Government of South Australia
Department for Education

Curriculum, pedagogy, assessment and reporting: early childhood services to year 12 policy

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This document is mandated under the operational policy framework. Any edits must follow the process on the creating, updating and deleting operational policies page.

1. Overview

This policy identifies the requirements that public education and care sites and services must meet in planning and implementing their curriculum, assessment and reporting practices.

It gives direction to educators and staff about what will be taught and how it will be taught, assessed and reported.

The policy also outlines expectations for delivering curriculum to optimise the engagement, challenge, progress and achievement of learners from early childhood to year 12.

It must be read along with the:

- curriculum, pedagogy, assessment and reporting: early childhood services to year 12 guideline (PDF 338KB)
- reporting on Australian Curriculum in Department for Education schools: reception to year 10 procedure (PDF 639KB) (staff login required).

Note: With the release of the SA Curriculum for public education, this policy **must** also be read with the interim policy guidance for curriculum, evidencing, assessing and reporting 2027.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all staff working in public education and care sites and services, including:

- schools
- preschools
- occasional care
- associated programs
- children's centres
- rural care
- integrated long day care services and family day care services
- education programs operating from support centres and units.

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3. Detail

The Chief Executive has authority to determine the curriculum used in government schools, under the:

- *Education and Children's Services Act 2019* (SA)
- *Education and Children's Services Regulations 2020* (SA).

The Early Years Learning Framework (PDF 25MB) is the mandated curriculum and pedagogical framework for early childhood services.

Practice in government preschools is directed by the:

- Respect, Reflect, Relate resource
- implementation guidelines for indicators of preschool numeracy and literacy in government preschools (PDF 2MB).

The Australian Curriculum is the mandated curriculum for government primary and secondary schools.

Practice in government schools is directed by the:

- SACE
- Teaching for Effective Learning (TfEL) framework (staff login required)
- Australian Professional Standards for Teachers
- Australian Professional Standard for Principals.

In addition, this policy ensures consistency and compliance with the following government acts, regulations and associated documents:

- *Education and Early Childhood Services (Registration and Standards) Act 2011* (SA)
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- *Australian Education Regulations 2023* (Cth)
- National Quality Standard
- *SACE Board of South Australia Act 1983* (SA)
- *SACE Board of South Australia Regulations 2023* (SA).

3.1 Learner diversity

Learner populations are diverse. Educators must provide appropriately challenging and supportive curriculum, pedagogy, assessment and educational pathways for all learners to optimise their engagement, challenge, progress and achievement inclusive of the following.

3.1.1 Aboriginal learners

The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Strategy provides the overarching framework that must guide the education of all Aboriginal children and young people from birth through to further education and employment pathways.

Educators are expected to use the curriculum and pedagogical frameworks referenced in this policy to design teaching and learning programs that are inclusive of and set high expectations for Aboriginal children and young people.

A One Plan (staff login required) must be developed with explicit learning goals, used purposefully to improve the learning outcomes of all Aboriginal learners and reviewed at least annually.

The South Australian Aboriginal Education Strategy 2019 to 2029 (PDF 4MB), provides the vision and principles the department expects to be adopted and adhered to in the teaching and development of Aboriginal children and young people.

3.1.2 Learners for whom English is an additional language or dialect (EALD)

Educators of EALD learners are expected to:

- use the curriculum to intentionally design and implement teaching programs that support EALD learners develop their knowledge and use of the English language, understanding of Australian society and the learning practices required for schooling that other learners may have already acquired
- work collaboratively with EALD specialists and bilingual staff to deepen their understanding of their EALD learners' strengths and educational needs.

EALD specialists in mainstream settings and those working with new arrivals who are learning English must use data and their expert understanding of the English language and the cultural and English demands of the curriculum to inform programming, monitoring and reporting on EALD learner progress and to prioritise support for EALD learners.

3.1.3 Learners with disability

Educators are expected to use effective teaching strategies and make adjustments to maximise the engagement and expected achievement of learners with disability. An inclusive and personalised learning program that meets the requirements of the Early Years Learning Framework (PDF 25MB), the Australian Curriculum or the SACE (including the Modified SACE) and the goals of the learner's One Plan must be developed. The plan must be documented and intentionally used for all learners with disability and reviewed annually or as needed. Learning programs must acknowledge the capacity and capabilities of the learners with disability and incorporate reasonable adjustments to teaching, learning and assessment strategies and the learning environment as necessary to ensure their access and participation on the same basis as their non-disabled peers.

Programs must be in line with legislation including the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cth) and *Disability Standards for Education 2005* (Cth).

Refer to the children and students with disability policy (PDF 195KB) and the Disability Standards for Education page (staff login required) for more information and guidance.

3.1.4 Learners in care (formerly under the guardianship of the Minister)

Children and young people in care (under guardianship) have been removed from their family by the Youth Court and placed in the care of the state. Educators have a responsibility to provide inclusive and supportive learning environments and opportunities for children in out-of-home care to meet their educational potential.

Educators are expected to use the curriculum and pedagogical frameworks referenced in the policy and guideline to design teaching and learning programs that take account of issues affecting their wellbeing which are often complex. Successful engagement and achievement for these learners is dependent on carefully coordinated and communicated actions with all key people involved. Educators must actively engage with interagency efforts to ensure the progress, achievement and wellbeing of these learners.

Learners in out-of-home care must be enrolled by their Department for Child Protection case worker in conjunction with the Team Manager of Student Support Services (Department for Education). A One Plan must be collaboratively developed within one month of enrolment and reviewed annually, or as circumstances change.

Refer to the children and young people in care page (staff login required) under the guardianship of the Chief Executive, Department for Child Protection for more information and resources.

3.1.5 Gifted and talented learners who require significant adjustments to engage them in their learning.

Educators must ensure that gifted and talented learners participate in appropriately engaging and challenging learning activities that foster wellbeing and the achievement of learning outcomes that are consistent with their abilities. This will lessen the significant risk of these learners underachieving and/or not completing secondary education.

Curriculum differentiation for gifted and talented learners must consider:

- extension beyond the year level curriculum and achievement standards and pursuing studies at greater breadth, depth and complexity
- enrichment through co-curricular programs and working with intellectual peers
- acceleration into any level of education, flexibility in timetabling, year-level acceleration and tertiary pathways.

For gifted and talented learners whose abilities require significant adjustments to engage them in their learning, schools are expected to negotiate and document a One Plan collaboratively with the learner, parents or carers and other relevant professionals, and review the plan at least once a year.

For requirements for Tailored Learning enrolled students, refer to the Tailored Learning policy (PDF 565KB) (staff login required).

A One Plan (staff login required) must be documented for these learners.

3.2 Curriculum

3.2.1 Early childhood services

Educators must plan, teach, assess and report children's learning using the Early Years Learning Framework (PDF 25MB) to meet the National Quality Standard.

Preschool services will also meet the requirements of the safeguarding children and young people policy (PDF 668KB) by delivering the Keeping Safe: Child Protection Curriculum (staff login required).

The indicators of preschool numeracy and literacy in government preschools (PDF 2MB) are mandated for use in all government preschool services.

Under the Education and Care Services National Regulations Part 4.1, Regulation 75, educators must display information about the content and operation of the educational program ensuring it is accessible to families/carers of children attending the service.

3.2.2 Reception to year 10

Educators must use all 3 dimensions of the Australian Curriculum for planning and teaching. This includes all learning areas, general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities. Schools need to make sure learners are given the opportunity to engage with and achieve in all 8 learning areas of the Australian Curriculum at relevant year levels. Refer to the preschool provision in rural communities policy (PDF 470KB) for requirements for a preschool program in a junior primary class.

In addition to the Australian Curriculum, schools can begin teaching SACE subjects in year 10, in particular the SACE Stage 1 Identities and Futures. Some gifted and talented learners may be accelerated into SACE subjects earlier than year 10.

Educators must also meet the requirements of the safeguarding children and young people policy (PDF 668KB) by delivering the Keeping Safe: Child Protection Curriculum (staff login required).

3.2.3 Years 11 and 12

The *Education and Children's Services Act 2019* and *Education and Children's Services Regulations 2020* require children of compulsory education age to participate in a full-time approved learning program or in a combination of approved learning programs including:

- delivered through a school, university or registered training organisation
- an apprenticeship or traineeship.

Educators must adhere to SACE policies, procedures and guidelines relating to subjects and courses. In addition, educators must also meet the requirements of the safeguarding children and young people policy (PDF 668KB) by delivering the Keeping Safe: Child Protection Curriculum (staff login required).

Teachers have a professional responsibility to document their selection and sequencing of learning experiences and assessment tasks reflecting the curriculum requirements and the diversity of student learning needs in their classes.

3.3 Pedagogy

3.3.1 Early childhood services

Educators must use the principles, practices and outcomes of the EYLF when developing teaching and learning activities. In all services providing care for children over preschool age, educators must use the Reflect, Respect, Relate resource to critically reflect on their practice.

3.3.2 Reception to year 10

Educators are required to use the Teaching for Effective Learning (TfEL) framework (staff login required) to inform how they teach the required curriculum and to be inclusive of the diversity of learners. The focus must be on improving all learners' engagement, intellectual challenge, progress and achievement.

R to 6 teachers are required to meet guaranteed minimum teaching times for English and literacy, mathematics and numeracy and science according to the following:

English, literacy

Years: R to 6
Guaranteed minimum per week: 300 minutes or 5 hours

Mathematics, numeracy

Years: R to 6

Guaranteed minimum per week: 300 minutes or 5 hours

Science

Years: R to 3
Guaranteed minimum per week: 90 minutes or 1½ hours

Years: 4 to 6
Guaranteed minimum per week: 120 minutes or 2 hours per week

3.3.3 Years 11 and 12

Educators are required to use the Teaching for Effective Learning (TfEL) framework (staff login required) to inform how they teach the required curriculum and to be inclusive of the diversity of learners. Educators' must focus on designing learning that improves engagement, intellectual challenge, progress and achievement for all learners.

3.4 Assessment

3.4.1 Early childhood services

Assessment practices must be informed by the principles, practices and outcomes of the Early Years Learning Framework (PDF 25MB). Preschool teachers are required to use the indicators of preschool numeracy and literacy in (PDF 2MB) to:

- inform their planning and teaching
- monitor children's numeracy and literacy development
- inform the Statement of Learning for discussion with and reporting to families or carers.

Under the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 Part 4.1, Regulation 74(1) educators must ensure that assessments of each child's needs, participation, wellbeing and progress are documented.

3.4.2 Reception to year 10

Educators will assess and report on learners' progress and achievement using a balanced range of evidence collected against the Australian Curriculum achievement standards.

Educators are expected to collaboratively moderate to ensure both consistency of judgements about learners' achievement and high-quality learning outcomes.

Educators are also required to administer prescribed national assessments within the National Assessment Program (NAP):

- Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9
- the cyclical 3-year program of sample assessment in Science, Civics and Citizenship and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in Years 6 and 10 (applies only to those schools selected as sample schools).

In addition, educators are required to administer annual progressive achievement tests (PAT) (staff login required), and the phonics screening check (staff login required) as outlined following:

3.4.3 Progressive Achievement Tests

Learners in years 3 to 10 are required to annually undertake the online PAT Reading comprehension (PAT-R) and Maths (PAT-M) tests during weeks 7 to 10 of term 3. Educators are expected to use the PAT results to inform teaching and learning and to monitor progress.

3.4.4 Phonics Screening Check

Year 1 teachers are required to administer the phonics screening check (staff login required) during weeks 3 to 6 of term 3. The score each year 1 student gained must be entered into EDSAS by the end of week 7 of term 3. Refer to the phonics screening check administration guide (PDF 273KB) (staff login required).

3.4.5 Years 11 and 12

Schools must follow SACE assessment and moderation SACE policies, procedures and guidelines.

3.5 Reporting

3.5.1 Early childhood services

Documentation about each child's learning program and progress must be available in an accessible format and must use a variety of processes corresponding to the diversity of families and children.

In all government preschools and government-funded preschools a Statement of Learning must be provided to the families or carers and to the school that the child will attend, on completion of the child's eligible preschool year.

The legal guardian of a child in out-of-home care is the Chief Executive of the Department for Child Protection (DCP), who is represented by the DCP case worker allocated to the child. Refer to children and young people in care (staff login required). This person is the formal guardian and required to sign all official documents and is responsible for the enrolment of the child. The daily caregiver of a child in care is known as 'the carer'. This could be an actual person for example a foster carer or a kinship carer, or a group of people for example residential care workers. Both of these 'parents' require formal correspondence including reports and learning plans from preschool and school.

3.5.2 Reception to year 10

All reception to year 10 educators must report formally in writing at the end of each semester to learners and their parents or carers about the learner's progress and achievement in relation to the

Australian Curriculum achievement standards for all learning areas using the grades A to E or word equivalents.

In addition, schools are expected to provide descriptive reporting about:

- the learner's engagement and achievement
- what they have learnt
- what they need to learn next
- how the teacher, student and parent can support these next steps to happen.

Schools can choose the most appropriate mode of descriptive reporting to parents or carers for their context.

There is no requirement for schools to assign A to E grades or word equivalents for reporting in the reception year. Further information is available in the reporting on Australian Curriculum in Department for Education schools: reception to year 10 procedure (PDF 639KB) (staff login required).

3.5.3 Years 11 and 12

Senior secondary learners' progress and achievement are reported in writing to learners and their parents or carers a minimum of twice per year. Those learners who have successfully completed all the requirements of the SACE are provided with the qualification.

Registered training organisations are required to provide a certificate of completion and record of achievement for each student who successfully completes a qualification.

Schools are responsible for reporting school-assessed SACE and Vocational Education and Training results to the SACE Board through SACE schools online (login required).

3.6 Alternative curriculum frameworks

Schools that have been given approval to use alternative curriculum frameworks must make sure the following points are addressed:

- The alternative curriculum frameworks, such as the International Baccalaureate (IB), Montessori and Steiner curriculum frameworks, have been formally recognised as meeting the requirements of the Australian Curriculum by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority Alternative Curriculum Recognition Committee.
- Student progress and achievement are reported to parents and carers twice a year using A to E grades or word equivalents in relation to the Australian Curriculum achievement standards or using the approved assessment and reporting requirements of the alternative curriculum framework.

In early childhood services, under Section 323 of the Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010, an alternative curriculum, that is other than the Early Years Learning Framework (PDF 25MB), would need to be approved by the Ministerial Council before it could be used.

4. Roles and responsibilities

4.1 Curriculum and Learning division

Lead quality curriculum, pedagogy, assessment and reporting design in department schools, preschools and services.

Monitor, evaluate and review this policy to ensure department schools, preschools and services have relevant and current information on curriculum, pedagogy, assessment and reporting.

Comply with all relevant department policies, procedures and procedures.

4.2 Principals, directors, leaders

Develop and implement plans and processes to meet the requirements of this policy at their site or service.

Develop the capacity of educators to plan, implement and evaluate quality teaching and learning programs that maximise every child and young person's wellbeing, engagement, intellectual challenge, progress and achievement.

Create and maintain a safe, inclusive and positive learning environment.

Comply with responsibilities outlined in the information and records management policy.

4.3 Educators

Comply with the obligations outlined in this policy.

Use the curriculum to design and teach learning programs that engage, challenge and improve the achievement of every learner.

Assess learning to inform the design of teaching and learning programs, to monitor learners' progress and to provide timely feedback to learners about their achievements.

Work collaboratively with other educators, learners, families/carers and communities.

Engage in ongoing professional learning that contributes to improving the progress and achievement of all learners.

Comply with responsibilities outlined in the information and records management policy.

5. Definitions

Term	Definition
Assessment	The process of gathering and interpreting information from a range of evidence to make judgements about learners' knowledge, skills and understandings. Assessment information provides the basis for learner feedback, reporting and the design of further learning.

Term	Definition
Australian Curriculum	Defines the common and core set of knowledge and skills that are required both for life-long learning and active and informed citizenship. A developmental learning sequence from R to 10 that describes to teachers, parents or carers, students and the wider community what is to be taught and the quality of learning expected of learners as they progress through school.
Curriculum	Describes the core knowledge, understanding, skills and capabilities children and young people will learn as they progress through education. It is the teaching and learning program planned and delivered to children and young people and referenced to the required framework. Educators use curriculum to: • design learning • monitor and assess learner progress and achievement • report progress and achievement to parents, carers and learners • support learner safety and wellbeing.
Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF)	Outlines expectations about 5 learning outcomes for all children's learning from birth through to transition to school. Involves interactive decision making by children, parents and families, educators and the broader community with the aim of fostering children's learning. Curriculum decision making is guided by a combination of principles, practices and outcomes to promote children's learning (refer to the Early Years Learning Framework (PDF 25MB), page 10 (staff login required)).
Pedagogy	What a teacher does and how they do it to encourage learning in children and young people, guided by the EYLF and TfEL frameworks.
Reporting	Communicating learners' progress and achievement, areas of strength and areas for improvement.
Reflect Respect Relate (RRR)	Resource designed to motivate critical reflection as early childhood educators plan, support and monitor children's learning.
South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE)	The qualification South Australian learners aim to achieve upon completing their senior secondary education.

6. Supporting information

6.1 Forms and tools

Nil.

6.2 Resources

Children and young people in care (staff login required)

One Plan (staff login required)

Australian Government Department of Education – Disability standards for education and related legislation

6.3 Policies

Children and students with disability policy (PDF 195KB)

Curriculum, pedagogy, assessment and reporting: early childhood services to year 12 guideline (PDF 338KB)

Implementation guidelines for indicators of preschool numeracy and literacy in government preschools (PDF 2MB)

Information and records management policy (PDF 575KB)

Interim policy guidance for curriculum, evidencing, assessing and reporting 2027

Preschool provision in rural communities policy (PDF 470KB)

Protective practices for staff in their interactions with children and young people (PDF 1MB)

Reporting on Australian Curriculum in Department for Education schools: reception to year 10 procedure (PDF 639KB) (staff login required)

Safeguarding children and young people policy (PDF 668KB)

Tailored Learning policy (PDF 565KB) (staff login required)

Vocational education and training (VET) policy (PDF 594KB) (staff login required)

Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority – National Quality Standard

Australian Government Department of Education – National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Strategy

SACE Board of South Australia

SACE assessment and moderation policies

SACE special provisions in curriculum and assessment policy

6.4 Legislation

Australian Education Regulations 2023 (Cth)

Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017 (SA)

Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)

Disability Standards for Education 2005 (Cth)

Education (Compulsory Education Age) Amendment Act 2007 (SA)

Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011

Education and Children's Services Act 2019 (SA)

Education and Children's Services Regulations 2020 (SA)

Education and Early Childhood Services (Registration and Standards) Act 2011 (SA)

SACE Board of South Australia Act 1983 (SA)

SACE Board of South Australia Regulations 2023 (SA)

7. Record history

7.1 Approvals

OP number: 051
File number: DE25/12853
Version: 1.6
Policy Officer: Policy and Project Officer, Curriculum Strategy and Planning
Policy Sponsor: Director, Curriculum Strategy and Planning
Senior Executive: Executive Director, Curriculum and Learning
Approved by: Director, Curriculum Strategy and Planning
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7.2 Revision record

Version: 1.6
Approved by: Director, Curriculum Policy and Standards
Approved date: 23 October 2026
Amendment(s): Added references to 'Interim policy guidance for curriculum, evidencing, assessing and reporting 2027'.

Version: 1.5
Approved by: Director, Curriculum Policy and Standards
Approved date: 21 January 2025
Amendment(s): Ownership from Curriculum Development to Curriculum Policy and Standards.

Version: 1.4
Approved by: Director, Curriculum Development
Approved date: 9 May 2024
Amendment(s): Replaced R to 7 with R to 6 to reflect year 7 moving to secondary school.

Version: 1.3
Approved by: Director, Curriculum Development
Approved date: 27 February 2024
Amendment(s): Ownership changed to Curriculum Development. Removed references to standard of educational achievement (SEA).

Version: 1.2
Approved by: Director, Curriculum Policy and Standards
Approved date: 17 November 2022
Amendment(s): Removed references to running records. Updated links.

Version: 1.1
Approved by: Director, Strategic Design
Approved date: 9 June 2020
Amendment(s): Updated template, links, and policy documents. Revised to reflect Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration 2019 and *Education and Children's Services Act 2019* (SA).

Version: 1.0
Approved by: Chief Operating Officer
Approved date: 22 January 2019
Amendment(s): New policy. Replaced the Implementation of the Australian Curriculum in DECD Schools Reception – Year 10 Guideline, Assessment for Learning in DECD Early Childhood Services policy, and Gifted and Talented Children and Students policy.

8. Contact

Curriculum Policy and Standards

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