



NEWS

Prep kids to start all over with a new name

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PREPPIES could vanish from Victorian schools next year under a plan to re-name their grade “foundation”.

Principals are behind a nationwide push to give the first year of full-time schooling a uniform title.

If successful, prep year — as well as the terms “reception”, “transition” and “kindergarten” favoured in other states — would be dumped.

And a compulsory “starting age” also may be introduced, cutting the confusion for families and students who move interstate.

Victoria’s Education Minister Martin Dixon said he was open to a more national approach, including the adoption of “foundation” year.

“I would certainly go into any discussions with an open mind,” he said.

“We need to get some sort of national consistency on the beginning of school age, what the year levels are called, and how many years are spent in primary school.”

The Australian Government Primary Principals Association, which represents 5300 schools throughout Australia, is campaigning for the name change from next year.

President Gabrielle Leigh said she saw no reason Victorians would struggle with the shift.

“Everybody inside and outside of education knows what a foundation is,” Ms Leigh said.

“At the moment it’s all over the shop. We would like consistency in the termin-

ology, so we can compare apples with apples.”

Parents Victoria executive officer Gail McHardy expects parents to accept the change. She said: “Considering we’re moving to a national curriculum and national teaching standards, it makes sense that we have common language.”

The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, which is working on the national curriculum, already uses the term “foundation” to describe first-year students.



No big deal: Ormond Primary preps. Picture: MIKE KEATING