

OUT OF HOME CARE (HOMELESSNESS)

Rationale

- Newport Gardens Primary School understands that education makes a significant contribution to the development and wellbeing of all children and young people as well as their future access to employment and life opportunities.
- The DET is working in partnership with other government departments and community service organisations to strengthen educational support for children, young people and their families who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.
- Guidelines have been developed primarily for all primary and secondary schools across Victoria to improve the wellbeing, educational experiences and outcomes of children and young people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Specifically, the guidelines assist schools to:
 - understand more about homelessness, how and why it occurs and the impact it has on the lives of children, young people and their families
 - identify actions that schools can take to improve outcomes for children and young people affected by homelessness, and the principles that underpin these actions
 - learn about what others are doing to improve wellbeing, educational experiences and outcomes for children affected by homelessness, especially where these activities involve good practices
 - identify key contacts and resources that will enable Newport Gardens Primary School to more effectively identify, engage and support children, young people and their families who are affected by homelessness.For a copy of the guidelines, see: [Supporting Children, Young People and their Families Affected by Homelessness – Guidelines for Victorian Schools \(pdf - 3.32mb\)](#)
- DET requires schools to develop an Individual Education Plan supported by a Support Group (SSG) for every child in OOHC.

Purpose

- To ensure Newport Gardens Primary School complies with DET policy in supporting children who are part of the Out-of-Home Care program or at risk of homelessness.
- To ensure that Newport Gardens Primary School complies with Child Safe Standards 1 & 2.

Definitions

Out-of-Home Care (OOHC) is a temporary, medium or long-term living arrangement for children and young people who cannot live in their family home. Up to 4000 Victorian children live in OOHC at any one time.

There are four types of OOHC:

Foster Care: a child is taken into care by a foster carer who has been trained and approved to look after children.

Kinship Care: a child is taken into care by a relative or family friend allowing them to remain within the family or local network.

Permanent Care: a child is placed into the permanent care of an existing foster carer or kinship carer through the Family Court.

Residential Care: a young person is placed into a home staffed by carers.

Children and young people come into OOHC through two main channels - after an investigation and removal from the family home by Child Protection or when a parent or parents cannot care for their child and approach the Department of Human Services or a community service organisation.

A number of legal orders can be granted by the Children's Court to assist in the safe removal of a child from their family home. They include:

- Interim Accommodation or Protection Order: granted pending further investigations.
- Supervision Order: a child is monitored in the family home by Child Protection.
- Custody or Third Party Order: a child is placed in the custody of another person without Child Protection supervision.
- Secretary Order: a child is placed in the care of the person arranging their placement.
- Permanent Care Order: a child is placed in the permanent care of a guardian.

Implementation

- The safety and wellbeing of every child is the highest priority for this school.
- Reference will be made to the following publications:
 - What is Out-of-Home Care?
 - Partnering Agreement: Out-of-Home Care Education Commitment
 - Authorising Carers: Information for Schools, Kindergartens and Child Care Providers
 - Educational Needs Assessment

- Individual Education Plans
- Out-of-HomeNot Out of School
- FUSE Learning Mentor Training
- Student Support Groups
- Teacher's Role
- Effects on Children
- Resources and Contacts

available on the website below.

- A Support Group will be established to provide a formal support network for every child in OOHC.
- An Individual Education Plan (IEP) will be developed. This plan will describe a set of strategies to address the particular educational needs of the child in care.
- If there are significant concerns for the wellbeing of a child, the school will report the concerns to DHHS Child Protection or Child FIRST.
- Inquiries also can be made on 1800 825 955 – 24 hours.
- If there is concern that a child is experiencing family violence, the school will contact the Women's Domestic Violence Crisis Service on 9322-3555 or toll free 1800 015 188 – 24 hours.
- Please refer also to the school's Attendance Policy, the Mandatory Reporting Policy and the Child Safe Standards.

Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle or if guidelines change (latest DET update late May 2016).

This policy was ratified by Newport Gardens Primary School, School Council on

Reference:

www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/participation/Pages/oohc.aspx

