

# OUT OF HOME CARE IN GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

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## Personalised learning and support planning procedures

### Introduction

These procedures support the development, implementation, review and monitoring of personalised learning and support planning for children or young people in statutory out of home care who are enrolled or are enrolling in a government school or preschool. This includes children and young people who are in statutory out of home care or are in court ordered kinship or guardianship care.

### Pre enrolment of students who are in out of home care

The school may be notified by either the carer or case worker regarding the impending enrolment of a child or young person in out of home care in their area. The school will be informed of the child or young person's statutory care status, the agency with case management responsibility, the carers details and, if known, learning, behaviour and health support needs.

### Enrolment at school of children and young people in out of home care

The child or young person is enrolled by their carer or case worker in the school in a timely manner, as outlined in the [current enrolment policy](#).

Information to inform the development of personalised learning and support planning for the child or young person should be collected during or as soon as possible after enrolment of the child or young person.

### Children and young people entering out of home care

NSW Department of Family and Community Services is responsible for informing the Department of Education via the mailbox [oohc.cps@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:oohc.cps@det.nsw.edu.au) when a child or young person attending a government school enters statutory care. Where case management responsibility has been transferred to a non-government organisation, NSW Department of Family and Community Services may delegate this responsibility to the organisation.

This information will be provided to the relevant Principal and Out of Home Care teacher as soon as is practicable.

### Personalised Learning and Support Planning

The principal is responsible for ensuring the development of personalised learning and support planning for a student in statutory out of home care who is enrolling in the school, or when it is known an existing student is entering care. The principal is responsible for ensuring its development within 30 school days

of notification that the child or young person has entered, or is in, out of home care and that it is revised at least annually.

The personalised learning and support planning may include disability, transition, behaviour or health care planning.

The principal should be aware that the personalised learning and support planning may contain potentially sensitive or confidential information. Consideration must be given to what should be included and what should be made available to others, on a 'need to know' basis. All staff are expected to manage personal information about students appropriately.

Personalised learning and support planning should identify:

- the academic, social, behavioural, emotional and wellbeing needs of the child or young person
- strategies for achieving the identified outcomes for the student and what is needed to achieve them, taking into account available resources
- who will be responsible for implementing the strategies or providing identified resources or support
- the timelines for implementing the planning
- monitoring strategies and responsibilities
- review dates, including annual review date. (Ideally learning goals should be reviewed following reporting periods).

Personalised learning and support planning should:

- outline a meaningful educational program which builds on and responds positively to the student's learning history, including their life experience, cultural, linguistic, religious or spiritual beliefs, gender and socio-economic background
- be age and developmentally appropriate
- be flexible and future-orientated
- be a strength-based model with a focus on what is needed to support the student to access the curriculum and participate in education on the same basis as all other students to achieve educational, social and behavioural outcomes
- aim to retain the student at school
- clearly articulate roles and responsibilities
- provide/document information on student progress
- contain a record of important decisions and actions
- be reviewed on a regular basis according to the needs of the child or young person (at least annually, when circumstances change and when the child or young person changes school)
- be developed by teachers in collaboration with the student, carers, caseworker and other relevant staff or service providers.

The learning support team, or equivalent group, oversees the development, review and monitoring of the personalised learning and support evidence. It is a collaborative process which should involve key people including:

- the child or young person
- the principal or nominee
- the teacher
- year advisor, head teacher welfare and other staff such as learning and support teachers.
- school counsellor, if applicable
- the carer
- the caseworker

- other professional staff (for example, speech therapists) and designated non-government agencies, where appropriate.

When a student transfers to a new school, evidence of the learning and support planning should be forwarded to the new school in a timely manner, where it will be reviewed by the learning support team and updated, within 30 school days, to meet the current needs of the student.

The principal should ensure contact is made with the relevant out of home care teacher and/or school services staff if additional support is required for the child or young person in out of home care.

### **Filing, documenting and access to the learning and support planning**

Care should be taken to manage sensitive or confidential information about students appropriately. The learning and support evidence should be kept in a secure place and available only to those staff who need this information to support the student.

The principal must ensure that all parties including the carer, student, caseworker and agency with case management responsibility are provided with a copy of the learning and support outcomes or evidence as soon as possible and whenever it is reviewed.

A copy of a child or young person's learning and support planning may be provided to NSW Health, as appropriate, to contribute to the child or young person's Health assessment/health care plan.

At times, if required and if appropriate, NSW Department of Family and Community Services may share information with other government or non-government agencies. They may also share evidence of the personalised learning and support planning with birth parents or other key birth family members to support the maintenance of a child or young person's identity and relationships within their birth family.

# Appendix

## What is out of home care?

School staff are better placed to support improved education outcomes for children and young people in out of home care when principals ensure that staff are aware of issues that affect children in care, while taking care not to stigmatise individual children and young people.

Children and young people come into out of home care through two main routes:

- after an investigation and removal from the family home by the NSW Department of Family and Community Services
- when a parent or parents cannot care for their child and approach the NSW Department of Family and Community Services.

Children and young people remain in care until they can safely return home or until they are 18 years of age. This may be a temporary, medium or long-term living arrangement. If they are not able to return to their birth parents, NSW Department of Family and Community Services seeks to place them in relative or kinship care, where possible. This form of care places a child or young person with a relative or someone they already know.

When relative or kinship care is not available, NSW Department of Family and Community Services through its out of home care program and funded non-government agencies, delivers a range of care accommodation and support services to children and young people across New South Wales.

Under the *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998* there are three types of out of home care: statutory out of home care, supported out of home care and voluntary out of home care. The Department of Education Out of Home Care program, **supports students in statutory out of home care.**

## Support information

Policies

[Out of Home Care in Government Schools Policy](#)

[School Attendance Policy](#)

Inside the department

[Keep Them Safe: A Shared Approach to Child Wellbeing](#)

[NSW Department of Family and Community Services](#)

Legislation

[Children and Young Persons \(Care and Protection\) Act 1998](#)