

APPLICABLE TO	All Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Maitland Newcastle
DOCUMENT OWNER	Head of Teaching and Learning Services
APPROVAL DATE	2017
APPROVED BY	CSO Leadership Team
SCHOOL ACTIONS	System Policy- Schools are to ensure their practices are consistent with this policy. Schools are to develop specific procedures aligned to this policy.
LAST REVIEW DATE/S	October 2021
NEXT REVIEW DATE	2024
RELATED DOCUMENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Education Policy CSO 2013 • K-12 Assessment Policy CSO 2019 • Gifted Education K-12 Policy CSO 2021 • Learning Support Policy CSO 2017 • Learning Framework CSO 2016 • MN Catholic Schools Learning Framework 2017 • Programming K-12 Policy CSO 2019 • Reporting Policy K-12 2017 • Sustainability Policy CSO 2018 • Vision Statement for Catholic Schools CSO 2016 • Wellbeing and Pastoral Care Policy CSO 2017

Purpose

The purpose of the Early Learning Policy is to articulate a system-wide commitment to Early Learning which supports diocesan schools to implement agreed philosophy and pedagogy. It acknowledges current research and best practice in the field, which respects the rights, capabilities and needs of the Early Learner to achieve success and build the successful foundations to flourish in their learning and wellbeing.

Policy Statement

The Catholic Schools Office is committed to implementing and resourcing a cohesive, system-wide approach to Early Learning that is based on agreed philosophy, pedagogy, best practice and current research in the field.

This Policy aims to:

- raise school and system awareness of the importance of the early years to learning for all children

- build staff knowledge and understanding, skills and capabilities that enable best practice in Early Learning
- provide advice and guidelines to school and system personnel in the development and implementation of Early Learning initiatives.

Underpinning the Early Learning Policy is the Vision Statement for Catholic Schools which clearly articulates identity and purpose. [Vision & Values - Catholic Schools Office Maitland-Newcastle](#)

At the heart of everything there is always Jesus Christ.

Catholic schools educate from and for a community of faith; from and for excellence in learning; in a rigorous, creative and critical pursuit of truth (2016).

The approach to Early Learning fits within the diocesan Learning Framework under Personalised Learning. <https://lf.mn.catholic.edu.au/personalised-learning>

The school places a high priority on ensuring that, in their day to day teaching, teachers identify and address the learning needs of individual students, including high achieving students, and those students who require adjustments to their learning. Students should be engaged, challenged and extended in meeting their learning needs (National School Improvement Tool ACER, 2012).

Scope

This policy applies to all primary schools and system personnel in the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle and is read in conjunction with the Procedure document.

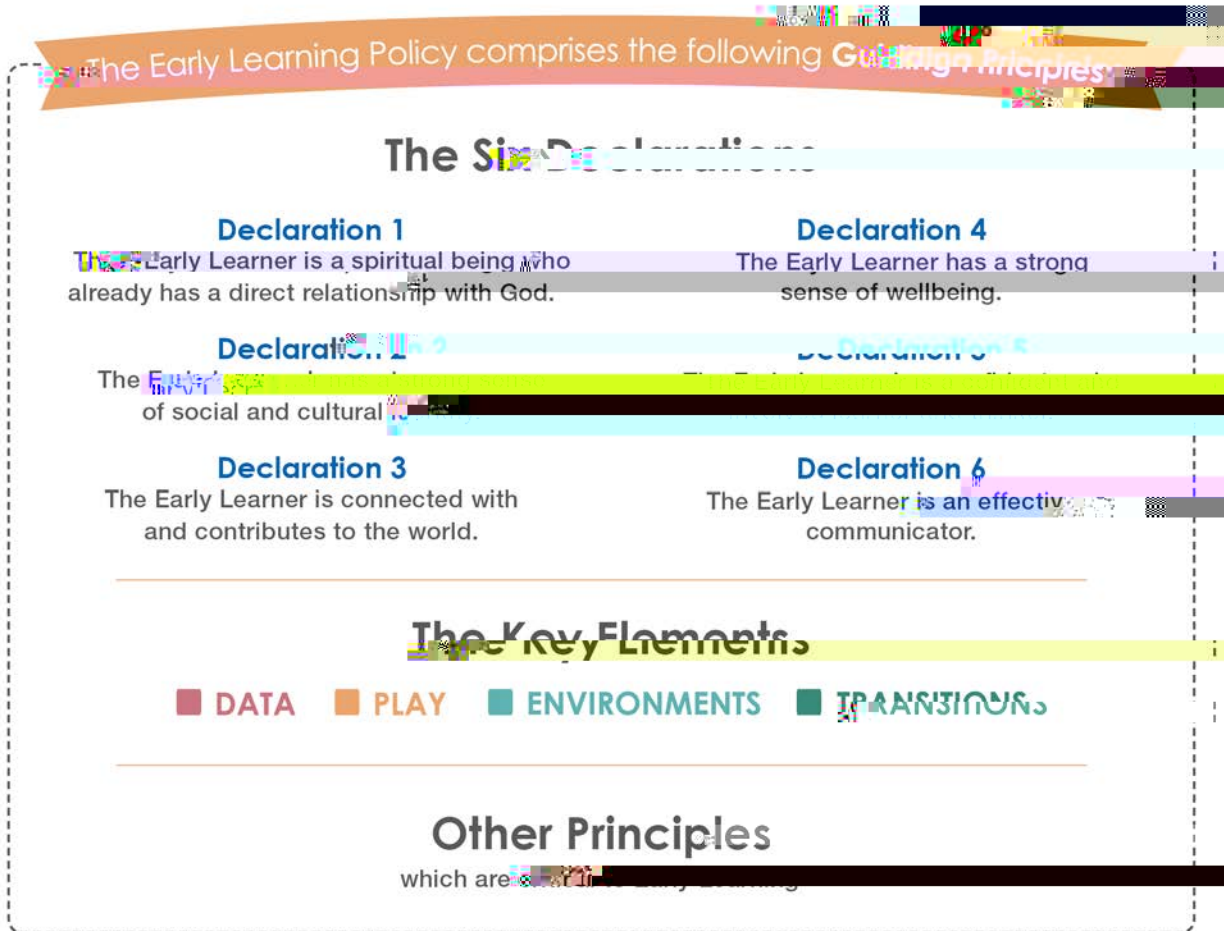
Definitions

Early Childhood is defined as the period from birth to eight years. It is a time of remarkable growth with brain development at its peak. During this stage, children are highly influenced by the environment and the people that surround them. Early Childhood is more than just a preparatory stage assisting the child's transition to formal schooling. It is a time of holistic development of a child's social, emotional, cognitive and physical needs in order to build a solid and broad foundation of lifelong learning and wellbeing. (UNESCO, 2016).

The Early Learner is the child in the age span from birth to eight years old. For the purpose of this policy, the Early Learner is the child transitioning into Kindergarten and the child in the school years of Kindergarten, Year One and Year Two.

Guiding Principles

“Don’t be discouraged by the difficulties that the educational challenge presents. Educating isn’t a profession but an attitude, a way of being. In order to educate you must go out of yourselves and be amidst the young, accompanying them in the stages of their growth, standing beside them”
(Pope Francis, 2013).



1. Declarations

This policy draws on a set of belief statements which make declarations about the Early Learner in Catholic schools in the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle. The Early Learning Policy is founded on the image of the child as described in the declarations and is integral to and underpins the meaning and context of this policy. The Declarations declare that the Early Learner is a fully formed human and five of the six Declarations are adapted from the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF).

Declaration 1

The Early Learner is a spiritual being who already has a direct relationship with God.

The Early Learner

...tive

...on, including

time to be, to seek and make meaning of the world.

Declaration 2

The Early Learner has a strong sense of social and cultural identity.

The Early Learner

- is able to experience the joy of childhood when in a safe, loving and support (d)]TJ 0 Tc 07d63.7 4 6 (ea)-

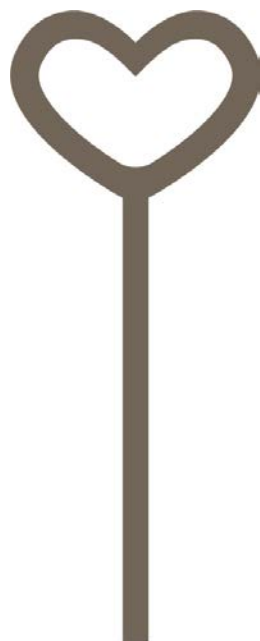
- develops dispositions for learning such as creativity, imagination, curiosity, confidence and reflection

Declaration 6

The Early Learner as an effective communicator

The Early Learner

- uses literacy and numeracy knowledge and skills to construct meanings and be actively involved in
- interacts verbally and non-verbally with others and the environment for a range of purposes
- engages in
- uses a mu
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- All children in the early years will have the opportunity to develop their **sensory, cognitive and affective appreciation** of the world around them through **exploratory and creative learning in the arts and technology** .

Responsibilities

Catholic Schools Office

Teachers of Early Learners within a Catholic school context are responsible for 7289

Transition to School

Recognised as one of the most significant transitions individuals make, transition to schools has been described as 'a major change for children and their families' (Research Institute for Professional Practice 2011), a 'landmark event' (Pianta & Cox 2002) and an event that 'sets the tone and direction of a child's school career' (Pianta & Kraft-Sayre 1999, cited by Dockett & Perry 2001). Refer to the Key Elements in Procedure.

Wellbeing

For our schools, and based on the literature, this Policy adopts the following definition: