

# POLICY

## MIDDLE YEARS OF SCHOOLING

Responsibility of:  
Effective Date:  
Next Review Date:  
Actual Date Reviewed

Teaching, Learning and Standards Division  
November 2006  
January 2008

DEET File: 2000/2009  
Doc: 2006/000496

VERSION NUMBER: 4

### 1 POLICY

In the Northern Territory, the Middle Years of Schooling are Years 7 – 9. School programs, practices and protocols in these years of schooling, are guided by the actions described in the Middle Years of Schooling Principles and Policy Framework. (Refer Attachment 1)

Year 6 is a transition period and as such introduces students to middle years' approaches with a main focus being a seamless and effective transition into the middle years. Teachers in the primary and middle years will jointly plan transition programs.

Year 10 is considered to be a period of transition into senior years. Year 10 introduces students to senior years approaches with a main focus being transition into appropriate pathways for the post compulsory years of schooling.

### 2 PRINCIPLES

The Middle Years of Schooling is informed by the following 5 principles. These describe practices to guide and inform classroom practice, school leadership and systemic support. They provide the road map for school improvement and action planning.

#### **Theme 1: Teaching and Learning**

The curriculum is based upon the Northern Territory Curriculum Framework (NTCF) outcomes and is rigorous, rich, real and relevant to students' current and future lives.

#### **Theme 2: Literacy and Numeracy**

Students are offered learning opportunities that allow them to reach and in most cases exceed literacy and numeracy national benchmarks.

#### **Theme 3: Student-Teacher Relationships**

Strong teacher-student relationships are fundamental to improving individual outcomes for most students in the middle years.

#### **Theme 4: Transition Into and Out of the Middle Years**

Transition into and out of middle years is a formal part of the program of all schools.

#### **Theme 5: Systemic Support**

The school system provides support to students, parents and teachers in the middle years.

### 3 BUSINESS NEED

In January 2006, the NT Government formed a decision that NT schools will commence implementation of Middle Years approaches in 2007. This decision recognises that students in the middle years have particular needs that are different from those of young children and older adolescents, and that these needs are changing.

Like all students, young adolescents have a range of personal, intellectual and social needs. With the onset of puberty, however, there are particular physical, emotional and cultural needs that must be addressed to ensure students are actively engaged in their learning and access appropriate pathways to maximise their achievement, attendance, retention and sense of personal well-being. The middle years of schooling provides opportunities for young people to learn and grow in ways that acknowledge and respect this unique and special phase of development.

Middle Schooling is founded on a commitment to advance the learning capacity of all students and the achievement of outcomes across the areas of enrolment, attendance, retention, achievement and student well-being.

To achieve this Middle Schooling in the NT is based on a shared philosophy of fundamental values and beliefs described within the following principles:

- **Learning centred** – coherent curriculum that is focussed on the identified needs, interests and concerns of students, with an emphasis on self-directed and co-constructed learning
- **Collaboratively organised** – powerful pedagogy that employed by teams of teachers who know and understand their students very well, and who challenge and extend them in supportive environments
- **Outcome based** – progress and achievement recorded continuously in relation to explicit statements of what each student is expected to know and be able to do.
- **Flexibly constructed** – arrangements responsive to local needs and circumstances, and reflect creative uses of time, space and other resources
- **Ethically aware** – justice, care, respect and a concern for the needs of others reflected in everyday practice of students, teachers and leaders
- **Community orientated** – parents, together with representatives from a diverse range of groups, institutions and organisations beyond the school are involved in productive partnerships
- **Adequately resourced** – experienced teachers and support staff, supported by high quality facilities, technology, equipment and materials, constitute essential requirements
- **Strategically linked** – a discrete phase of schooling is implemented within a P-12 continuum and connected to the early, primary and senior years of schooling

## 4 RESPONSIBILITIES

### DEET Executive

- Lead and sustain a shared vision of and commitment to middle schooling, with a focus on teaching and learning.
- Ensure adequate human, fiscal and physical resourcing is made available for the implementation and monitoring of middle schooling across the Northern Territory.
- Report annually on enrolment, attendance, retention and outcomes.
- Monitor, evaluate and report annually on the implementation of middle years approaches within Northern Territory Schools.

### Business Planning and Information Division

- Co-ordinate the systems to collect, analyse and evaluate data to inform the planning, implementation and monitoring of outcomes in the Middle Years.

## **People and Learning**

- Facilitate professional learning opportunities for school leaders to prepare them for middle years approaches to leadership.
- Create human resource systems and practices that result in career structures, leadership pathways and performance enhancement processes to support staff working in the middle years of schooling.
- Recruit and retain teachers and school leaders with knowledge, expertise and experience in the middle years of schooling.

## **Teaching, Learning and Standards Division**

- Facilitate targeted professional learning opportunities for teachers of middle years' students.
- Facilitate processes that enable schools to initiate and sustain professional communities of practice through which teachers develop, trial and share examples of effective practice.
- Maintain effective professional learning and achievement tracking systems.
- Support the implementation of assessment processes such as Year 9 National Literacy and Numeracy Testing, standards validation and moderation of student achievement against the NTCF outcomes.
- Provide an appropriate range of Layer 2 support materials to support teaching and learning in the Middle Years of Schooling.
- Publish materials and research that document examples of effective practice, seminal and school-based research in the middle years.

## **Student Services**

- Ensure that appropriate assessment and intervention are available for students at the system and school levels.
- Facilitate professional learning opportunities for teachers and school leadership teams to build and sustain effective student well-being policy, well-being programs and practices across all aspects of school life.
- Facilitate professional learning opportunities for teachers to prepare them for effective approaches to appropriate intervention and special assistance for students with special needs in the middle years.
- Facilitate processes that enable schools to initiate and sustain professional learning communities through which teachers develop, trial and share examples of best practice appropriate to intervention and special assistance for students with special needs in the middle years.

## **General Managers, Principals and School Leadership Teams**

Ensure effective implementation of the actions described in the Middle Years of Schooling Policies and Principles Framework in their schools through:

- Leading and sustaining a shared vision of middle schooling approaches with a focus on teaching and learning.
- Leadership in teaching and learning.
- Developing a learning community within a collaborative culture.
- Building and sustaining healthy student well-being through fostering relationships, partnerships and leadership opportunities.
- Developing organisational structures that best meet the needs of learners in the middle years
- Allocating sufficient human, physical and fiscal resources to ensure delivery of outcomes for students and teachers in the middle years within the whole school framework.
- Facilitate opportunities for staff from feeder primary and senior secondary schools to collaborate when developing and implementing quality transition programs for learners as they move into and out of the middle years.
- Providing opportunities for staff, students and parents to reflect on performance indicators that set a baseline for future evaluation.

- Ensuring that all teaching staff use performance enhancement processes as a means of critical reflection on teaching practice in order to support continuous improvement.
- Provide systems and processes through school actions plans and reporting schedules incorporating priorities and explicit actions for of middle schooling practices in terms of infrastructure; teaching and learning; human, physical and fiscal resources; school organization, reporting and evaluation and other as required.

### **Teachers and Support Staff**

Ensure effective implementation of the actions described in the Principles and Policy Framework in their schools through planning, delivering, assessing and reporting programs that:

- Contribute and sustain a shared vision of middle years approaches with a focus on teaching and learning.
- Use the outcomes described in the EsseNTial Learnings, Learning Technology, English as a Second Language, Learning Area and Indigenous Languages and Culture components of the NTCF.
- Use a middle years approach to curriculum design, delivery and evaluation, ensuring opportunities for student experience of Integrated learning, Specialised learning, Personal learning, Extended learning and Vocational Learning.
- Use pedagogical approaches that ensure students have expanded opportunities to actively engaged in learning and access appropriate pathways to maximise their achievement, attendance, retention and sense of personal well-being.
- Actively plan and participate in professional learning opportunities to ensure teaching demonstrates evidence of effective middle years practices to learning including literacy, numeracy and ICT.
- Initiate, participate in and sustain professional communities of practice to ensure effective teaching and learning practices are developed, trialed and shared within and across schools.
- Actively reflect on personal practice with a view to facilitate inclusive programs and practices that address adolescent interests and concerns, personal development and academic standards.

## **5 DEFINITION**

The *Middle Years of Schooling* represents a critical phase of development in the lives of young adolescents. This phase of development is recognised as being Years 7 – 9 in the Northern Territory. It requires distinct approaches to leadership, teaching and learning, relationships and community partnerships, organisational structures and resource allocation.

## **6 RELATED POLICIES**

- The Overview component of the *Northern Territory Curriculum Framework* describes essential policy, which informs middle years approaches to teaching and learning.
- Professional Learning Policy
- Performance Enhancement Policy
- Leadership Development Policy

## **7 REFERENCE DOCUMENTS**

- *Middle Years of Schooling – A Scoping Paper for Consultation on the Middle Years of Schooling in the Northern Territory*. Prepared by Socom 2005.
- *‘Making the Most of the Middle Years – A Report on the Community Consultation for the Principles and Policy Framework for the Middle Years of Education Stage 1’* prepared by Socom 2005.
- *Report on the Future Directions for Secondary Education in the Northern Territory* by Ramsey et al, 2003.
- *The Northern Territory Curriculum Framework* Northern Territory Government 2002

## **8 ATTACHMENTS**

- Attachment One: *Middle Years of Schooling Policies and Principles Framework* prepared by Socom, 2005.

## **9 REVIEW**

This policy will be reviewed in January 2008

## **10 GUIDELINES/PROCEDURES**

From 2006, Years 7 – 9 will be known as the Middle Years of Schooling.

From 2007, Years 10 –12 will be known as the Senior Years of Schooling.

All divisions within Education will commence supporting schools in 2006. This will require schools and DEET Divisions to plan, deliver and monitor the Middle Years of Schooling Implementation Strategy as a part of their workplace business plans. This Strategy acknowledges that implementation of Middle Years Approaches will require workplaces to undergo significant and ongoing change management. Divisions are required to consider existing relevant NT DEET policy and strategies relating when planning for implementation and working with schools.