

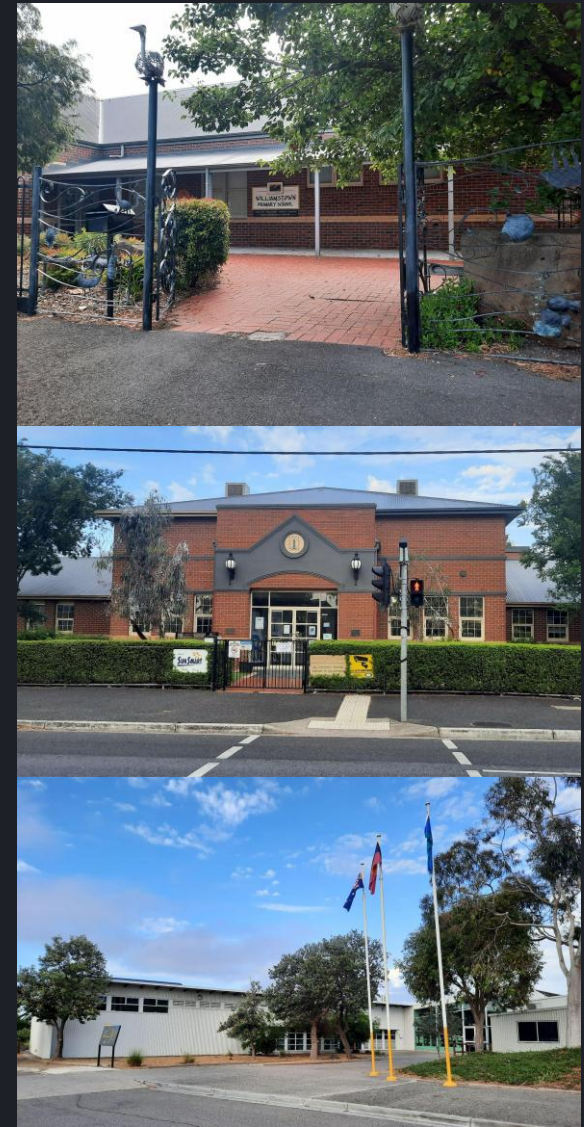
Year 6 to Year 7 diverse learners: Autism spectrum disorder community of practice

Lisa Leydin - Assistant Principal
Mathew Montebello - Principal
Williamstown Primary School

Giorgia Moss - Leading Teacher
Shevani Moodley - Assistant Principal
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Williamstown North Primary School

Karen Anderson - Campus Principal
Gino Catalano - Principal
Williamstown High School

Judy Maguire - Senior Education Improvement Leader
Boon Wurrung Bunurong Traditional Owners



Learning intentions

We are consolidating our understanding of the four phases of transition to secondary school that can help guide our support for students.

We are learning about how two primary schools and a secondary school are working together to support transition, in particular, for neurodivergent learners (focus on autism)

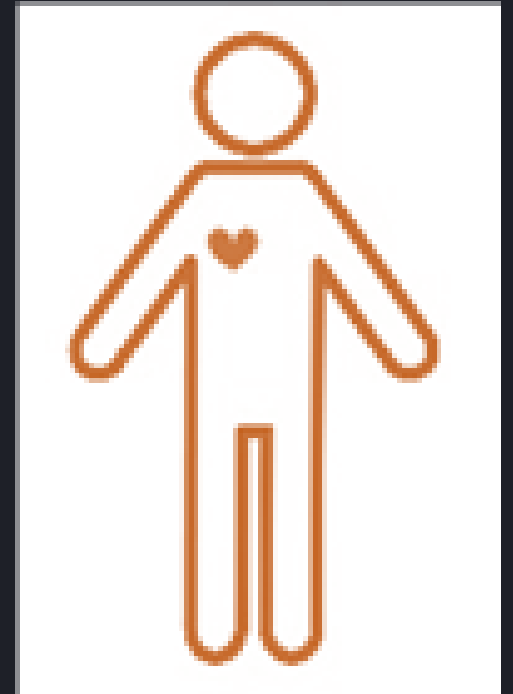
Success criteria

- I can identify the phases of transition
- I can identify key actions to support primary to secondary school transition
- I can articulate how schools can establish means of working together for our students

2026 potential learner...

What do you ask - the student?
 the parent/carer?
 the school?

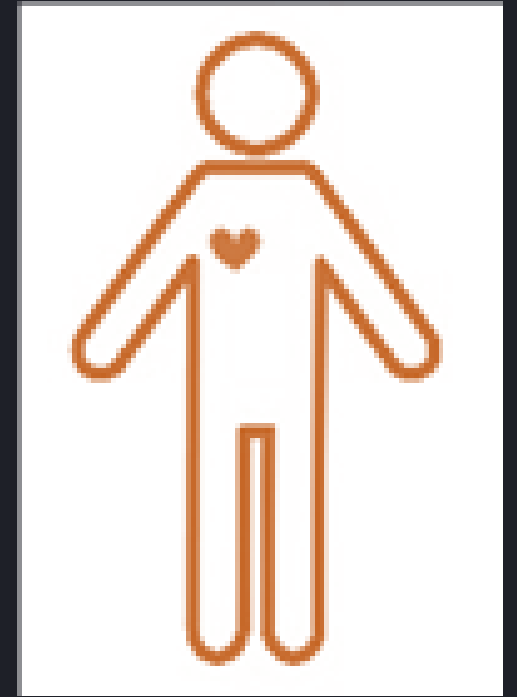
THINK - PAIR - SHARE



2026 potential learner...

An approach to responding (Viviane Robinson):

- use relevant knowledge
- solve complex educational problems?!? (begin to...) - Robinson defines 'problems' as the gap between where we are and where we want to be
- building relationships of trust with those involved



Context of the challenge/opportunity

Williamstown Primary School	currently 464 students
Williamstown North Primary School	currently 632 students
Williamstown High School	currently 1540 students

WPS and WNPS are approximately 2.5 km apart, as the crow flies

Both are within 'walking distance' of the two campus' of WHS

Context of the challenge/opportunity...

2023

South Western Victoria Region

Hobson's Bay Network

Education Improvement Leaders - Diverse Learners - Autism

Sarah Faella

Ella Tang

Context of the challenge/opportunity...

Preparation Phase (Years 5 and 6)

Transfer Phase (end of Year 6)

Induction Phase (Year 7)

Consolidation Phase (Year 8)

‘Childhood to adolescence’ sees a period of tremendous growth and development but also a heightened risk of disengagement, poor wellbeing and declining learning outcomes

‘A student’s transition experience can have fundamental and long-lasting impacts on their achievement, engagement and wellbeing’

Context of the challenge/opportunity...

Autism is a neurodevelopmental disability that affects the way people communicate and interact with the world.

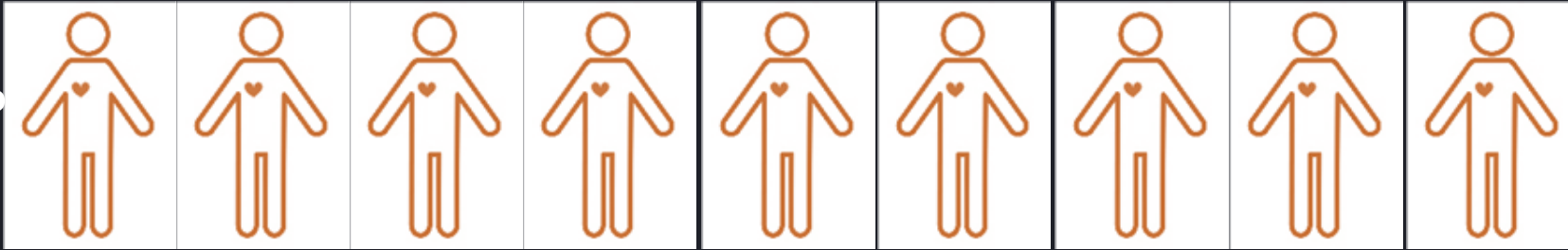
Around 1 in 100 Australians is autistic. Autistic people may have:

- challenges with communicating and interacting with others
- repetitive and different behaviours, moving their bodies in different ways
- strong interest in one topic or subject
- unusual reactions to what they see, hear, smell, touch or taste
- preferences for routines and dislike change

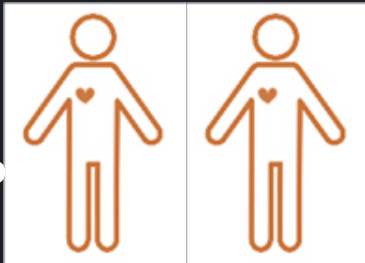
SOURCE: <https://www.amaze.org.au/about-autism/what-is-autism/>

Context of the challenge/opportunity...

Tier 1
80-90%



Tier 2
10-15%



Tier 3
<5%



Student Support Group - Individual Education Plan required

‘Excellence in Every Classroom’

‘There are 3 teachers of students [in the classroom]: adults, other children, and their physical environment.’

Loris Malaguzzi

Reggio Emilia Approach

'Excellence in Every Classroom'...

In our classrooms, working towards...

Physical environment

- clearly defined learning spaces including quiet spaces
- spaces to support collaboration: floor, stools/chairs, desks/tables, arrangement plans
- low visual stimuli
- access to sensory supports (*i.e.*, noise cancelling headphones, sensory toys)
- visual prompts
- classroom expectations displayed

Structure and routine

- familiar, school-wide daily routines and visual schedules
- templates/scaffolds for tasks
- timers to support students' time management and transition between tasks/learning
- methods for notifying students of teacher absences

Social structure

- opportunities for students to co-construct classroom expectations
- consistent approach to teaching SWPBS and RRRR curriculum (*or similar*)
- dedicated time for explicit teaching of social skills
- positive feedback or acknowledgement systems
- peer support or buddy systems
- supports for engaging in group activities (i.e., group assignments)

Network Year 6 to 7 transition - teacher form at end of Term 3:

- gender and pronouns
- ATSI
- EAL
- SSS referral
- any diagnoses (upload)
- IEP/'Learner Snapshot' (T2, 3)/Behaviour Support Plan/SSG/Safety Plan (upload)
- DI (upload)
- VHAP, TLI, Student Leadership, SSV
- staff member to contact to discuss
- VC
- group with/not group with
- need to discuss in person?

Explore the approach

- examined student data, AToSS and additional student survey responses (Tier 1 and ASD)
- Partnership Agreement and SMART Goal
- produced Transition Protocol

Explore the approach...

Established Transition Protocol...

Y	T	Responsibility	Tier 1 (ALL STUDENTS)	Tier 2 (SOME STUDENTS)	Tier 3 (FEW STUDENTS)
E A R M	6	Primary	Encourage families/carers to connect with social networks such as friends, neighbours and other networks about secondary school options. Informal discussions during PTS conferences around suitable secondary settings	Commence transition discussions with parents of children with a disability or additional needs. Informal discussions during PTS/SSG conferences around suitable secondary settings	Work with allied health to respond to student transfer information – this will include details about any foreseeable risks (if applicable) to the secondary school. During SSGs, broad discussions with families regarding a suitable high-school setting Forward planning and discussions with parents and secondary stakeholders for specific/additional needs
		Secondary	Maintain transition information on school website to ensure parents/carers can seek information as they. Host secondary school information sessions, open days, tours and opportunities to meet with the principal/leaders for prospective families.	Discussions with Primary around students with complex or additional needs that may enrol into WHS (impacting assessment and funding etc)	Siblings with additional needs
		KEY DATES (YEAR 5, TERM 4): <ul style="list-style-type: none">SSGs mid Term 4			

Y	T	Responsibility	Tier 1 (ALL STUDENTS)	Tier 2 (SOME STUDENTS)	Tier 3 (FEW STUDENTS)
E A R M	6	Primary	Support parent/guardian/carers as required in the nomination of secondary school preference. Begin collating transfer information including health/wellbeing reports. Continued discussions around academic/ welfare and behaviour expectations with all students, with a big focus on the transition processes that happen in Term 4. Open door policy/ Encouragement of F.A.Q. about Transition. Year 6 to Year 7 information packs for carers are sent out to the community (encourage families to be open and honest about their child's needs or additional learning needs/diagnosis)	Participate in transition discussions at SSG meetings. Begin collating information to be given to the secondary school to assist them in providing support.	Engage allied health, parents/carers to support and participate in any Disability Inclusion Profile application processes (if applicable).
		Secondary	Transition coordinator sends year 7 information packs (including enrolment information and processes). Host secondary school information sessions, open days, tours and opportunities to meet with the principal/leaders for prospective families.	ASD CoP reflection survey about transition processes from previous year. Reflect on attendance data for focus group of students noted in ASD CoP.	
		KEY DATES (YEAR 6, TERM 2): <ul style="list-style-type: none">High school open nights (May)			

Y	T	Responsibility	Tier 1 (ALL STUDENTS)	Tier 2 (SOME STUDENTS)	Tier 3 (FEW STUDENTS)
E A R M	6	Primary	Attend school specific whole year level transition day at WHS (collect photos, videos to support after this day). Attend the State-wide transition day to WHS. Host/ attend transition meetings between the primary and secondary school. Whole School Transition Day informal discussions/ workshops for Year 6 which leads into Year 7	WPS & WHPS attend small group transition at WHS. Convene an SSG and finalise the Transition Statement. Finalise transfer information including details about student support needs, i.e., Di funding, IEP, specialist reports – by the end of the school year Provide WHS with any DIP documentation to support future application	Convene an SSG with the receiving secondary school to assist them in preparing support for the student. Identify students who may require an extended orientation or time to meet teachers. Finalise transfer information including details about student support needs, i.e., Di funding, IEP, specialist reports – by the end of the school year Request a SSG meeting for Term 1 of Year 7. Ensure transfer information including details about student support needs, i.e., Di funding, IEP, specialist reports.
		Secondary	Identification of key information/terms/documentation they expect from PS Begin school orientation and familiarisation activities, i.e. video tour, year 7 students or WHS leaders to share WHS experience and host Q & A Convene transition meeting between year 6 teachers and WHS transition team Support parents/carers to enrol their child and pass on relevant information and enrolment packs, including support of parents/carers to organise transport options for their child to the new school Plan for orientation day	Prepare and implement strategies. Facilitate extra transition days for students with complex needs. Organise sessions for students who require an extended orientation or time to meet teachers. Request a SSG meeting for Term 1 of Year 7. Ensure transfer information including details about student support needs, i.e., Di funding, IEP, specialist reports.	Convene an SSG with the receiving secondary school to assist them in preparing support for the student. Identify students who may require an extended orientation or time to meet teachers. Request a SSG meeting for Term 1 of Year 7. Ensure transfer information including details about student support needs, i.e., Di funding, IEP, specialist reports.
		KEY DATES (YEAR 6, TERM 4): <ul style="list-style-type: none">Week 2: WHS visiting WPS.Week 4: WHS visiting WHPS.Week 6: WHPS students visiting WHS.Week 7: Handover/SSGs WPS & WHSWeek 8: Handover/SSGs WHPS & WHSWeek 9: WPS Transition DayWeek 10: Additional transition days at WHS for selected students.Week 11: Statewide transition day			

Y	T	Responsibility	Tier 1 (ALL STUDENTS)	Tier 2 (SOME STUDENTS)	Tier 3 (FEW STUDENTS)
E A R M	6	Primary	Support parents/carers to make informed secondary school choices, share opportunities for tours/visits, and select their preference. Discussions around academic/ welfare and behaviour expectations with all students, with a big focus on the transition processes that happen in Term 4. Open door policy/ Encouragement of F.A.Q. about Transition. Update all student information onto CASES21. Make community and school council aware of collaboration across Williamstown cluster.	Explicit discussions/teaching around transition expectations and readiness for a small group of students (including social thinking groups) Within SSGs or parent/teacher meetings: Discussions around expectations with students with a big focus on the transition processes in Term 4 around high school the following year.	Commence transition discussions at SSG meeting. At the SSG, identify potential secondary schools to invite to a future meeting. Engage allied health, parents/carers to support and participate in any Disability Inclusion Profile application processes (if applicable).
		Secondary	The Transition Coordinator makes contact with local primary schools. Make community and school council aware of collaboration across Williamstown cluster.		
		KEY DATES (YEAR 6, TERM 1)			

Y	T	Responsibility	Tier 1 (ALL STUDENTS)	Tier 2 (SOME STUDENTS)	Tier 3 (FEW STUDENTS)
E A R M	6	Primary	Receive notifications of Year 6 Review applications and notify parents/carers. Identify a Transition Coordinator to assist the student to prepare their 'student profile'. Classroom teachers to complete Year 6 to Year 7 WHS Transition Form Student surveys regarding transition Continued discussions around academic/ welfare and behaviour expectations with all students, with a big focus on the transition processes that happen in Term 4. Open door policy/ Encouragement of F.A.Q. about Transition. Survey students around strengths/concerns about transition to secondary school.	Identify students requiring additional transition sessions - consult and inform families Classroom teachers to complete Year 6 to Year 7 WHS Transition Form including IEPs, BSP, allied health reports - to be confirmed Participate in transition discussions at SSG meeting to assist the preparation of a Transition Statement - a summary of important information about your child that can be given to the secondary school in planning appropriate supports for your child. Classroom teachers to complete Year 6 to Year 7 WHS Transition Form including IEPs, BSP, allied health reports - to be confirmed	Begin collating information (diagnostic and/or assessment reports) to be given to the secondary school. Participate in transition discussions at SSG meeting to assist the preparation of a Transition Statement - a summary of important information about your child that can be given to the secondary school in planning appropriate supports for your child. Classroom teachers to complete Year 6 to Year 7 WHS Transition Form including IEPs, BSP, allied health reports - to be confirmed
		Secondary	Identify staff professional learning needs, and consider planning for student access needs. Offers sent to students/families. Support families to confirm acceptance of offers and next steps.		Staff/organisational planning to support specific students and individual needs/learning plans. Observations of students within their primary setting who may require extensive planning and preparation ahead of transition.
		KEY DATES (YEAR 6, TERM 3): <ul style="list-style-type: none">ASD CoP meets to reflect on transition processes from previous year, progress and data sets.Student placement offers sent out to ALL students start T3 (July)Students to return placement forms to WPS & WHPS around mid AugustPS to confirm placements with WHS by mid August (completed around W6)WPS & WHPS to contact WHS around W8 T3 to confirm estimated numbers of funded students/students requiring additional focusWPS & WHPS to offer potential dates for early for full handover, as well as dates for additional supported T2/T3 visits (extra days)WHS to confirm dates by last week T3			

Y	T	Responsibility	Tier 1 (ALL STUDENTS)	Tier 2 (SOME STUDENTS)	Tier 3 (FEW STUDENTS)
E A R M	7	Primary		Confirm dates for the SSG to meet in Term 1 at the secondary school.	
		Secondary	Sharing established classroom setups and protocols with staff and students Ensuring the inclusivity statement, SIMPLE model are displayed in every classroom for students. Support parents/carers to visit the school with students ahead of the first day to become more familiar with environment, meet teachers etc. Receive transfer information including Transition Statement. Reflect on student voice collected through data - implications for support across rest of the year	Consider access needs of new students who may require specific learning, wellbeing or medical support. Including storage of medication, a private area for personal care, planning for Year 7 camp and anything else required to meet the student's needs.	Data tracking for students identified within the goal identified by the cluster (transition goal). Confirm dates for initial SSG meetings with parents/carers and support parents/carers to collaborate fully in planning for their child's learning with your team.
		KEY DATES (YEAR 7, TERM 1):			

Explore the approach...

Y E A R 6	T E R M 3	Responsibility	Tier 1 (ALL STUDENTS)	Tier 2 (SOME STUDENTS)	Tier 3 (FEW STUDENTS)
		Primary	Receive notifications of Year 6 Review applications and notify parents/carers. Identify a Transition Coordinator to assist the student to prepare their 'student profile'. Classroom teachers to complete Year 6 to Year 7 WHS Transition Form Student surveys regarding transition Continued discussions around academic/ welfare and behaviour expectations with all students, with a big focus on the transition processes that happen in Term 4. Open door policy/ Encouragement of F.A.Q. about Transition. Survey students around strengths/concerns about transition to secondary school.	Identify students requiring additional transition sessions - consult and inform families Classroom teachers to complete Year 6 to Year 7 WHS Transition Form including IEPs, BSP, allied health reports - to be confirmed	Classroom teachers to complete Year 6 to Year 7 WHS Transition Form. Begin collating information (diagnostic and/or assessment reports) to be given to the secondary school. Participate in transition discussions at SSG meeting to assist the preparation of a Transition Statement – a summary of important information about your child that can be given to the secondary school in planning appropriate supports for your child. Classroom teachers to complete Year 6 to Year 7 WHS Transition Form including IEPs, BSP, allied health reports - to be confirmed
		Secondary	Identify staff professional learning needs, and consider planning for student access needs. Offers sent to students/families. Support families to confirm acceptance of offers and next steps.		Staff/organisational planning to support specific students and individual needs/learning plans. Observations of students within their primary setting who may require extensive planning and preparation ahead of transition.
		KEY DATES (YEAR 6, TERM 3): <ul style="list-style-type: none">ASD CoP meets to reflect on transition processes from previous year, progress and data sets.Student placement offers sent out to ALL students start T3 (July)Students to return placement forms to WPS & WNPS around mid AugustPS to confirm placements with WHS by mid August (completed around W6)WPS & WNPS to contact WHS around W8 T3 to confirm estimated numbers of funded students/students requiring additional focusWPS & WNPS to offer potential dates for early for full handover, as well as dates for additional supported T2/T3 visits (extra days)WHS to confirm dates by last week T3			

Strengths

- sharing of documentation
- collaboration between schools, documents, environment, supports, professional learning, strategies
- sharing of documentation to support DIP process
- shared understanding of existing adjustments and supports
- 'champions' within each setting
- earlier communication with families - build support and confidence, 'front loading' from students and families
- additional transition times

Learnings

- Professional Learning led by EILs
- collaborative conversations build informed practices
- upskilling staff - through school visits, SSS and from professionals outside the school
- similar approach to be implemented across all environments
 - Kinder to school
 - multi campus settings
 - Year 9 - 10 campus
 - specialist settings

Successes

- established Transition Protocol - shared understanding of each school's processes and then alignment
- families being supported throughout the transition process (feeling that they've been heard); a team approach
- captured student voice through survey and SSG
- practices have changed
 - file hand-over, including Student Snapshot embedded process
 - final SSG - begin the IEP for 2026 - ensuring family feels as confident as possible

Challenges

- change of staff/champions
- annual commitment of key staff - ongoing work
- adhering to the timeframe for key dates
- prioritising this key work

Outcomes

- improvement in student attendance data 2023 compared to 2024 - 5% fewer days absent, on average, for ASD students at WHS Bayview Campus
- anecdotal evidence:
 - families choosing WHS for their child whereas may not have considered this school
 - families reporting children are enjoying school
- regular collaboration - in person, telephone calls, in writing
- confirmed transition practices, as per protocol
- brought parent/carer Transition Event from December to October - Inclusive Education LT, Year 7 LT, Curriculum LT, Principal Class presenting
- confirmed Term 4 SSG at WHS for all funded students

Changes

Term 3 SSG at WHS for all funded students

- Year 7 - 8 students to visit primary schools to share their experiences and insights
- opportunity to collaborate to support DIP applications
- teacher snapshot - introduction to student (example to be shared)
- Social Story - key staff, areas, lockers, books

Leading improvement in this in your school

Success criteria

- Identify the phases of transition?
- Identify key actions to support primary to secondary school transition?
- Articulate how schools can establish means of working together for our students?

Questions?