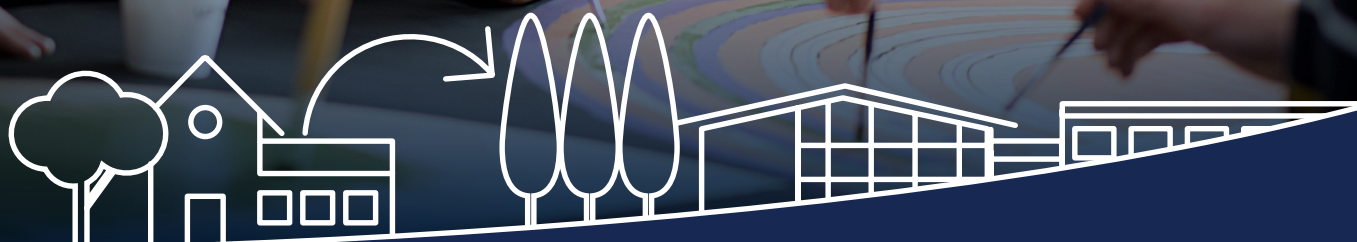


YEAR 7
TO HIGH
SCHOOL

TRANSITIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

FOR REGIONAL COMMUNITIES



Government of South Australia
Department for Education

MINISTERIAL FOREWORD



Regions are the lifeblood of South Australia, and as a government we are committed to recognising and responding to the unique interests and concerns of regional communities.

Around one third of children in public schools go to school in the regions, and we know that country children will reap the benefits of moving to high school in year 7, with earlier access to specialist teachers and specialist facilities.

We have heard from many regional families and communities who are excited about the opportunities of bringing year 7 into high school.

But we also know that the move raises different questions for some country communities.

This document outlines transitional arrangements that should satisfactorily answer those questions and resolve those issues in the way that will best meet the needs of the young people in those communities.

It has been developed following extensive consultation with regional South Australians and reflects the needs and interests of our diverse regional communities.

Our transitional approach achieves the right balance between giving country students the same opportunities as city students to attend high school in year 7 from 2022, while giving families and communities more time to adjust to this change if they need.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'John Gardner'.

Hon John Gardner MP
Minister for Education

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Tim Whetstone'.

Hon Tim Whetstone MP
Minister for Primary Industries
and Regional Development

INTRODUCTION

From July to September 2019, the Department for Education undertook consultation to understand concerns of country communities and ensure transitional arrangements reflected those concerns.

The feedback received through this consultation is reflected in the *Community Feedback Year 7 to High School regional consultation* report.

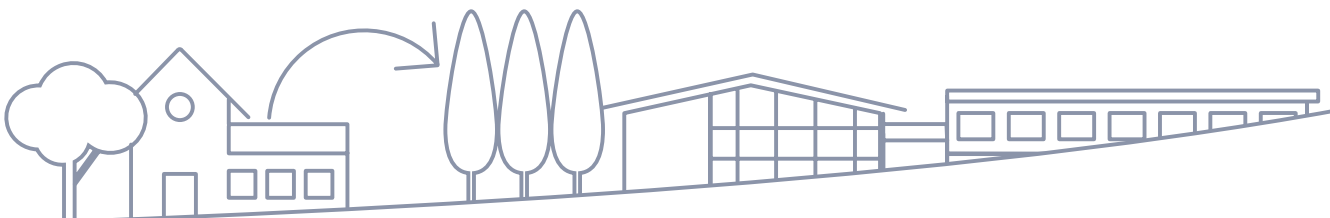
The proposed approach tested in community consultation was framed on the model employed in Western Australia, which allowed parents at country schools the choice to keep their year 7 child in primary school for a three year period.

The consultation process tested an approach which focused on mitigating the impacts on:

- children travelling further on the bus to high school/area school, and
- small schools in towns that are some distance from the local regional centre.

In this context, transitional arrangements were proposed for primary schools that are more than 20km from their local area or high school.

Under the proposed approach, some regional primary schools would continue to offer year 7, while all regional high schools would introduce year 7 (so that year 7 is offered concurrently in both settings).





WHAT COMMUNITIES SAID

Feedback from the community consultation suggested that we had the right framework for identifying relevant schools.

A small number of primary school communities were enthusiastic in relation to this option.

Similarly, a small number of parents who had particular concerns about their child's development or wellbeing, expressed the idea that having the option was a comfort to them.

However, the majority of communities and parents expressed hesitation and worry about this option. This included worries about the impacts of the transition period on the children 'left behind' in primary school; concern about the confusion and challenge of a prolonged transition; and a sense that it was better to 'rip the bandaid off'.

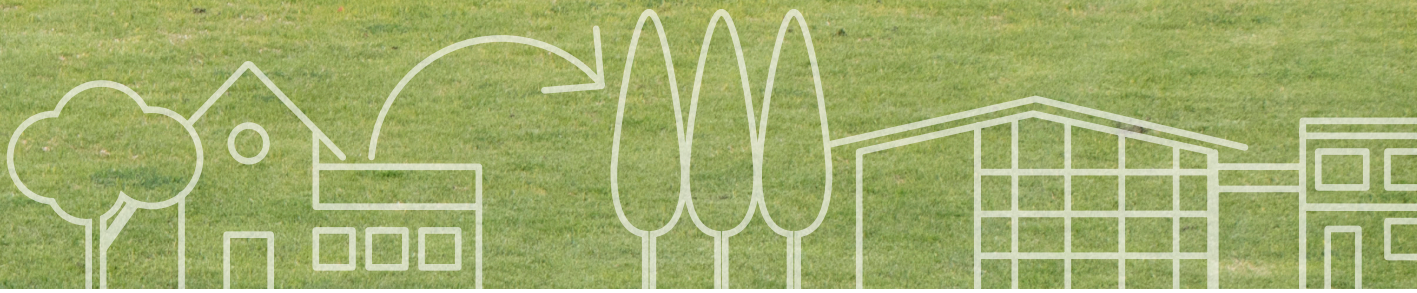
By and large, those communities said they looked forward to the opportunities high school would offer their children – and that even if they had some worries, they would send their children to high school to be with their peers.

However, those communities also expressed worry about the impact of the departure of year 7 on their small primary schools.

While communities accepted that the Government had promised not to force schools to close, they worried about the 'snowball' effect of diminishing enrolments.

If those schools close or no longer provide what families consider to be a viable option for their child, communities worried about both the impact on their town, and on much younger children having to travel much further on the bus to neighbouring schools.

Very consistently, communities identified the biggest factor in influencing families to stay at their local school as being the number of classes. A drop in the number of classes was considered to be the moment at which parents would reconsider their decision to stay at their small local primary school.



AGREED TRANSITIONAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR REGIONAL COMMUNITIES

The Government has decided on the following transitional arrangements for country primary schools located more than 20km from their local area or high school ('eligible schools').

By default, all year 7s will go to high school (or area school) from 2022.

That is, parents will not be asked to make a choice about whether to keep their child in primary school or send them to high school. It is assumed all year 7s will go.

- For a transition period (2022-24), parents at eligible primary schools can seek a 'by exception' exemption from their Principal to keep their year 7 in primary school.
- For a transition period (2022-24), where the departure of the year 7 cohort causes an eligible primary school to 'drop a class' from the number of classes offered in 2021, that school will be able to apply for a grant to maintain the number of classes in their school.

In addition, in response to the issues identified by communities in this consultation, the Year 7 to High School project will:

- Provide additional funding for the extra transport costs for transition activities in country schools in 2021, when the double cohort (years 6 and 7) get ready to start high school.
- Provide additional support to the regular process of updating bus routes in 2021, to ensure the changes required for the double cohort moving to high school are in place for 2022.
- Incorporate feedback received in areas such as professional learning for teachers, supporting transition for younger students and delivering capital works in regional settings, into project planning and delivery.



HOW THE TRANSITIONAL ARRANGEMENTS WILL BE IMPLEMENTED

To ensure effective implementation of these transitional arrangements, a departmental procedure will be developed in consultation with stakeholders, including school leaders and representative associations.

This will cover such things as:

- The process for parents seeking to apply for a 'by exception' exemption to keep their child in primary school.

This will include specifying the date by which such an application must be made. This is likely to be as part of the state-wide transition process for students moving to high school (which usually starts late term 1 the year prior to moving).

- Factors for a Principal to consider in making a decision about granting a 'by exception' exemption.
- The process for eligible primary schools to apply for grant funding.

This will likely include a simplified template for estimating the likely financial impacts of the departure of the year 6 cohort.

Further information on these arrangements will be published prior to the start of the 2021 school year.

To have a say in the development of the procedure, please contact year7toHS@sa.gov.au.

ELIGIBLE SCHOOLS

Primary schools more than 20kms by road from their nearest area or high school	
Andamooka Primary School	Lake Wangary Primary School
Auburn Primary School	Mallala Primary School
Beachport Primary School	Moorook Primary School
Blanchetown Primary School	Morgan Primary School
Booborowie Primary School	Mypolonga Primary School
Brinkworth Primary School	Nangwarry Primary School
Bute Primary School	Padthaway Primary School
Cadell Primary School	Penong Primary School
Callington Primary School	Pinnaroo Primary School
Cambrai Primary School	Port Neill Primary School
Cobdogla Primary School	Port Wakefield Primary School
Coonalpyn Primary School	Rapid Bay Primary School
Frances Primary School	Robe Primary School
Geranium Primary School	Robertstown Primary School
Glencoe Central Primary School	Snowtown Primary School
Goolwa Primary School	Spalding Primary School
Hamley Bridge Primary School	Stansbury Primary School
Jervois Primary School	Tailem Bend Primary School
Kalangadoo Primary School	Two Wells Primary School
Kingston-on-Murray Primary School	Ungarra Primary School
Kongorong Primary School	Warooka Primary School
Koolunga Primary School	Wasleys Primary School
Koonibba Aboriginal School	Wilmington Primary School
School of the Air	

