments can be both challenging and exciting. Transition to school spans from when children start to get ready for school until they have fully settled into school. The evidence consistently suggests that a successful transition to school acts as a significant lever for improving children's educational, social and emotional outcomes (NSW Department of Education). Sweetpeas acknowledges our huge role in children's lives before attending school, and we aim to assist all of our children to feel secure, confident and connected in their new environment.

SCOPE - WHO IS AFFECTED BY THIS POLICY?

- Children
- Families
- Educators
- Community

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD

QUALITY AREA 1 (EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM AND PRACTICE)

- Standard 1.1 (Program) - The educational program enhances each child's learning and development.
- Element 1.2.1 (Intentional Teaching) - Educators are deliberate, purposeful, and thoughtful in their decisions and actions.
- Element 1.3.3 (Information for Families) - Families are informed about the program and their child's progress.

QUALITY AREA 6 (COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS WITH FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES)

- Standard 6.2 (Collaborative Partnerships) - Collaborative partnerships enhance children's inclusion, learning and wellbeing.
- Element 6.2.1 (Transitions) - Continuity of learning and transitions for each child are supported by sharing information and clarifying responsibilities.
- Element 6.2.3 (Community Engagement) - The service builds relationships and engages with its community.

RELATED POLICIES AND LEGISLATION

RELATED SWEETPEAS POLICIES:

- Acceptance and Refusal of Authorisations Policy
- Anti-Bias and Inclusion Policy
- Arrival and Departure Policy
- Confidentiality Policy
- Development & Education Policy
- Interactions and Relationships with Children Policy
- Excursion Policy
- Safe Transportation of Children Policy

RELATED EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL LAW AND REGULATIONS

- Part 4.7, Regulation 181 - Confidentiality of records kept by approved provider

IMPLEMENTATION AND STRATEGIES

The Service will always talk about starting school in a positive manner that will reinforce a healthy attitude toward the transition.

- Where possible, information on local schools will be made available to parents.
- Where possible, towards the end of each year educators will organise a transition excursion to the local school to familiarise the children with the school environment.
- Educators assist children to understand their transition by displaying the school crests and photos of their school in a visual map.
- Uniforms are displayed and discussed.
- Sweetpeas invites local Principals, Assistant Principals, or early stage one teachers to visit the service for families and children. This is to aid the exchange of information and reduce anxiety for both families and children.
- Families with children who are of eligible age to commence school in the following year will be given a school readiness report mid-year for the child's school interview and again in December before finishing at the service.

Not all children are emotionally or socially ready to begin school the year they turn five. Some children benefit greatly from the extra year of maturity before they start school, and it can help them if they start a bit later.

- Sweetpeas educators recognise and promote the importance of emotional and social development as a key indicator for a child's readiness for school.
- Families will be encouraged to talk to their child's primary carer at the service in relation to whether their child is ready for the transition to school.
- Educators offer one-on-one discussions with key educators to assist families in the transition or the decision to send their child to school.
- Children who turn five on or before 31st July next year are eligible to start school. By law, all children must be enrolled in school by the time they turn six.

Similar to an early childhood education service, schools provide learning experiences based on each child's skill set when they arrive at school. Children develop at different rates and learn skills in different ways. Schools will respond to the needs, learning styles and rates of progress of individual students.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF STAFF

THE APPROVED PROVIDERS/MANAGEMENT WILL:

- Ensure that all staff are aware of and abide by this policy.
- Ensure all below responsibilities, particularly Nominated Supervisor responsibilities are being met.

THE NOMINATED SUPERVISOR/DIRECTOR WILL:

- Organise parent/teacher interviews mid-year where families and educators can share their different thoughts, questions or concerns regarding the child and their education. This also opens doors to discussing whether the child is ready for school.
- Ensure confidentiality of child and family records and information is maintained throughout the transition to school process, as per the *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*.
- Ensure no child leaves the premises without authorisation whether they are:
 - Signed out by an authorised adult, or
 - On an organised excursion (see Excursion Policy)

EDUCATORS WILL:

- Always talk about starting school in a positive manner that will reinforce a healthy attitude toward the transition.

- Write a half yearly and end of year report on each child to provide to the school before each child's last day - the end of year report may be replaced by a *Transition to School Statement* provided by the NSW Department of Education.
- Keep families up to date on their child's development, progress and any concerns you may have about them starting school in the following year.

Ideas for educators to help prepare children for school:

- Talk to the children about school, encouraging them to ask questions or voice their concerns.
- Assist children to understand their transition by discussing and displaying the school crests, uniforms and photos of their school in a visual exhibit.
- Read stories about school during group times throughout the week.
- Provide lots of reading and writing materials as part of the daily play-based program.
- Support children to develop their self-help skills.
- Incorporate activities about local schools as part of the program for children to learn about where they and their peers will be in the following year.
- Invite the children to come wearing their school uniform, along with hat and backpack.
- Invite teachers from the local school to come and run a group time in the preschool group or meet with families.
- Organise with families to bring in the child's lunch box and provide the child with a sandwich and some fruit to help prepare for school.
- Provide sign in and out station available for the children to sign themselves in to class for the day.
- Model name-writing and recognition using the NSW Foundation Style writing.
- Organise an excursion to one of the local schools where the children can visit into a kindy classroom.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF FAMILIES

- Talk to your child's Sweetpeas educators
 - Share any questions or concerns you have about your child's development or school readiness. Listen to their educator's feedback on the same.
 - Learn about this year's transition to school program, what has been planned so far, and how your child will be involved
- Talk to your child's new school - there's lots of questions you can ask!
 - What transition program are they offering? Will there be orientation days? Parents evenings? Do they have transition resources to share with you?
 - Be sure to attend orientations with your child so they can familiarise themselves with their new school.
 - What types of learning support are available?
 - Are there any videos of the school that you can show your child?
 - Are there any outside of school hours care (OOSHC) options available onsite at school or offsite and what transport options are available?
- Talk to your child - Engaging in positive conversations and activities with your child about their new school is an important part of the transition to school process!
 - Talking with your child about their first few days at school is one way to support them. You can talk about:
 - what their first day may look like
 - friends they will meet
 - who their new teacher is (once confirmed)
 - how they will get to and from school safely.
 - Talk with your child about the new schedules of school life. Talk about:
 - upcoming changes in morning and night routines
 - what they are looking forward to and what they worry about
 - what will make their transition to school easier and see if this can be accommodated by your child's new school
 - teaching them who to ask when they need help - this is particularly important at recess and lunch times when there will be minimal supervision compared to what they are used to at Sweetpeas.

IF YOUR CHILD HAS ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS:

- Children with disability and learning support needs may require additional support as part of a personalised transition program. This includes children without a confirmed diagnosis.
- Your child’s learning and support needs could be identified before they start school, or at any point during their schooling. Contact your local school to find out how you can give your child the best start to their education.
- Speak to your child’s new school to let the staff know about your child’s additional needs. The ideal time to speak with your local school is **two years** before your child starts Kindergarten - but **it’s never too early or late to start the conversation**.
- Discuss additional support with Sweetpeas and learn how we can connect and share information with your child’s new school.
- As children readjust to the pleasures and challenges associated with school, they may show greater difficulties with emotional regulation and challenging behaviour - remember, this is likely to be part of the readjustment phase and should improve with time.

INDICATORS OF CHILDREN’S READINESS FOR SCHOOL

The following table contains some indicators of children’s individual readiness for school. Please note, this is not an exhaustive list, and should not replace advice from your child’s educators, new school or other relevant child or educational services. This list may not apply to children with learning delays or disabilities and Sweetpeas would like to reiterate that all children learn at different rates.

Language	Cognitive/ Thinking/STEM	Social/Emotional	Physical Skills	Self-Help/ Independence
Answers and asks simple questions	Touches objects to count, understands relationship between numbers and objects	Can recite name and address	Can use scissors to cut along a straight line	Uses toilet independently
Follows simple instructions	Uses words and phrases such as many, a lot, more, less	Adapts to unfamiliar settings and new experiences	Enjoys a variety of indoor and outdoor play	Can finish a task and cleans up own mess
Identifies and correctly labels pictures of familiar people / items	Identifies things in a group that are different	Plays cooperatively with other children - Shares and takes turns.	Holds writing utensils between thumb and first two fingers	Dresses/undresses with minimal assistance
Joins in singing familiar songs	Sees differences in shapes or patterns	Can focus for group times (for at least a book or song)	Climbs playground equipment with increasing agility	Feeds self with minimum spills
Speaks in sentences and use many different words	Differentiates opposites such as hot and cold	Can share adult attention with several other children	Hops, jumps and runs with ease	Put own belongings away in bag/locker
	Uses imagination to create designs using a variety of materials	Makes needs known/asks for help		
	Copies letters and may write some unprompted	Can cope with changes to routine		

RELATED TELEPHONE NUMBERS

- Early Childhood Directorate - 1800 619 113 (or ececd@det.nsw.edu.au)
- NSW Department of Education - 1300 679 332

RELATED SWEETPEAS DOCUMENTS

- Excursion Authorisation template

REFERENCES

- Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia (V2.0) (EYLF)
- Developmental Milestones: and the Early Years Learning Framework and the National Quality Standards: <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2018-02/DevelopmentalMilestonesEYLFandNQS.pdf>
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- National Quality Framework (NQF)
- Sweetpeas Philosophy
- The National Quality Standard. (Revised 2018)
- Transition to school: <https://education.nsw.gov.au/early-childhood-education/ecec-resource-library/transition-to-school>
- Transition to school: Information for early childhood education and care services: <https://education.nsw.gov.au/early-childhood-education/ecec-resource-library/transition-to-school/information-for-services>
- Transition to school: Information for parents and carers: <https://education.nsw.gov.au/early-childhood-education/ecec-resource-library/transition-to-school/information-for-parents-and-carers>
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)

REVIEW AND AMENDMENT HISTORY

This policy will be updated to ensure compliance with all relevant legal requirements. Appropriate consultation of all stakeholders (including staff and families) will be conducted on a timely basis. In accordance with Regulation 172 of the *Education and Care Services National Regulation*, families of children enrolled will be notified at least 14 days and their input considered prior to any amendment of policies and procedures that have any impact on their children or family.

Version	Amendment(s)	Review Date	Updated By
1.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adapted from previous Sweetpeas policy 	July 2017	Cassandra Way (Educator/Admin)
1.1.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Checked and updated links 	July 2018	Cassandra Way (ECT/Admin)
1.2.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Added indicators of school readiness • Checked links 	July 2019	Janine Evans (Director) Rebekah Lang (Assistant Director - Penrith)
1.3.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Added additional work educators do who are doing school transition 	July 2020	Cassandra Irvine (Assistant Director - Cranebrook)
2.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cosmetic update with changes for new template/colours • Updated hotlinks and references • Added Managing Director responsibilities to reflect Janine's new role • Updated Nominated Supervisor responsibilities to include confidentiality and excursion authorisations • Updated family responsibilities with information from NSW Dept. of Education transition to school 	August 2022	Cassandra Way (Assistant Manager) Janine Evans (Managing Director)

Version	Amendment(s)	Review Date	Updated By
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moved table of developmental milestones to new section titled “Indicators of children’s readiness for school” Added “Related Sweetpeas Documents” section Added “Related Policies” section Added “National Quality Standard” section Added “Scope” section Added rationale 		
2.1.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fixed version numbering (Aug22 previously version 5) Checked and updated all hotlinks 	March 2024	Cassandra Way (Assistant Manager)
2.2.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updated style of some headings for better consistency Checked and updated all hotlinks 	March 2025	Cassandra Way (Assistant Manager)