

Strengthening networks and school communities

Guidelines for student
support services



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Contents

Acknowledgements.....	3
1. Introduction.....	4
1.1 Student support services in Victoria.....	4
1.2 Current reform.....	4
1.3 Guidelines for student support services	5
1.4 Framework for Student Support Services	5
2. The Student Support Services Policy Context	7
2.1 The Victorian policy environment.....	7
2.2 The statewide context	9
2.3 The Commonwealth policy environment	10
3. Student Support Services Program Priorities and Structure.....	11
3.1 Student support services objectives and priorities.....	11
3.2 Student Support Services Program structure	14
3.3 Student support services multidisciplinary teams	19
3.4 Accommodating student support services staff	20
Appendix 3A: Sample Position Description Materials	22
4. Planning and Delivering Student Support Services	35
4.1 Student support services planning.....	35
4.2 Delivering student support services	39
4.3 Support planning for individual students	45
Appendix 4A: Student Support Services Workplan	46
Appendix 4B: Student Support Services School Referral Form	50
Appendix 4C: Parent/guardian Consent Form	52
Appendix 4D: Privacy Statement and Informed Consent.....	53
Appendix 4E: Individual Support Plan Template	56
Appendix 4F: Sample Outsourced Service Provider Agreement	58
Appendix 4G: Delivering Student Support Services: Process Checklist.....	59
5. Service Partnerships	60
5.1 Effective service partnerships.....	60
5.2 DEECD health and wellbeing workforces and programs	62
5.3 Other key health and wellbeing services.....	65
6. Workforce Support and Development.....	70
6.1 Induction	70
6.2 Professional learning activities	72
6.3 Performance and development.....	72
6.4 Operational Debriefing	73
6.5 Mentoring.....	73
6.6 Teamwork.....	73
6.7 Supervision.....	73
Appendix 6A: Sample Student Support Services Induction Checklist	79
Appendix 6B: Sample Supervision Agreement.....	82
Appendix 6C: Supervision Checklist.....	83
7. Student Support Services Program Accountability	84
7.1 Accountability within the planning cycle	84
7.2 Program performance reporting.....	85
7.3 Accountability for student support services files	87

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In particular, we would like to acknowledge the contribution of regional and student support services staff across Victoria.

1. Introduction

1.1 Student support services in Victoria

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) is committed to providing safe, inclusive and engaging learning environments in all Victorian government schools. Wellbeing of students is essential for the achievement of successful learning outcomes. The Student Support Services Program assists children and young people to achieve their educational and developmental potential through the provision of specialised support at individual, group, school, network and regional levels. Student support services staff comprise psychologists, guidance officers, speech pathologists, social workers, visiting teachers and other related professionals.

These staff are involved in a range of activities, including student and family support, assessment, crisis response, consultation with student wellbeing and other school staff, group work and the facilitation of early intervention programs in schools.

Student support services staff also assist in strengthening the capacity of the workforces within schools to meet the needs of disadvantaged or vulnerable children, young people and their families to enable them to achieve successful education and wellbeing outcomes. The Program has a strong focus on facilitating, building and strengthening partnerships with other support agencies – such as early childhood services; community organisations; and health, family, child mental health and youth services – to provide increased options and coordinated service provision for families and their children.

1.2 Current reform

The Victorian Government allocated \$33.2 million over four years in the 2008–09 State Budget to the expansion and enhancement of the Student Support Services Program to ensure that services are targeted to areas of greatest need. This funding builds on existing investment in the Program through employment of additional staff and strengthening Program governance and accountability structures.

Strengthening Student Support Services: a Discussion Paper for Consultation was developed to facilitate a broad, comprehensive consultation process with key stakeholders, during 2008 including student support services staff, principals, regional officers and professional and industrial organisations.

Strengthening Student Support Services Directions Paper: The Way Forward (the Directions Paper) was subsequently released in January 2009, based on responses to the consultation process. The Directions Paper provided broad information about the enhanced student support services model to be implemented across the state. The Directions Paper outlined five key interrelated elements of the new model:

- overarching statewide student support services policy
- targeted service delivery
- improved management structures
- enhanced workforce support and supervision
- better accountability and performance reporting arrangements.

The Directions Paper is available at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/support/ssso.htm>

The enhanced approach to the delivery of student support services includes a universal focus on wellbeing and engagement while also targeting children and young people who have additional needs or are most vulnerable to disengagement from education.

Integral to the enhanced student support services model is the need for balance between a consistent statewide approach and the flexibility to meet regional, network and local community needs in order to provide the most appropriate support to vulnerable young people and their families. Different needs, arrangements and structures across each region have been taken into consideration when developing and implementing the model.

1.3 Guidelines for student support services

Building on the elements outlined in the Directions Paper, Strengthening Networks and School Communities: Guidelines for Student Support Services (the Guidelines) have been developed as the main point of reference for student support services staff and schools, networks and regions using or overseeing the Program. The Guidelines are available online and will be reviewed and extended as required in response to changes in policy directions and the needs of regions and school communities.

These Guidelines outline the six key elements of the Student Support Services Program as follows:

Figure 1.1: Key elements of the Student Support Services Program

Section of the Guidelines	Contents
Policy context	Section 2 DEECD, Victorian and Commonwealth policy environments and the links with student support services
Program purpose and structure	Section 3 Student support services objectives and priorities Program structure Multidisciplinary team arrangements Accommodating student support services staff
Planning and delivering student support services	Section 4 Student support services planning Stages of service delivery
Effective service partnerships	Section 5 Student health and wellbeing workforces and programs Other service partners
Workforce support and development	Section 6 Induction Professional learning Performance and development Supervision
Program accountability mechanisms	Section 7 Accountability within the planning cycle Program performance reporting Accountability for file and records management

1.4 Framework for Student Support Services

These Guidelines have been developed to replace the 1998 Framework for Student Support Services in Victorian Government Schools (the Framework) document in response to the changing context, structure and model of delivering student support services. However, the Framework together with the following resources

associated with the Framework continue to provide a valuable whole-school wellbeing structure and point of reference for all student health and wellbeing staff, including school-based and student support services staff:

- The Framework for Student Support Services in Victorian Government Schools: Teacher Resource (1999) is designed to assist schools, teachers and student support staff to use four levels of activity to strengthen student welfare and curriculum support in schools: primary prevention, early intervention, intervention and restoring wellbeing. The Teacher Resource is available online at: <http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/stuman/wellbeing/fwksss.pdf>
- The Framework for Student Support Services in Victorian Government Schools: Professional Development Support Materials (1998) provides a resource and materials for student wellbeing professionals and teachers for implementing and using the four levels of activity to improve student wellbeing and engagement support structures. The Professional Development Support Materials are available online at: <http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/stuman/wellbeing/frame.pdf>

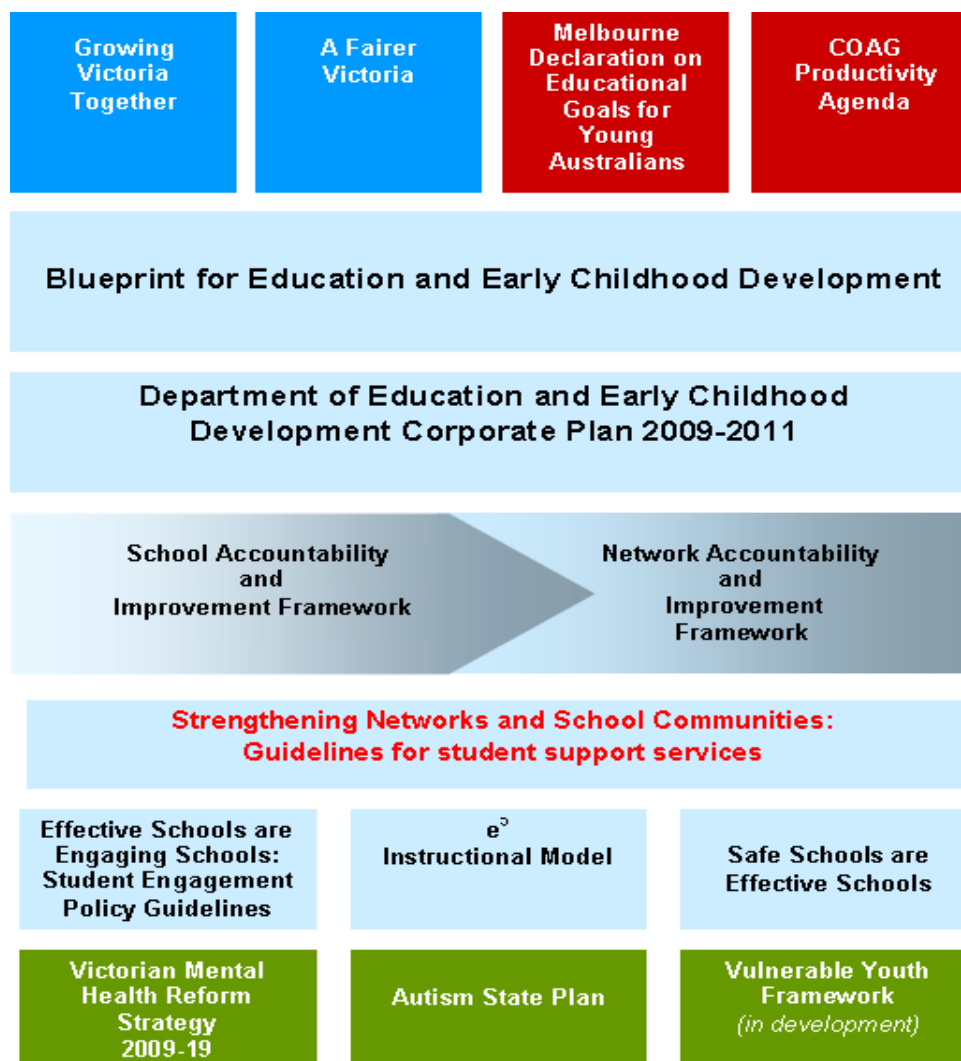
2. The Student Support Services Policy Context

2.1 The Victorian policy environment

The provision of student support services in Victoria is informed by a substantial policy context and is strongly connected to Victorian Government, Departmental and national policy priorities. Student support services staff contribute to improving engagement and learning outcomes for all students, and provide targeted support for those with additional needs and children, young people and their families who are disadvantaged or vulnerable. The work of student support services is closely aligned with school, network and regional improvement and strategic planning. The current policy context significantly informs and directs the work, objectives and priorities of the Student Support Services Program.

Figure2.1: Policy context for student support services

(Federal policy initiatives, [Victorian Government broad policy direction](#), [Interdepartmental wellbeing policies](#), [DEECD policy light blue](#))



2.1.1 Departmental context

The Blueprint for Education and Early Childhood Development 2008 (the Blueprint) articulates the Department's five-year vision for Victorian education and early childhood development. One of the focus areas of the Blueprint is ensuring all children and young people are supported to achieve their best, irrespective of personal circumstances, cultural background or geographic location. Particular attention is focused on promoting improvement in government schools and reducing the effects of disadvantage on learning and development. Improving outcomes for disadvantaged young Victorians is a Blueprint priority that the Student Support Services Program contributes to achieving through working with children and young people, families, schools and networks. The Blueprint is available online at

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/directions/blueprint2008/thepaper.htm>

The DEECD Corporate Plan 2009-2011 also includes a focus on improving outcomes for disadvantaged young Victorians, in line with the Blueprint's vision. This approach acknowledges that some groups of children and young people are not faring as well as their peers, face unique challenges, or require a range of different educational strategies, and that children and young people from low socio-economic backgrounds are over-represented among low achievers. The Plan states that in order for Victoria to achieve the goal of becoming a world leader in education and early childhood development, the development and learning of these children is where the greatest progress must be made. Student support services staff contribute to this by providing specialised, targeted support to schools, children, young people and their families who have additional needs in order to achieve successful educational and wellbeing outcomes. The Corporate Plan is available online at

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/directions/corporateplan/default.htm>

The School and Network Accountability and Improvement frameworks include enhanced student engagement and wellbeing among the three key outcomes for which schools and networks are accountable. Student support services staff are integral to school and network improvement by providing support to networks and schools, and helping them develop and implement strategies and actions to enhance targeted areas related to student wellbeing and engagement.

The delivery of student support services is aligned with regional and network processes and planning and student support services must be considered as part of school improvement initiatives. The Student Support Services Program is a significant expert resource that can greatly contribute to network and school improvement planning because of its focus on improving learning outcomes for children and young people, particularly in areas of high need and low performance. A strong partnership between Regional Network Leaders and the network/sub-regional student support services team will ensure that planning and activities are well coordinated and integrated to best meet the specific needs of the network. More information about the School and Network Accountability and Improvement frameworks is available at

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/management/schoolimprovement/accountability/default.htm>

The Department's e5 Instructional Model is designed to assist principals to engage with their staff in developing a shared understanding about what constitutes high-quality classroom instruction, to help teachers to reflect on current practice, and to determine a focus for their professional learning. The Model consists of five phases of instruction: 'Engage, Explore, Explain, Elaborate and Evaluate'. Each phase is supported by a developmental continuum of learning to assist teachers to identify areas for improvement. Student support services staff can support schools and students to improve engagement, particularly for those students facing barriers to engagement and learning. The e5 Instructional Model is available at

http://www.education.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/teachlearn/innovation/e5/E5_A1PosterTable4.pdf

The Effective Schools are Engaging Schools: Student Engagement Policy Guidelines (2009) support all schools to create positive school cultures in which children and young people feel that their differences, ideas, needs and beliefs are valued and respected. The Guidelines recognise that many children and young people encounter some difficulties, including learning difficulties, during their school lives and need to be supported by targeted strategies to address these challenges. Student support services staff contribute by assisting in the implementation of preventative and early intervention strategies to support engagement and address individual barriers to learning.

Element 4 of the Student Engagement Policy Guidelines, 'Promoting positive behaviours through a staged response' outlines actions to support children and young people, including prevention, early intervention and intervention strategies, along with establishment of a student support group, to help develop an understanding of the child or young person and the difficulties they may face. Student support services staff can provide advice and assistance to schools in the development and provision of these strategies. Student support services staff may also be involved in student support groups by assisting in the development of Individual

Learning Plans and supporting referrals to community support agencies for specialist interventions delivered in partnership with student support services and schools. Effective Schools are Engaging Schools is available online at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/wellbeing/engagement/default.htm>

The Department's anti-bullying policy, Safe Schools are Effective Schools, was released in 2006 to support schools to develop and implement comprehensive student wellbeing and anti-bullying structures and policies. Safe Schools Are Effective Schools clearly asserts the right of every student to feel safe from bullying, including cyber bullying. Student support services staff assist schools to address issues of bullying and determine the most appropriate form of action to prevent bullying behaviour. Safe Schools Are Effective Schools, and further information about a range of anti-bullying strategies, is available at: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/safety/bullying/policy.htm>

Regions and schools offer a range of flexible learning options to support children and young people who are experiencing significant difficulties with engagement in mainstream schooling. They include programs that provide for students in their school settings and as well as off-site programs that aim for the full-time return of the student to the regular school. Student support services staff contribute to these programs by providing targeted support to students to encourage their ongoing engagement in education. The Department is currently undertaking a review of flexible learning options in Victoria. More information is available at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/wellbeing/alternativeprograms.htm>

Victoria's Plan to Improve Outcomes in Early Childhood (2007) sets out a ten-year vision for Victoria and the Commonwealth to work together to improve outcomes in early childhood, including strengthening the health, development and learning of all children from birth to five years and enhancing the provision of early childhood education and care services. Transition support from early childhood settings to school for those children who may require it is a key area of work for student support services staff, who work in collaboration with early childhood support staff to identify children requiring support. More information about Victoria's Plan to Improve Outcomes in Early Childhood is available online at

<http://www.dpc.vic.gov.au/CA256D8000265E1A/OrigDoc/-63839C84B967FE2CCA2572AB007F5F22?OpenDocument&1=15-Governments+Working+Together-&2=16-Victoria%E2%80%99s+plan+to+improve+outcomes+in+early+childhood-&3=->

2.2 The statewide context

Growing Victoria Together (2001) outlines the Government's vision for a thriving economy, quality health and education, a healthy environment, caring communities and a vibrant democracy in Victoria. It articulates a specific commitment to improving the wellbeing of all children and young people and to creating a fairer society that reduces disadvantage. Student support services staff help to ensure that all children and young people are supported to achieve successful educational and wellbeing outcomes, especially those identified as most vulnerable and in need of additional support. Growing Victoria Together is available online at www.growingvictoria.vic.gov.au

A Fairer Victoria, the Government's social inclusion policy, launched in 2005, aims to reduce disadvantage and promote opportunity for all Victorians. A Fairer Victoria 2009 is focused on addressing critical areas, including disability services, mental health, homelessness, Indigenous health and protection of vulnerable children. Student support services staff help to ensure that disadvantaged children and young people are supported to engage in education to provide them with a greater chance of reaching their potential. More information on A Fairer Victoria is available online at <http://www.dpcd.vic.gov.au/Web14/dvc/dvcmain.nsf/allDocs/RWPBA66A032F874AC59CA2572D00026A891?OpenDocument>

Because Mental Health Matters: Victorian Mental Health Reform Strategy 2009–2019 envisages that all Victorians will have the opportunity to maintain good health and wellbeing, while those experiencing mental health problems will have access to timely, high-quality care and support to live in the community. This whole-of-government reform agenda includes the development of a broader system of child and youth mental health care for children and young people until from birth to the age of 25 years, emphasising prevention, early intervention, age-appropriate responses and continuity of care.

Schools are critical sites in this approach.

Because Mental Health Matters: Victorian Mental Health Reform Strategy 2009–2019 is available at <http://www.health.vic.gov.au/mentalhealth/reformstrategy/index.htm>

The Autism State Plan (2009) has been developed in partnership with Autism Victoria to strengthen services and supports, and build new and better approaches to meeting the growing and complex needs of people with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) across the life course. The Plan includes strategies to strengthen expertise and knowledge of ASD in the education and mental health workforce, to support practitioners to strengthen their expertise in ASD, and to ensure that parents and carers of children with ASD receive better information, advice and help. The Autism State Plan is available at www.autismstateplan.dhs.vic.gov.au

The Vulnerable Youth Framework is currently being developed to guide and strengthen action across State and local government and communities, including schools, to better respond to the needs of vulnerable young people from late primary school through to adulthood. The Framework will set out the reforms required in major services and settings that affect young people, and propose a set of principles for responding to the needs of vulnerable young people. The strengthened Student Support Services Program supports this by focusing on identifying and targeting support for vulnerable young people. More information on the Vulnerable Youth Framework is available at <http://www.cyf.vic.gov.au/youth-services/vulnerable-youth-framework>

2.3 The Commonwealth policy environment

The Commonwealth Government is also committed to supporting a high-quality school education system to provide children and young people with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary for lifelong learning, employment and full participation in society. The Commonwealth works with all jurisdictions towards achieving the best possible outcomes for children and young people, while recognising that some population groups are more vulnerable and at risk of disengagement than others.

In 2008, the Council of Australian Governments developed the Productivity Agenda, a reform agenda spanning education, employment skills and early childhood development. The reform agenda includes a commitment to provide children with the best possible start in life, ensuring that they are born healthy and equipping them with the skills for learning and wellbeing.

The Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians, agreed to by all State, Territory and Commonwealth Education Ministers, makes a national commitment to improve outcomes for students, including providing targeted support to disadvantaged students in order to achieve better and more equitable educational outcomes. Indigenous children and young people, students from low socio-economic backgrounds, those from remote areas, refugees, homeless young people and students with disabilities are considered to be at risk of experiencing educational disadvantage and requiring particular support. Student support services focus on the provision of targeted, specialised support for children and young people with additional needs or at risk of disengagement. More information about the Melbourne Declaration is available at

http://www.mceecdya.edu.au/mceecdya/melbourne_declaration,25979.html

3. Student Support Services Program Priorities and Structure

3.1 Student support services objectives and priorities

The purpose, objectives and priorities of the Student Support Services Program provide a common direction for all student support services staff to ensure that there is a consistent approach to service planning and delivery. The objectives and priorities ensure that regional and network student support services planning involves the current key areas of focus for the program.

3.1.1 Purpose

The purpose of student support services is to assist children and young people facing a range of barriers to learning to achieve their educational and developmental potential through the provision of a range of strategies and specialised support at individual, group, school, network and regional levels.

3.1.2 Objectives

The objectives of the Student Support Services Program are to:

- work in collaboration with schools, networks and services within the community to identify and intervene early with children and young people who have additional needs or are at risk of disengagement
- strengthen the capacity of the workforce within schools to meet the needs of children and young people who have additional needs, or are disadvantaged or vulnerable, to enable them to achieve successful education and wellbeing outcomes
- target the delivery of individual support services to those who require specialised expertise, assessment and intervention in order to overcome barriers to learning
- respond to emerging student wellbeing needs and contribute to identified school, network and regional improvement priorities
- facilitate and strengthen partnerships between schools, student support services and early childhood services; community organisations; and health, family, child, mental health and youth services in order to provide greater options and coordinated service provision for children, young people and their families.

3.1.3 Role of student support services

Student support services staff are employed to address barriers to learning and improve access, participation and inclusion for both individual and groups of children and young people who require additional support. The role of the student support services network/sub-regional team is to:

- assist schools to identify students with additional learning, wellbeing, or communication needs in order to commence earlier support planning and prevent disengagement
- work with schools to strengthen student wellbeing structures, processes and programs to benefit all students
- provide advice and expertise about student wellbeing, engagement and inclusion
- contribute to the development and implementation of student wellbeing primary prevention and early intervention programs and strategies in schools
- improve school capacity to meet the needs of students with additional needs through consultancy, professional learning, teaching and learning strategies, service coordination and referral
- undertake needs assessments, cognitive assessments, speech and language assessments and other relevant assessments as required to identify additional learning needs
- contribute to the development of student learning or support plans for students with disabilities, behavioural issues or other learning and wellbeing needs, including identifying and facilitating the involvement of other services

- provide direct support or intervention with individual or groups of students as required to address barriers to learning and engagement
- work with Regional Network Leaders to implement student wellbeing and engagement strategies that contribute to school and network improvement
- facilitate the strengthening of service partnerships between schools and support agencies and services
- respond to critical incidents, emergencies and disasters and provide recovery support.

3.1.4 Priorities for 2009–11

The Student Support Services Program directly contributes to a number of DEECD and government priority areas, particularly school improvement. It is important that statewide, regional and network student support services planning takes into account and includes actions to address these priorities. The 2009–11 priority areas for student support services are:

- school and network accountability and improvement
- student engagement
- autism
- mental health.

Network accountability and improvement

The enhanced network model for Victorian government schools provides for the inclusion of the Student Support Services Program in developing and contributing to the achievement of network goals and targets. Student support services staff are integral to school and network accountability and improvement processes, through the provision of support to networks and schools in developing and implementing strategies and actions to enhance student learning and wellbeing outcomes.

Network/sub-regional student support services teams are able to work closely with Regional Network Leaders and the Network Executive to identify how teams can contribute to the network goals, targets and key improvement strategies within the three key strategic areas of engagement and wellbeing; pathways and transitions. This may involve the mobilisation of student support services resources to contribute to specific network improvement strategies. Regional Network Leaders and Network/Sub-regional Student Support Services Coordinators may also collaboratively examine data such as school and network level reports, student support services referral and service delivery information, and relevant community-based data in order to identify priority areas of need.

The Student Support Services Program contributes to the school improvement agenda by:

- working collaboratively with schools to identify individual and groups of students who may be at risk of disengaging or not achieving their educational potential
- implementing strategies to support these students and improve learning and wellbeing outcomes
- contributing to network strategies to improve student outcomes.

More information about the School and Network Accountability and Improvement Frameworks is available at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/management/schoolimprovement/accountability/default.htm>

Student engagement

Supporting the successful implementation of Effective Schools Are Engaging Schools: Student Engagement Policy Guidelines (2009) (the Guidelines) is a key priority for student support services. The Guidelines encourage all schools to create positive cultures in which students feel that their differences, ideas, needs and beliefs are valued and respected. The Guidelines recognise that many students may encounter some difficulties, including learning difficulties, during their school lives and will need to be supported by targeted strategies to address these challenges. Student support services staff contribute to achieving the aims of the Guidelines by supporting schools to:

- develop and implement fair and respectful whole-school behaviour management systems based on pro-social values, social competencies, incentives and positive peer relationships

- be aware of and able to address the risk factors that increase the chances of a child or young person disengaging from school
- implement preventative and early intervention approaches to support student engagement and address individual barriers to learning, including attendance and behaviour
- support individual students through Student Support Groups and the development of Individual Learning Plans where required, such as when disciplinary action such as suspension or expulsion is being considered. This is an important role for student support services staff, who are able to work collaboratively with the school to ensure all possible preventative strategies have been implemented to avoid suspension and expulsion, which are actions of last resort.

Effective Schools Are Engaging Schools is available online at

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/wellbeing/engagement/default.htm>

Autism

The Student Support Services Program has a key role in supporting the delivery of the Autism State Plan (2009), which aims to help strengthen services and build new and better approaches to meeting the growing and complex needs of people, including children and young people, with ASD.

Student support services staff contribute to achieving the objectives of the Plan by:

- supporting the development of regional autism plans where appropriate
- supporting teaching and school staff to increase their awareness of ASD and the need for a flexible and inclusive curriculum by providing professional learning and consultation where appropriate
- supporting and providing advice to teachers about appropriate teaching strategies and needs of students with an ASD
- playing a key role in providing expertise about the development of support plans for students with an ASD to ensure their ongoing educational development and engagement
- contributing to the coordination of services, facilitating referral pathways and strengthening communication between service providers, especially during transition between services and schools where required
- working with families and students with an ASD to ensure that their information and support needs are being met where appropriate.

The Autism State Plan is available at <http://www.autismstateplan.dhs.vic.gov.au>

Mental health

A priority for student support services is to support the implementation of the Government's Victorian Mental Health Reform Strategy 2009–19, which aims to ensure that all Victorians, including children and young people, are provided with the opportunities they need to maintain good mental health, while those experiencing mental health problems can access timely, high-quality care and support.

Student support services staff contribute to preventing, identifying and responding to mental health concerns by:

- assisting schools to develop skills and proficiency in recognising and responding to social, emotional and behavioural problems in children and emerging mental health problems in young people
- providing support to individual students and their families where emerging mental health issues may be a concern
- facilitating access to specialist mental health support and intervention where required
- fostering the development of a renewed and strengthened partnership between schools, student support services staff and child and youth mental health services to improve access to and collaboration between staff and services.

Because Mental Health Matters: Victorian Mental Health Reform Strategy 2009–19 is available at

<http://www.health.vic.gov.au/mentalhealth/reformstrategy/index.htm>

3.2 Student Support Services Program structure

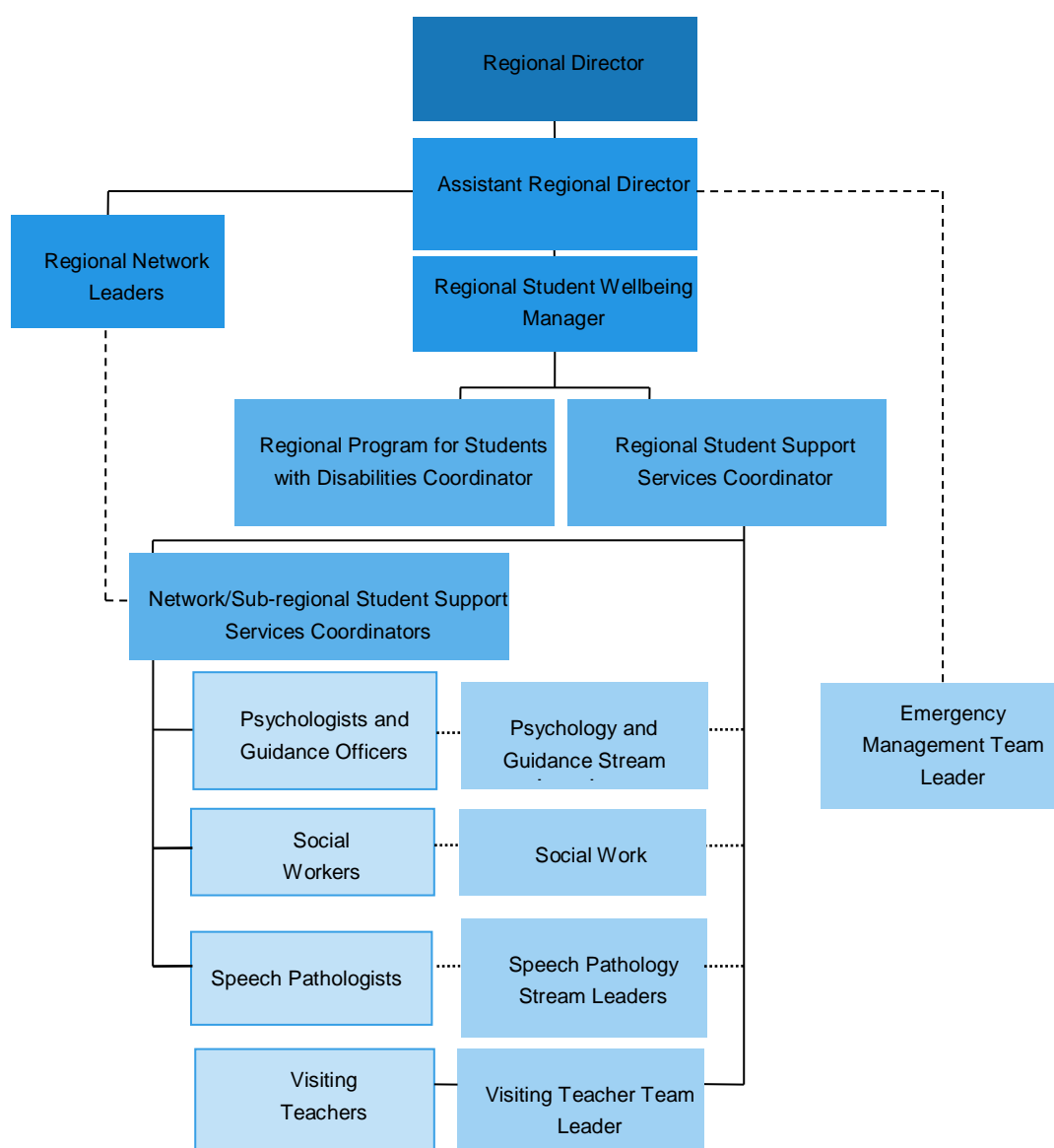
The Student Support Services Program structure extends across statewide, regional and network levels. At the statewide level, a student support services coordination role provides consistent program implementation, direction and guidance.

The regional Student Support Services Program and management structure is aligned with the school network model in order to facilitate strong linkages between Network/Sub-regional Student Support Services Coordinators and Regional Network Leaders.

While the diagram below outlines the broad regional student support services structure, each region has developed its own specific structure tailored to its needs and arrangements.

This organisational structure replaces the previous line-management arrangements whereby student support services staff reported directly to nominated school principals.

Figure 3.1: Program structure



The network/sub-regional locations of student support services positions are negotiated between the individual student support services staff member and the Regional Director (or nominee) and regularly reviewed in accordance with regional student support services resource allocations. Sample position descriptions for student support services roles are provided later in this section. Regions may customise these position

descriptions to suit local needs and arrangements. The position descriptions build upon existing position descriptions and provide greater clarity about the key accountabilities, responsibilities and functions of the various student support services positions.

While the position descriptions cover the majority of roles within student support services, regions may also elect to employ other professionals such as occupational therapists. Regions can use the position descriptions to create new position descriptions for these professionals, adding relevant qualifications, responsibilities and criteria as appropriate.

3.2.1 Management and leadership structure

Student support services management, coordination and leadership are essential elements of the program structure. The specific configuration of management and leadership roles is based upon the needs, size and structures of each region. A critical aspect of regional program management is to ensure regional student support services consistency with, and contribution to, the objectives and priorities of the Department and program.

The management and leadership structure in each region comprises the following roles:

- An **Assistant Regional Director**, reporting to the Regional Director, has overall responsibility for providing program direction and the delivery of student support services in the region, and ensuring program effectiveness and accountability.
- **Regional Student Support Services Coordinator** positions, depending on the classification and responsibilities of the position as determined by the region according to local needs, report to the Student Wellbeing Manager or the Assistant Regional Director. The responsibilities of **Regional Student Support Services Coordinators** include:
 - developing and implementing the service delivery model across the region, working with Network/Sub-regional Student Support Services Coordinators and the regional management team
 - resource management and coordination across the region in consultation with the regional management team
 - providing leadership for Network/Sub-regional Student Support Services Coordinators in ensuring that their teams contribute to school improvement, planning and support
 - building service partnerships to strengthen working relationships between network/sub-regional student support services teams, other Departmental and government programs and community support agencies
 - providing support for professional learning and supervision and support of regional student support services staff through the development and promotion of professional learning strategies and opportunities
 - implementing consistent and effective program performance measures and reporting arrangements in collaboration with Network/Sub-regional Student Support Services Coordinators and the regional management team
 - providing line management where appropriate to the classification of the position and overall supervision of Network/Sub-regional Student Support Services Coordinators and the Visiting Teacher Team Leader, including performance planning and evaluation and establishment of roles and responsibilities.

A sample position description for the Regional Student Support Services Coordinator is available at Appendix 3A.

- **Network/Sub-regional Student Support Services Coordinator** positions are classified within the Allied Health Worker structure. The Network/Sub-regional Student Support Services Coordinator is responsible for management and oversight of a network or sub-regional team, as deemed appropriate by the region. Network/Sub-regional Student Support Services Coordinators are responsible for:
 - providing line management and overall supervision of a multidisciplinary student support services team, including performance planning and evaluation
 - establishing roles and responsibilities within the multidisciplinary team
 - implementing and overseeing the service delivery model within the network or sub-region

- coordinating resources and services in consultation with the Regional Network Leader and network principals
- reporting to and working with the Regional Student Support Services Coordinator on the service delivery model, management of operational functions, service improvement and accountability reporting
- contributing as a member of the regional student support services management team in all matters related to service delivery
- establishing and strengthening links and referral pathways between relevant departments, services, community organisations and schools to optimise support for children and young people with additional needs and their families
- working with Regional Network Leaders and principals to contribute to network and school improvement planning and support.

A sample position description for the Network/Sub-Regional Student Support Services Coordinator role is available at Appendix 3A.

- **Stream Leader** positions are senior allied health positions providing profession-specific support for student support services staff. Stream Leaders may operate in the streams of psychology, speech pathology, social work and other disciplines as appropriate to the region. Stream Leaders are not 'line managers', but work with Network/Sub-regional Student Support Services Coordinators to ensure that the professional learning, supervision and support requirements of staff within their stream are met. Stream Leaders report to either the Regional Student Support Services Coordinator or the Regional Student Wellbeing Managers, depending upon regional arrangements. Stream Leaders are responsible for:
 - coordinating and providing professional support and the educative components of professional supervision and programs
 - disseminating relevant profession specific information and materials to staff within their stream
 - working with Network/Sub-regional Student Support Services Coordinators to ensure that staff within their stream have access to appropriate supervision, consultation and learning opportunities
 - working with the Regional Student Support Services Coordinator on service delivery and professional practice issues.
- Stream Leaders may also work within network/sub-regional student support services teams. As student support services staff members, they report to the Network/Sub-regional Student Support Services Coordinator. Either the Regional Student Support Services Coordinator/Student Wellbeing Manager or the Network/Sub-regional Student Support Services Coordinator should be nominated to be responsible for the Stream Leader's performance plan, depending upon the role in which the staff member spends the greater proportion of their time.

A sample position description for the Student Support Services Stream Leader role is available at Appendix 3A.

- **Regional Visiting Teacher Team Leader** positions report to the Regional Student Support Services Coordinator, the Student Wellbeing Manager or the Assistant Regional Director, depending on regional needs and arrangements, and are responsible for service coordination and delivery, line management, professional support and supervision of visiting teachers across the region. Regional Visiting Teacher Team Leaders are responsible for:
 - leading and managing visiting teachers across the region, including performance planning, evaluation and resource coordination
 - implementing and overseeing the service delivery model for visiting teachers across the region
 - contributing to regional and network/sub-regional school improvement planning and support
 - leading, managing and facilitating the provision of professional development activities and team participation in supervision and support
 - leading and managing the development and implementation of visiting teacher student support services referral and accountability systems, including performance measures and reporting requirements
 - contributing as a member of the regional student support services management team on all matters related to service delivery

- establishing and strengthening links and referral pathways between relevant departments, services, community organisations and schools to optimise support for children and young people with additional needs and their families.

A sample position description for the Student Support Services Visiting Teacher Team Leader role is available at Appendix 3A.

- **The Regional Emergency Management Team Leader** position could be undertaken by a senior social worker or psychologist/guidance officer. Accountabilities have been developed for the position of Emergency Management Team Leader to ensure consistency of role and responsibilities across regions for this common leadership position, which is held by a student support services staff member as part of their senior role. The Emergency Management Team Leader position, is responsible for:
 - coordinating critical incident recovery. While performing this job function the Emergency Management Team Leader reports to the Regional Emergency Management Coordinator who is responsible for overall emergency management in the region. However actual reporting arrangements for this role do vary across the regions. This position is a key element of the student support services structure.

A sample position description for the Emergency Management Team Leader role is available at Appendix 3A.

Other leadership roles

Senior student support services (classified as Allied Health Level Four) staff responsibilities should include leading network or region-wide portfolios or key student wellbeing priority areas such as coordinating Network implementation of the Autism Regional Plan. Specific senior responsibilities should be developed by regions and inserted as appropriate in position descriptions for these roles.

There may be appropriate leadership roles within the network team to which senior student support services staff may be assigned. These could include responsibility for leadership of portfolios such as autism, protective behaviours/personal safety, positive behaviour support, children and young people in out of home care, mental health and mandatory reporting among a range of possibilities.

Senior student support services staff are also able to provide leadership in implementing key priorities including those outlined in Section 3.1.4.

3.2.2 Student support services professional streams

Student support services staff comprise psychologists, guidance officers, speech pathologists, social workers, visiting teachers and other related allied health and education professionals. These staff are involved in a range of activities, including student and family support, assessment, intervention, crisis response, consultation with student wellbeing and other school staff, provision of teaching and learning advice, group work and facilitation of early intervention programs in schools. Student support services staff provide assistance, advice and support to students and their families, as well as schools, to ensure that the diverse needs of students with additional needs are recognised and addressed.

While all student support services streams provide professional advice, consultancy and support to principals, school staff, school communities and school networks, their roles and functions may differ significantly. The specific responsibilities of student support services staff in different professional streams also vary depending on the level at which staff members are appointed.

Senior student support services staff in all streams are expected to provide high-level professional advice, consultancy and support, and significant leadership to the team. They are also expected to identify and lead the development of key strategic partnerships, relationships and referral pathways between relevant departments, services, community organisations and schools to optimise support.

Psychology/guidance stream

Student support services staff employed within the psychology/guidance stream provide a comprehensive psychology service to schools in a network/sub-region. This includes conducting individual assessments, providing assessment reports, providing advice about relevant teaching and learning strategies, support and advice about the requirements of the Program for Students with Disabilities, undertaking individual, group and family work and attending critical incidents in schools where appropriate.

All psychology/guidance stream staff are required to possess a graduate or postgraduate qualification in psychology, along with registration or provisional registration with the Psychologists Registration Board of Victoria as appropriate for the level of the role. Guidance officers require appropriate teaching qualifications in addition to their qualifications in psychology.

Some regions or networks may choose to employ provisional psychologists and arrange for the level of required professional supervision to be provided. Regional offices should seek Human Resources advice in this regard.

A sample position description for the Psychology/Guidance stream is available at Appendix 3A.

Social work stream

Student support services staff employed within the social work stream provide a social work service to schools in a network/sub-region that includes involvement in complex student engagement and wellbeing issues, individual, group and family work, and attendance at critical incidents in schools where appropriate. Staff in the social work stream are experienced in the development and implementation of programs and strategies that foster resilience in children and young people and that address their social, emotional and educational needs.

All social work stream student support services staff are required to possess graduate or postgraduate qualifications in social work or other qualifications that are acceptable for membership of the Australian Association of Social Workers.

A sample position description for the Social Work stream is available at Appendix 3A.

Speech pathology stream

Student support services staff employed within the speech pathology stream provide speech pathology services to network/sub-regional schools to assess and support the communication needs of children and young people.

Speech pathology stream staff in schools conduct speech and language assessments and provide assessment reports, speech therapy and advice about relevant teaching and learning strategies. Speech pathology stream staff also provide advice and support to principals, school staff and parents about the requirements of the Program for Students with Disabilities and the implementation of the Language Support Program.

Speech pathology stream staff are experienced in providing appropriate intervention services and supporting teachers, school staff and families to develop effective programs and strategies for students with additional communication needs. Speech pathologists in schools collaborate with allied health professionals in response to the needs of students, their families and schools.

All speech pathology stream student support services staff are required to possess approved qualifications in speech pathology that are acceptable for membership of Speech Pathology Australia.

A sample position description for the Speech Pathology stream is available at Appendix 3A.

Visiting teacher stream

Visiting teachers undertake direct teaching and assessment of students where appropriate, including monitoring, evaluating and reporting student progress and also provide high-level advice and support to teachers regarding the teaching of students with additional learning, health or wellbeing needs.

While visiting teachers often provide region-wide student support services, working with eligible students in three streams (physical/health impaired, vision impaired and hearing impaired), they may also be employed in specialist areas, such as autism, attendance or behaviour support where they have the required expertise.

All visiting teachers require appropriate teaching qualifications, including a recognised special education qualification in a specialist area of education as appropriate (for example hearing impairment, vision impairment, additional health or physical needs, autism or behaviour support).

Visiting teachers conduct educational needs assessments which with the appropriate relevant medical assessments for the disability, determine student eligibility for service. Visiting teachers work closely with classroom teachers, integration aides and parents in supporting students with additional learning, health or wellbeing needs to achieve their optimum potential and independence within their chosen educational setting.

While the classroom teacher has primary responsibility for the provision of an appropriate educational program for all students, including those with disabilities or additional learning, health and wellbeing needs, visiting teachers contribute to the development and implementation of the Student Support Services Program by providing high-level advice and a range of supports to the classroom teacher, student, family and wider school community. Visiting teachers provide information and advice on resources, equipment and other services that may assist the student. They also implement a specialist curriculum which teaches students specific skills such as Braille skills, hearing tactics and use of adaptive technology.

Visiting teachers model exemplary practice and coach or advise other teachers on how to critically reflect on practice, as well as assisting the class teacher to modify curriculum where required. They also work with a range of external agencies and provide information regarding specific disabilities, conditions or related issues and their educational implications.

A sample position description for the Visiting Teacher stream is available at Appendix 3A.

3.3 Student support services multidisciplinary teams

Student support services staff work in a multidisciplinary team on a network or sub-regional basis. The student support services multidisciplinary team approach enables strong collaboration between a team of professionals from different professional streams delivering support services to students with additional needs across the network/sub-region. This approach provides greater capacity to respond to the differing and complex needs of students, while providing an opportunity for staff to share information when they are working with students, schools or issues in common, as is frequently the case. A multidisciplinary approach is critical to ensuring that resources are directed to the area of greatest need.

Multidisciplinary teamwork supports student engagement by providing different perspectives on issues faced by children and young people in educational settings in order to best support their wellbeing. The multidisciplinary student support services team approach offers a number of advantages:

- Staff from all streams bring their particular skills and expertise to work towards achievement of the team's objectives and priorities.
- Information is shared between streams, helping to expand student support services staff knowledge and encouraging innovative teamwork.
- Staff have the opportunity to reflect on student support services practice with staff from other professional streams and to receive peer advice, feedback and review.
- Staff have the opportunity for professional learning in a team setting.
- Team support is provided.

A key advantage of the multidisciplinary team approach is provision of the combined expertise of a range of student support and wellbeing professionals working together to deliver comprehensive support to students. Combined expertise is particularly valuable where a complex range of issues are affecting student learning or wellbeing. The provision of support by more than one stream where appropriate ensures that the issues affecting student wellbeing and engagement are addressed by the most appropriate student support services staff member. This approach enables communication between student support services staff to share knowledge, professional expertise, and offer intervention from a range of professional streams.

3.3.1 Working in a multidisciplinary team

Student support services staff from all streams (psychologists, guidance officers, speech pathologists, social workers and visiting teachers) make up the multidisciplinary team. Co-location of the multidisciplinary team wherever possible provides an opportunity for regular communication and information sharing between professional streams. While co-location contributes to building a strong multidisciplinary team, it is also important that teams:

- establish systems and processes that use each staff member's existing professional skills while allowing for the development of shared goals and understandings for the team
- agree upon and document team values, objectives and protocols and ensure that these are made available to new team members as part of the induction process
- implement team-building activities and teamwork

- use opportunities to work as a team and in smaller groups within the team to explore particular issues.

3.4 Accommodating student support services staff

Student support services staff working in co-located multidisciplinary teams must be provided with appropriate accommodation at their network/sub-regional base location in order to deliver services effectively. The majority of student support services staff are located in school-based accommodation, while some are located at other regional or sub-regional locations. It is the role of regions to determine the most appropriate location for student support services teams, taking into account regional needs, geography and availability of suitable space.

Student support services accommodation arrangements at the base location and within schools should meet the functional requirements of the role. Day-to-day activities of student support services staff may include:

- conferring with team members, school colleagues and external partners
- participating in student support services network/sub-regional team meetings
- writing reports and maintaining student support services files
- accessing the internet, email and student support services databases
- handling telephone queries, advice and follow-up
- participating in supervision, support and learning and development activities
- assessing, counselling, coaching and supporting students and their families
- supporting teachers in the classroom
- liaising and conferring with school-based partners (e.g. school leadership team, school nurses, primary welfare officers, student wellbeing coordinators) and community agencies
- participating in school meetings
- leading and participating in learning and development activities with school-based staff.

The layout, location, accessibility and privacy of locations within schools at which student support services are provided are also important to consider. They may include consideration of issues such as:

- reduced sound transmission and minimal external acoustic or visual distractions to support confidentiality, privacy and increased concentration
- appropriate furnishings for the type of service being delivered; for example, seating should meet the needs and dimensions of the range of children and adults using it
- disability access.

At their base location, it is important that student support services staff are provided with a work environment that includes:

- individual workstations, including a computer with internet access and up-to-date software
- ergonomic furniture and lockable cabinet/s
- telephone and access to other office support equipment
- meeting room access as appropriate
- accessible parking for loading and unloading equipment.

Student support services staff are required to travel at regular intervals between the base location, schools, regional office and other work locations. It is important that arrangements in place to ensure safe, secure and efficient transit between workplaces cover:

- the handling and moving of test materials, teaching aids, books, notebooks and other portable equipment
- [safe vehicle use](#) and [driver fatigue](#)
- personal security, including travelling to or within areas of high fire risk or working in isolated locations.

Any health and safety risks associated with these activities must be managed by regional student support services management in consultation with student support services staff and their regional occupational health

and safety representative, consistent with health and safety legislation/standards and the Department's occupational health and safety policies.

Student support services accommodation arrangements must comply with the following relevant legislation standards and guidelines:

- the [Victorian Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004](#), which requires the Department to provide and maintain working environments that are safe and without risks to health so far as practicable with adequate facilities for the welfare of employees
- the [Workplace Amenities and Work Environment Compliance Code 2008](#), which requires workspaces, working conditions, seating and amenities to be adequate for the safe performance of work
- [Officewise – A Guide to Health and Safety in the Office](#), a WorkCover publication designed to help employers and employees assess their workplace by providing compliance standards for office-based work.
- the [Victorian Public Sector Agreement 2006](#), which requires the provision of necessary resources and furniture for employees to carry out their work, including accessible first aid
- the [Victorian Office Accommodation Guidelines 2007](#), which provide information for the design of Victorian Government offices, including issues such as workplace function, the workplace as a forum, and standards applicable to the workspace and physical environment.
- the [Department of Education and Early Childhood Development Office Accommodation Policy 2009](#), which assists Departmental workplaces to create a working environment that is aligned with government objectives and provides an office environment that fosters high performance.

Further information on employee health, safety and WorkCover in DEECD can be found at <http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/hrweb/safetyhw/default.htm>

Appendix 3A: Sample Position Description Materials

The following sample student support services position description materials have been developed for regions to customise according to local needs and arrangements when recruiting staff. These materials build upon existing position descriptions and provide greater clarity for regions and staff about the key accountabilities, responsibilities and functions of the various student support services positions.

All positions are intended to be regionally based, with the work location to be negotiated between the successful applicant and the Regional Director (or nominee) and to be regularly reviewed in accordance with student support services resource allocation reviews by the region.

While the position description materials cover the majority of roles within student support services, regions may also elect to employ people from other professional streams, such as occupational therapists. Regions can use the position descriptions materials to form the basis for position descriptions for these professionals, adding other relevant qualifications, responsibilities and criteria as appropriate.

Please note: grading differences for each of the professional streams are highlighted in blue.

Role: Regional Student Support Services Coordinator

Regions will determine the classification of the Regional Student Support Services Coordinator role based upon the needs and requirements of the region and responsibilities in accordance with the work value of the role.

Where regions determine that the Regional Student Support Services Coordinator will report to a VPSG6 position such as the Student Wellbeing Manager, and the role has a lesser degree of responsibility, the VPSG5 grading will be appropriate. However, where the Regional Student Support Services Coordinator has an expanded range of senior responsibilities, including program line management, and reports to a senior regional staff member such as an Assistant Regional Director, the VPSG6 role will be appropriate.

Desirable qualifications:

A relevant tertiary qualification.

Accountabilities: Regional Student Support Services Coordinator (VPSG5)

Contribute to the coordination of student support service delivery across the region working with Network or Sub-regional Student Support Services Coordinators and the Visiting Teacher Team Leader.

Provide leadership for Network or Sub-Regional Student Support Services Coordinators and the Visiting Teacher Team Leader in positioning their teams to contribute to school improvement, planning and support.

Work with senior regional staff and Network or Sub-Regional Student Support Services Coordinators regarding human resources management and workforce planning responsibilities and to establish staff support, supervision and professional learning activities.

Work with senior regional staff to develop and implement student support services data and accountability structures, including performance measures and regional reporting arrangements.

[Insert other duties as determined to be appropriate by the region.]

Key selection criteria: Regional Student Support Services Coordinator (VPSG5)

Demonstrated capacity to successfully lead and manage projects and programs.

Demonstrated capacity to contribute to the delivery of high-quality services and initiatives in an educational environment.

Demonstrated knowledge of current policy and issues related to student wellbeing and health support in an education context, including school improvement initiatives.

Highly developed organisational, conceptual and analytical skills with a demonstrated capacity to apply complex concepts in support of service improvement, policy and program development.

Highly developed communication, networking, teamwork and interpersonal skills, including the ability to liaise effectively with a wide range of people within the education community and beyond.

Accountabilities: Regional Student Support Services Coordinator (VPSG6)

Provide **overall supervision and** coordination of Network or Sub-Regional Student Support Services Coordinators and the regional Visiting Teacher Team Leader, **including performance planning and evaluation.**

Coordinate student support services delivery across the region, working with Network or Sub-regional Student Support Services Coordinators and the Visiting Teacher Team Leader.

Provide leadership for Network or Sub-Regional Student Support Services Coordinators and the Visiting Teacher Team Leader in positioning their teams to contribute to school improvement, planning and support.

Coordinate human resources management and workforce planning responsibilities and work with the Network or Sub-Regional Student Support Services Coordinators to establish staff support and supervision processes, and implement targeted learning and development activities.

Coordinate the development and implementation of student support services data and accountability structures including performance measures and regional reporting arrangements.

[Insert other duties as determined to be appropriate by the region.]

Key selection criteria: Regional Student Support Services Coordinator (VPSG6)

Demonstrated capacity to successfully lead and manage **complex** projects and programs.

Demonstrated capacity **to manage a team of experienced professionals** in the delivery of high-quality services and initiatives in an educational environment.

Demonstrated **high-level** knowledge of current policy and issues related to student wellbeing and health support **and their implications for regions** in an education context, including school improvement initiatives.

Highly developed organisational, conceptual and analytical skills with a demonstrated capacity to apply complex concepts in **leading** service improvement, policy and program development.

Highly developed communication, networking, teamwork and interpersonal skills, including the ability to liaise effectively with a wide range of people, **including senior stakeholders** in the education community and beyond.

Role: Network/Sub regional Student Support Services Coordinator

Mandatory qualifications:

A graduate or postgraduate qualification in a student support services discipline; that is, psychology, guidance, social work, speech pathology or other relevant profession.

Accountabilities: Network/Sub-Regional Student Support Services Coordinator (AHG4)

Provide line management and supervision of a multidisciplinary team of student support services staff, including performance planning and evaluation

Implement and oversee the student support service delivery model within the network/sub-region.

Contribute to regional, network or sub-regional school improvement planning and support.

Facilitate team participation in staff support, supervision and professional learning activities.

Coordinate the development and implementation of student support services referral, data and accountability systems, including performance measures and network reporting requirements.

Coordinate human resources management and workforce planning responsibilities within the network/sub-region.

Participate as a member of the regional student support services management team in all matters related to student support services delivery.

Establish and strengthen links and referral pathways between relevant departments, services, community organisations and schools to optimise support for vulnerable children, young people and their families.

Key selection criteria: Network/Sub-Regional Student Support Services Coordinator (AHG4)

Demonstrated capacity to coordinate a collaborative multidisciplinary team in the delivery of services and initiatives in an educational environment.

An excellent knowledge of the range of student support services, including strategic interventions that build a supportive learning environment for vulnerable students.

Demonstrated knowledge of current policy and issues related to student wellbeing and health support in an education context.

Highly developed organisational, conceptual and analytical skills with a demonstrated capacity to apply complex concepts in support of service improvement and program development.

Highly developed communication, networking, teamwork and interpersonal skills, including the ability to liaise effectively with a wide range of people within the education community and beyond.

Role: Student Support Services Stream Leader

[insert student support services stream, e.g. psychology/guidance, social work, speech pathology]

Student support services stream leader positions will typically be undertaken by senior members of a network or sub-regional team. Position descriptions will need to cover the network team role as appropriate.

Mandatory qualifications:

Social Worker: A graduate or postgraduate qualification in social work or other qualification that is acceptable for membership of the Australian Association of Social Workers.

Psychologist/Guidance Officer: A graduate or postgraduate qualification in psychology. Registration with the Psychologists Registration Board of Victoria.

Speech Pathologist: A qualification in speech pathology approved for membership of Speech Pathology Australia.

Accountabilities: Student Support Services Stream Leader [insert student support services stream, e.g. psychology/guidance, social work, speech pathology] (AHG4)

Coordinate and provide staff support, supervision and professional learning opportunities to assist [insert appropriate student support services stream] colleagues to enhance their knowledge and skills in providing student support services.

Disseminate relevant information and resources to staff within the [insert appropriate student support services stream] stream to ensure all staff are informed about current materials to enhance their professional knowledge and skills.

Work closely with Network/Sub-regional Student Support Services Coordinators to ensure staff within the [insert appropriate student support services stream] stream have access to appropriate professional and educative support

Work with the Regional Student Support Services Coordinator on service delivery and professional practice issues relevant to the [insert appropriate student support services stream] stream.

Key selection criteria: Student Support Services Stream Leader [insert student support services stream, e.g. psychology/guidance, social work, speech pathology] (AHG4)

Demonstrated experience in the delivery of student support services and an excellent knowledge of [insert appropriate student support services stream] practice, including strategic interventions that build a supportive learning environments for vulnerable students.

Demonstrated capacity to provide a leadership, supportive and educative role to a collaborative professional team and contribute significantly to the achievements of the team.

Demonstrated ability to provide support, supervision and professional learning for [insert 'psychologists and guidance officers', 'speech pathologists', 'social workers' or other professional as appropriate] delivering student support services.

Demonstrated ability to identify and develop strong strategic relationships and partnerships with relevant organisations such as child and family support services, professional associations and organisations providing professional learning or materials.

Highly developed organisational, conceptual and analytical skills with a demonstrated capacity to apply complex concepts in support of service improvement and program development.

Highly developed communication, networking, team and interpersonal skills, including the ability to liaise effectively with a wide range of people in the education community and beyond.

Stream: Psychology/Guidance

Mandatory qualifications:

AHG2: A graduate or postgraduate qualification in psychology.

[Provisional registration](#) with the Psychologists Registration Board of Victoria.

AHG3: A graduate or postgraduate qualification in psychology.

[Registration or provisional registration](#) with the Psychologists Registration Board of Victoria.

AHG4: A graduate or postgraduate qualification in psychology.

[Registration](#) with the Psychologists Registration Board of Victoria.

Note: Guidance officers will have [appropriate teaching qualifications](#) in addition to their qualification in psychology.

Accountabilities: Student Support Services Psychologist (AHG2)

Provide professional advice, consultancy and support to principals, school communities and school networks through the development and implementation of programs and services with a focus on the learning, development and wellbeing of students, particularly those who are most vulnerable.

Participate in the identification and delivery of programs to address statewide, regional and network student engagement and wellbeing priorities in collaboration with the student support services team.

Contribute to strategic interventions in schools and networks to support capacity-building related to student learning, engagement and wellbeing consistent with DEECD priorities, particularly school improvement priorities.

Contribute to strengthening links and referral pathways between relevant departments, services, community organisations and schools to optimise support for vulnerable children, young people and their families.

Provide a psychology service, under supervision, to schools in the network that includes conducting individual assessments; providing assessment reports and advice about relevant teaching and learning strategies; undertaking individual, group and family work; and attending critical incidents in schools where appropriate.

Contribute to the collaborative work of the team and participate in service improvement activities.

Participate actively in support, supervision, learning and development activities as a professional member of a multidisciplinary team.

Key selection criteria: Student Support Services Psychologist (AHG2)

Experience in the development and implementation of programs and strategies that foster resilience in children and young people and address their social, emotional and educational needs.

Capacity to work as part of a collaborative multidisciplinary professional team.

Ability to contribute to the design and delivery of professional learning, preferably for teachers and other relevant professionals, related to student engagement and wellbeing.

Demonstrated ability to deliver a psychology service to schools, under supervision, including psychological assessments, counselling and referral for students and families.

Capacity to apply assessment, conceptual and analytical skills in the provision of student support services and work with children, young people and their families.

Communication, networking and interpersonal skills, including the ability to liaise effectively with a wide range of people within the education community and beyond.

Accountabilities: Student Support Services Psychologist/Guidance Officer (AHG3)

Provide professional advice, consultancy and support to principals, school communities and school networks through the development and implementation of programs and services with a focus on the learning, development and wellbeing of students, particularly those who are most vulnerable.

Identify and deliver programs to address statewide, regional and network student engagement and wellbeing priorities in collaboration with the team.

Contribute to strategic interventions in schools and networks to support capacity-building related to student learning, engagement and wellbeing consistent with DEECD priorities, particularly school improvement priorities.

Establish and strengthen links and referral pathways between relevant departments, services, community organisations and schools to optimise support for vulnerable children, young people and their families.

Provide a **comprehensive** psychology service to schools in the network, **under supervision if required**, that includes conducting individual assessments; providing assessment reports and advice about relevant teaching and learning strategies; undertaking individual, group and family work; and attending critical incidents in schools where appropriate.

Contribute to the collaborative work **and functioning** of the team and provide **leadership in initiating service improvement**.

Participate actively in staff support, supervision, learning and development activities as a professional member of a multidisciplinary team.

Key selection criteria: Student Support Services Psychologist/Guidance Officer (AHG3)

Substantial experience in the development and implementation of programs, procedures and policies that foster resilience in children and young people and address their social, emotional and educational needs.

Demonstrated capacity to work as part of a collaborative multidisciplinary professional team and contribute significantly to the achievements of the team.

Demonstrated ability to **design, deliver or broker professional learning**, preferably for teachers and other relevant professionals, in student engagement and wellbeing.

Demonstrated ability to deliver a comprehensive psychology service to schools, including psychological assessments, counselling and referral for students and families.

Strong capacity to apply highly developed assessment, conceptual and analytical skills in the provision of student support services and work with children, young people and their families.

Highly developed communication, networking and interpersonal skills, including the ability to liaise effectively with a wide range of people in the education community and beyond.

Accountabilities: Student Support Services Psychologist/Guidance Officer (AHG4)

Provide **high-level** professional advice, consultancy and support to principals, school communities and school networks through **the initiation**, development and implementation of programs and services with a focus on the learning, development and wellbeing of students, particularly those who are most vulnerable.

Provide significant leadership to the team in the identification and delivery of programs, strategies **and procedures** to address statewide, regional and network student learning, engagement and wellbeing priorities in collaboration with the team.

Contribute **expertise and high-level advice** to strategic interventions in schools and networks to support capacity--building related to student learning, engagement and wellbeing consistent with DEECD priorities, particularly school improvement priorities.

Identify and lead the development of key strategic partnerships, relationships and referral pathways between relevant departments, services, community organisations and schools to optimise support for vulnerable children, young people and their families

Provide an expert psychology service to schools in the network, **including support to less experienced colleagues**, that includes conducting individual assessments, providing assessment reports, giving advice about relevant teaching and learning strategies, working with individuals, groups and families and attending critical incidents in schools where appropriate.

Provide leadership in the development and maintenance of the collaborative work and functioning of the team, and **significant** leadership **and direction** in initiating service improvement.

Participate actively **and provide leadership** in staff support, supervision and learning and development activities as a professional member of a multidisciplinary team.

Lead the network (sub-regional or regional) team in the area of [insert portfolio or area of specific responsibility appropriate to the needs of the team in line with expectations of an AHG4 level staff member].

Key selection criteria: Student Support Services Psychologist/Guidance Officer (AHG4)

Substantial experience in the **initiation**, development and implementation of programs, procedures and policies that foster resilience in children and young people and address their social, emotional and educational needs, including undertaking psychological assessment.

Demonstrated capacity to work and **provide a leadership role** within a collaborative, multidisciplinary professional team and contribute significantly to the achievements of the team.

Demonstrated ability to design, deliver or broker professional learning on **complex student wellbeing topics**, preferably for teachers and other relevant professionals, related to student engagement and wellbeing.

Demonstrated ability to deliver a comprehensive psychology service to schools, including psychological assessments, counselling and referral for students and families **and to provide leadership and support to less experienced colleagues**.

Strong capacity to apply highly developed assessment, conceptual and analytical skills **and the ability to lead areas of significant portfolio expertise** in the provision of student support services and work with children, young people and their families.

Highly developed communication, networking, **leadership** and interpersonal skills, including the ability to liaise effectively **on complex issues** with a wide range of people in the education community and beyond.

Stream: Social Work

Mandatory qualifications:

A graduate or postgraduate qualification in social work or other qualification which is acceptable for membership of the Australian Association of Social Workers.

Accountabilities: Student Support Services Social Worker (AHG2)

Provide professional advice, consultancy and support to principals, school communities and school networks through the development and implementation of programs and services related to the learning, development and wellbeing of students, particularly those who are most vulnerable.

Participate in the identification and delivery of programs to address statewide, regional and network student engagement and wellbeing priorities in collaboration with the student support services team.

Contribute to strategic interventions in schools and networks to support capacity-building related to student learning, engagement and wellbeing consistent with DEECD priorities, particularly school improvement priorities.

Contribute to strengthening the links and referral pathways between relevant departments, services, community organisations and schools to optimise support for vulnerable children, young people and their families.

Provide a social work service to schools in the network that includes the management of complex cases; individual, group and family work; and attendance at critical incidents in schools where appropriate.

Contribute to the collaborative work of the team and participate in service improvement activities.

Participate actively in staff support, supervision, learning and development activities as a professional member of a multidisciplinary team.

Key selection criteria: Student Support Services Social Worker (AHG2)

Experience in the development and implementation of programs and strategies that foster resilience in children and young people and address their social, emotional and educational needs.

Capacity to work as part of a collaborative, multidisciplinary professional team.

Ability to contribute to the design and delivery of professional learning, preferably for teachers and other relevant professionals, related to student engagement and wellbeing.

Ability to deliver a social work service to students and families in an educational environment.

Capacity to apply assessment, conceptual and analytical skills in the provision of student support services and work with children, young people and their families.

Communication, networking and interpersonal skills, including the ability to liaise effectively with a wide range of people in the education community and beyond.

Accountabilities: Student Support Services Social Worker (AHG3)

Provide professional advice, consultancy and support to principals, school communities and school networks through the development and implementation of programs and services related to the learning, development and wellbeing of students, particularly those who are most vulnerable.

Identify and deliver programs to address statewide, regional and network student engagement and wellbeing priorities in collaboration with the team.

Contribute to strategic interventions in schools and networks to support capacity-building related to student learning, engagement and wellbeing consistent with DEECD priorities, particularly school improvement priorities.

Establish and strengthen links and referral pathways between relevant departments, services, community organisations and schools to optimise support for vulnerable children, young people and their families.

Provide a **comprehensive** social work service to schools in the network that includes the management of complex cases, individual group and family work and attendance at critical incidents in schools where appropriate.

Contribute to the collaborative work and functioning of the team and provide leadership in initiating service improvement.

Participate actively in staff support, supervision, learning and development as a professional member of a multidisciplinary team.

Key selection criteria: Student Support Services Social Worker (AHG3)

Substantial experience in the development and implementation of programs and strategies that foster resilience in children and young people and address their social, emotional and educational needs.

Demonstrated capacity to work as part of a collaborative, multidisciplinary professional team and contribute significantly to the achievements of the team.

Demonstrated ability to design, deliver or broker professional learning, preferably for teachers and other relevant professionals, related to student engagement and wellbeing.

Demonstrated ability to deliver a comprehensive social work service to students and families in an educational environment.

Strong capacity to apply highly developed assessment, conceptual and analytical skills in the provision of student support services and work with children, young people and their families.

Highly developed communication, networking and interpersonal skills, including the ability to liaise effectively with a wide range of people within the education community and beyond.

Accountabilities: Student Support Services Social Worker (AHG4)

Provide high-level professional advice, consultancy and support to principals, school communities and school networks through the initiation, development and implementation of programs and services related to the learning, development and wellbeing of students, particularly those who are most vulnerable.

Provide significant leadership to the team in the identification and delivery of programs to address statewide, regional and network student engagement and wellbeing priorities.

Contribute expertise and high-level advice to strategic interventions in schools and networks to support capacity-building related to student learning, engagement and wellbeing consistent with DEECD priorities, particularly school improvement priorities.

Identify and lead the development of key strategic partnerships, relationships and referral pathways between relevant departments, services, community organisations and schools to optimise support for vulnerable children, young people and their families.

Provide an expert social work service to schools in the network, including leadership and support to less experienced colleagues, which includes the management of complex cases; individual, group and family work; and attendance at critical incidents in schools where appropriate.

Provide leadership in the development and maintenance of the collaborative work and functioning of the team and provide significant leadership and direction in initiating service improvement.

Participate actively and provide leadership in staff support, supervision and learning and development activities as a professional member of a multidisciplinary team.

Lead the network (sub-regional or regional) team in the area of [insert portfolio or area of specific responsibility appropriate to the needs of the team in line with expectations of an AHG4 level staff member].

Key selection criteria: Student Support Services Social Worker (AHG4)

Substantial experience in the initiation, development and implementation of programs, procedures and policies that foster resilience in children and young people and address their social, emotional and educational needs.

Demonstrated ability to deliver a comprehensive social work service to students and families within an educational environment and to provide leadership and support to less experienced colleagues.

Demonstrated capacity to work and provide a leadership role within a collaborative, multidisciplinary professional team and contribute significantly to the achievements of the team.

Demonstrated ability to design, deliver or broker professional learning on complex student wellbeing topics, preferably for teachers and other relevant professionals, related to student engagement and wellbeing.

Strong capacity to apply highly developed assessment, conceptual and analytical skills and the ability to lead areas of significant portfolio expertise in the provision of student support services and work with children, young people and their families.

Highly developed communication, networking, [leadership](#) and interpersonal skills, including the ability to liaise effectively [on complex issues](#) with a range of people within the education community and beyond.

Stream: Speech Pathology

Mandatory qualifications:

An approved qualification in speech pathology acceptable for membership of Speech Pathology Australia.

Accountabilities: Student Support Services Speech Pathologist (AHG2)

Provide professional advice and support to principals, school communities and school networks through the development and implementation of programs and services with a focus on the learning, development and wellbeing of students, particularly those who are most vulnerable.

Provide a speech pathology service to schools in the network that includes conducting speech and language assessments; providing assessment reports and advice about relevant teaching and learning strategies; and supporting teachers, school staff and families to develop effective programs and strategies for students with additional language and communication needs.

Provide advice and support to principals, school staff and parents about the requirements of the Program for Students with Disabilities and the implementation of the Language Support Program.

Contribute to strategic interventions in schools and networks to support capacity-building and improvement related to student learning, engagement and wellbeing consistent with DEECD priorities, particularly school improvement priorities.

Contribute to strengthening the links and referral pathways between relevant departments, services, community organisations and schools to optimise support for vulnerable children, young people and their families.

Contribute to the collaborative work of the team and participate in service improvement activities.

Participate actively in support, supervision, learning and development activities as a professional member of a multidisciplinary team.

Key selection criteria: Student Support Services Speech Pathologist (AHG2)

Experience and sound knowledge of speech pathology techniques and the ability to provide speech pathology services and specialist advice on appropriate intervention strategies.

Ability to deliver a speech pathology service to students and families in an educational environment, including speech and language assessment and reporting and the provision of advice on program delivery.

Capacity to work as part of a collaborative, multidisciplinary professional team.

Capacity to apply assessment, conceptual and analytical skills in the provision of student support services and work with children, young people and their families.

Ability to design, deliver or broker professional learning, preferably for teachers and other relevant professionals, in the area of language and communication.

Communication, networking and interpersonal skills, including the ability to liaise effectively with a wide range of people in the education community and beyond.

Accountabilities: Student Support Services Speech Pathologist (AHG3)

Provide professional advice and support to principals, school communities and school networks through the development and implementation of programs and services with a focus on the learning, development and wellbeing of students, particularly those who are most vulnerable.

Provide a [comprehensive](#) speech pathology service to schools in the network that includes conducting speech and language assessments; providing assessment reports and advice about relevant teaching and learning strategies; and supporting teachers, school staff and families to develop effective programs and strategies for students with additional language and communication needs.

Provide **high-level** advice and support to principals, school staff and parents about the requirements of the Program for Students with Disabilities and the implementation of the Language Support Program.

Contribute **comprehensive advice** regarding strategic interventions in schools and networks to support capacity-building related to student learning, engagement and wellbeing consistent with DEECD priorities, particularly school improvement priorities.

Establish and strengthen links and referral pathways between relevant departments, services, community organisations and schools to optimise support for vulnerable children, young people and their families.

Contribute to the collaborative work **and functioning** of the team and provide leadership in initiating service improvement.

Participate actively in support, supervision, learning and development activities as a professional member of a multidisciplinary team.

Key selection criteria: Student Support Services Speech Pathologist (AHG3)

Experience and sound knowledge of speech pathology techniques and the ability to **develop**, provide and **evaluate** speech pathology services and provide specialist advice on appropriate intervention strategies.

Demonstrated ability to deliver a **comprehensive** speech pathology service to students and families in an educational environment, including speech and language assessment and reporting and the provision of advice on program delivery.

Demonstrated capacity to work as part of a collaborative, multidisciplinary professional team and **contribute significantly to the achievements of the team**.

Strong capacity to apply **highly developed** assessment, conceptual and analytical skills in the provision of student support services and work with children, young people and their families.

Demonstrated ability to **design, deliver or broker professional learning**, preferably for teachers and other relevant professionals, in the area of language and communication.

Highly developed communication, networking and interpersonal skills, including the ability to liaise effectively with a wide range of people within the education community and beyond.

Accountabilities: Student Support Services Speech Pathologist (AHG4)

Provide **high-level** professional advice and support to principals, school communities and school networks through the **initiation**, development and implementation of programs and services with a focus on the learning, development and wellbeing of students, particularly those who are most vulnerable.

Provide **an expert** speech pathology service to schools in the network, **including support to less experienced colleagues**, that comprises conducting speech and language assessments; providing assessment reports and advice about relevant teaching and learning strategies; and supporting teachers, school staff and families to develop effective programs and strategies for students with additional language and communication needs.

Provide **expert** advice and support to principals, school staff and parents about the requirements of the Program for Students with Disabilities and the implementation of the Language Support Program.

Contribute **expertise and high-level advice** regarding strategic interventions in schools and networks to support capacity-building related to student learning, engagement and wellbeing consistent with DEECD priorities, particularly school improvement priorities.

Identify and lead the development of key strategic partnerships, relationships and referral pathways between relevant departments, services, community organisations and schools to optimise support for vulnerable children, young people and their families

Provide leadership in the development and maintenance of the collaborative work and functioning of the team and provide **significant** leadership **and direction** in initiating service improvement.

Participate actively **and provide leadership** in staff support, supervision, learning and development activities as a professional member of a multidisciplinary team.

Lead the network (or regional) team in the area of [insert portfolio or area of specific responsibility appropriate to the needs of the team in line with expectations of an AHG4 level staff member].

Key selection criteria: Student Support Services Speech Pathologist (AHG4)

Comprehensive experience in and sound knowledge of speech pathology techniques and the ability to develop, provide and evaluate speech pathology services and provide specialist advice on appropriate intervention strategies **in complex matters**.

Demonstrated ability to deliver **an expert** speech pathology service to students and families in an educational environment, including speech and language assessment and reporting, the provision of advice on program delivery **and the capacity to provide leadership and support to less experienced colleagues**.

Demonstrated capacity to work **and provide a leadership role** in a collaborative, multidisciplinary professional team and contribute significantly to the achievements of the team.

Strong capacity to apply highly developed assessment, conceptual and analytical skills **and the ability to lead areas of significant portfolio expertise** in the provision of student support services and work with children, young people and their families.

Demonstrated ability to design, deliver or broker professional learning **on complex student language and communication topics**, preferably for teachers and other relevant professionals, in student engagement and wellbeing.

Highly developed communication, networking, **leadership** and interpersonal skills, including the ability to liaise effectively **on complex issues** with a wide range of people within the education community and beyond.

Role: Student Support Services Visiting Teacher Team Leader

Mandatory qualifications:

Appropriate teaching qualifications, including a recognised special education qualification in an area or visiting teacher expertise as appropriate. For further details see the Recruitment in Schools Guide at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/hrweb/careers/vacs/recruitinsch.htm>

Accountabilities: Student Support Services Visiting Teacher Team Leader – Leading Teacher

Lead and manage a team of visiting teachers, providing performance planning, evaluation and resource coordination.

Implement and oversee the visiting teacher components of the student support service delivery model across the region.

Contribute to regional, network or sub-regional school improvement planning and support.

Lead, manage and facilitate the provision of professional development activities and team participation in staff support and supervision.

Lead and manage the development and implementation of the visiting teacher component of the regional student support services referral, data and accountability systems, including performance measures and network reporting requirements.

Coordinate human resources management and visiting teacher workforce planning responsibilities.

Contribute as a member of the regional student support services management team in all matters related to student support services delivery.

Establish and strengthen links and referral pathways between relevant departments, services, community organisations and schools to optimise support for vulnerable children, young people and their families.

Key selection criteria: Student Support Services Visiting Teacher Team Leader – Leading Teacher

Demonstrated capacity to coordinate a collaborative teaching team in the delivery of services and initiatives in an educational environment.

An excellent knowledge of student support services, including the delivery of strategic interventions that build a supportive learning environment for students with additional needs.

Demonstrated knowledge of current policy and issues related to student wellbeing and health support in an education context.

Highly developed organisational, conceptual and analytical skills, with a demonstrated capacity to apply complex concepts in support of service improvement and program development.

Highly developed communication, networking and interpersonal skills, including the ability to liaise effectively with a wide range of people in the education community and beyond.

Stream: Visiting Teachers

Mandatory qualifications:

Appropriate teaching qualifications [insert if appropriate... including a recognised special education qualification in the specialist area of ... (insert ... hearing impairment, vision impairment, additional health or physical needs, autism, behaviour support, etc.)]. For visiting teachers of students with vision impairment, this will include specific training in Braille. For further details see the Recruitment in Schools Guide at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/hrweb/careers/vacs/recruitinsch.htm>

Accountabilities: Visiting Teacher

Undertake direct teaching and assessment of students with specific disabilities or health conditions affecting learning or wellbeing where appropriate, including monitoring, evaluating and reporting of student progress.

Provide professional, expert advice and support to principals, student support group members, school communities and school networks through the development and implementation of programs and services with a focus on the learning, development and wellbeing of students, particularly those with specific disabilities or health conditions affecting learning or wellbeing.

Provide high-level advice and support to teachers regarding teaching of students with additional learning or wellbeing needs.

Establish and strengthen links and referral pathways between relevant community support agencies and schools to optimise support for vulnerable children, young people and their families.

Identify and deliver programs to address statewide, regional and network student learning, engagement and wellbeing priorities in collaboration with the team.

Contribute comprehensive, expert advice regarding strategic interventions in schools and networks to support capacity-building related to student learning, engagement and wellbeing consistent with DEECD priorities, particularly school improvement priorities.

Contribute to the collaborative work and functioning of the team and provide leadership in facilitating service improvement.

Model exemplary practice, mentor/coach other teachers to engage in critical reflection of their practice, and support staff to expand their capacity.

Key selection criteria: Visiting Teacher

Substantial experience in teaching students with additional learning or wellbeing needs in a relevant setting and preferably experience working with schools in the area of student learning, engagement and wellbeing.

Demonstrated capacity to work within a collaborative, multidisciplinary professional team and contribute significantly to the achievements of the team.

Demonstrated ability to design, deliver or broker professional learning, preferably for teachers and other relevant professionals, on relevant topics such as disabilities, additional learning needs, student social and emotional issues, and appropriate teaching and learning strategies.

Substantial experience in supporting or establishing successful curriculum development strategies to enhance the provision of a comprehensive curriculum to students with additional learning or wellbeing needs.

Highly developed conceptual and analytical skills, particularly in assessing the teaching and learning needs of children, young people and their families and providing effective support services

Demonstrated substantial communication, networking and interpersonal skills, including the ability to liaise effectively with a wide range of people in the education community and beyond on complex matters.

Other roles within the Student Support Services Program

As outlined in Section 3.2.4, senior student support services staff (AHG4) are expected to be responsible for or lead specific network or region-wide portfolios or key student wellbeing priority areas. Specific senior responsibilities should be developed by regions and inserted as appropriate in AHG4 position descriptions.

Accountabilities have been developed below for the position of Emergency Management Team Leader to ensure consistency of role and responsibilities across regions for this common leadership position, which is likely to be held by an AHG4 staff member as part of their senior role.

Role: Student Support Services Emergency Management Team Leader

The coordination of the critical incident response and support role by student support services staff is a region-wide senior responsibility to be undertaken by a senior social worker or psychologist/guidance officer.

Accountabilities: Student Support Services Emergency Management Team Leader

Coordinate the provision of appropriate support to school communities in response to critical incidents.

Coordinate staff support and professional learning for student support services staff, who provide emergency management assistance across the region.

Coordinate deployment of the Psychosocial Core Response team as required by the Emergency and Security Management Unit.

Take a lead role in the identification of and response to statewide, regional and network emergency management priorities, particularly as they relate to support provided to school communities by student support services officers.

Reporting to the Regional Emergency Management Coordinator, the Emergency Management Team Leader: takes a lead role in the provision of professional learning and awareness of school communities across the region regarding the provision of community support in the event of a critical incident.

Insert other duties as determined to be appropriate by the region.

4. Planning and Delivering Student Support Services

4.1 Student support services planning

Planning the delivery of student support services is essential to the effective coordination and targeting of resources. Improved student support services coordination and leadership structures within regions and networks provide for systemic inclusion of the Program in school and network improvement processes and activities, particularly in relation to network strategic planning

Regions are responsible for the distribution and review of student support services resources across the region. Regions take into account the higher rates of disadvantage in some areas, which require greater support to achieve positive learning outcomes, as well as student performance information, local knowledge and a range of other factors relevant to local decision-making when allocating student support service resources.

The network/sub-regional student support services annual workplan should draw on regional and network strategic plans to ensure that they are in line with the directions and priorities of DEECD, regions and networks. The purpose of the workplan is to detail the responsibilities of the network/sub-regional student support services team in contributing to the strategies and initiatives to be put in place across the region and in the network to achieve improved student learning, engagement and wellbeing outcomes.

The Network/Sub-regional Student Support Services Coordinator is responsible for providing advice to the Regional Network Leader and the Network Executive about the establishment of goals, targets and key strategies in the three key areas of school and network improvement: student learning; engagement and wellbeing; and pathways and transitions, particularly as they relate to vulnerable children and young people. This advice should be based on analysis of data, including data from school and network level reports, service referral data and relevant community-based data.

In order to achieve improvement outcomes, it is important that Network/Sub-regional Student Support Services Coordinators and teams receive direction and support from the Regional Student Support Services Coordinator and Regional Student Wellbeing Manager.

In addition, professional learning opportunities should be available to student support services staff that are consistent with the relevant goals and targets of the network/sub-regional student support services annual workplan and broader regional and Departmental priorities in order to enhance the capacity of teams to address the identified goals and targets.

4.1.1 Student support services network/sub-regional annual workplan

It is the role of Network/Sub-regional Student Support Services Coordinators to develop an annual workplan in consultation with the Regional Network Leader, the Regional Student Support Services Coordinator and the student support services team. The workplan should respond to network strategic planning priorities in relation to support for vulnerable children and young people, including strategic interventions, school and network capacity, community partnerships and Commonwealth and State priorities.

The workplan should include:

- a team overview, including roles and responsibilities of the team, location, basic information about the network/sub-region and staffing composition of the team
- an outline of the annual workplan priorities and actions that are strongly linked to network strategic planning. Actions may also include the targeted professional learning strategies to be implemented in order to deliver the plan.

The workplan should also be developed in line with the network annual implementation plan, which outlines the specific actions required to implement improvement strategies and defines how they will be resourced and who will be responsible.

It is important that an end-of-year review of the network/sub-regional student support services workplan is provided to the Regional Network Leader and the Regional Student Support Services Coordinator at an agreed date, as this review will inform the network annual report and development of the following year's workplan.

A sample template for the student support services network/sub-regional workplan can be found at Appendix 4A.

4.1.2 Data for student support services planning

Several data sources are available that may be accessed by Network/Sub-regional Student Support Services Coordinators in consultation with the Regional Network Leader. These may inform service planning across the network/sub-region. Information regarding the demand for student support services and the type of support required will also inform prioritisation of resources and activities.

School absence data

School absence data is collected through CASES21, which provides different categories for types of absence (e.g. suspension, refusal, medical, etc.). CASES21 enables schools to analyse absence data in order to identify absence trends and implement both whole-school strategies and targeted support for individual students. Absence data at a network level may assist Regional Network Leaders and Network/Sub-regional Student Support Services Coordinators to target student engagement strategies and support to particular schools or local areas.

Student, staff and parent surveys

There are a number of surveys that assist schools in planning and improvement by seeking the opinion of those engaged with the school system. The surveys below can contribute to student support services planning by providing an indication of satisfaction and engagement with the school and helping to identify areas that may require additional focus and support.

Attitudes to School Survey

- The Attitudes to School survey assists Victorian government schools to gain an understanding of students' perceptions and experience of school. Survey information provides schools with valuable data on students' views of their wellbeing, school in general and teaching and learning. Schools use Attitudes to School survey data to drive school and network improvement.
- The survey is offered annually to all students in Years 5–12. In 2008, over 98 per cent of Victorian government schools participated in the survey. Schools that conduct the survey are able to build up trend data that enables them to undertake more in-depth analysis on levels of student engagement over time.
- Additional information on the Attitudes to School survey is available at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/management/schoolimprovement/performance/surveys/attitudesurvey.htm>

Staff Opinion Survey

- The overall objective of the Staff Opinion Survey is to collect data about staff opinions about individual schools across Victoria to drive improvement. The survey provides an opportunity for school staff to express their views about what works well in their school and to identify what could be done better to improve the working environment for all staff members and ultimately to further improve outcomes for students. All school staff (principal, teachers and non-teachers) who have worked at the school on a day-to-day basis (including part-time staff) during the month preceding the survey are invited to participate.
- Additional information on the Staff Opinion Survey is available at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/management/schoolimprovement/performance/surveys/staffsurvey.htm>

Parent Opinion Survey

- The Parent Opinion Survey is conducted by Victorian government schools to determine parent opinions about their child's school. The survey is conducted in Term 3 each year to ensure that families new to a school have received a report on their child's progress and are able to give an informed response. To ensure that the results of the survey are valid and representative, the survey is distributed to a randomly selected sample of parents in each school.

- Additional information on the Parent Opinion Survey is available at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/management/schoolimprovement/performance/surveys/parentsurvey.htm>

School-level reports

The school-level report is the key document for reporting school performance on student learning outcomes, student pathways and transitions and student engagement and wellbeing. Data is available on potential drivers of student outcomes, including information on staff and parent opinion, school climate and resource management. The school-level data is reported against state averages and like-school groups matched against whether English is the main language spoken at home, and the proportion of students who receive the Education Maintenance Allowance or Commonwealth Youth Allowance.

School-level reports can assist in identifying schools and groups of students with priority needs as part of the student support services and network strategic planning process. They may also assist in evaluating the likely impacts of student support services interventions by measuring student outcomes data for groups of students and schools participating in Student Support Services Programs compared with baseline data for like groups.

School-level reports are prepared on an annual basis as part of the school accountability and improvement framework. Further information is available at

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/management/schoolimprovement/accountability/default.htm>

Benchmark publications

The school accountability framework includes benchmarks of actual school performance. The benchmarks enable schools to compare their own performance with the performance of other Victorian schools, after allowing for the socio-economic composition and language background of their student populations.

Data extracted from school annual reports is used to develop a variety of benchmarks in key areas of school operations. Benchmarks provide common points of comparison, enabling schools to determine their own relative standards and plan for improvement. Benchmark reports include School Management, VCE Benchmarks and the P–10 Curriculum and Standards Framework. This material can inform student support services planning by providing details of how school populations are faring overall and where additional support for learning and engagement may be required. Further information is available at

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/management/schoolimprovement/performance/default.htm>

Victorian Adolescent Health and Wellbeing Survey

The Victorian Adolescent Health and Wellbeing Survey (also known as ‘How r u?’) has been developed by the Centre for Adolescent Health on behalf of DEECD. The survey is targeted at selected secondary and primary/secondary schools and involves a single class at Years 7, 9 and 11. The survey aims to provide information on aspects of adolescent health and wellbeing that is not otherwise readily available, and to investigate the possible effects of health and social issues on the health and wellbeing of young people.

Information gained from the Adolescent Health and Wellbeing Survey can be used to monitor trends in key indicators and to help support the planning and implementation of adolescent health, wellbeing, development and learning services and programs. The survey findings can inform student support services planning by identifying areas of wellbeing and engagement requiring more focused attention.

Additional information on the survey is available at

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/directions/children/newdata.htm>

Student Mapping Tool

The Student Mapping Tool is used by Victorian government schools to identify students at risk of disengagement by extracting information relevant to each student’s risk of early school leaving from the CASES21 student information system.

The Tool was developed in response to findings that early school leavers are more likely to exhibit certain characteristics or be exposed to certain risk factors, including poor attendance, low literacy or numeracy, disrupted relationships with teachers and peers and a low-income family background.

Student support services staff can work with schools to review the data and consider its implications for the provision and planning of student support services.

Identification of students at risk and analysis of the data provided can assist in planning the delivery of student support services in a network/sub-region through better coordination of support services and better matching of students to appropriate support.

More information on the Student Mapping Tool is available at

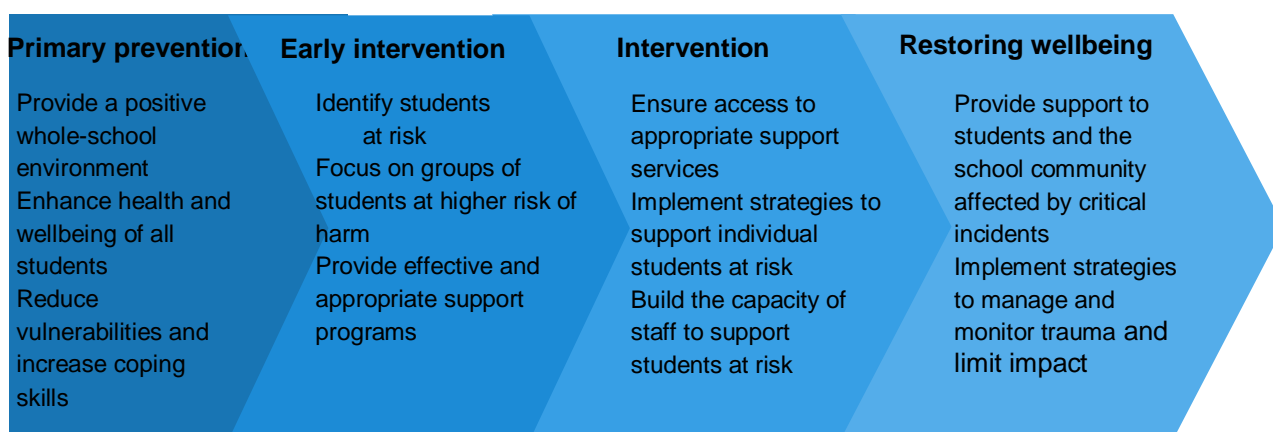
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/sensecyouth/careertrans/mips/sar/default.htm>

4.1.3 Student wellbeing planning frameworks

Schools and student support services staff working within schools provide a continuum of strategies and services from universal student engagement and wellbeing prevention activities through to targeted support to meet the individual education and wellbeing needs of children and young people.

As outlined in the Framework for Student Support Services in Victorian Government Schools: Teacher Resource (1999) and the Framework for Student Support Services in Victorian Government Schools: Professional Development Support Materials (1998), student wellbeing activities are generally provided across four levels: primary prevention, early intervention, intervention and restoring wellbeing. While schools have overall responsibility for planning, coordinating and implementing strategies within each level of activity, network/sub-regional student support services teams are able to work collaboratively with schools and contribute expertise and support across the four levels. For further information refer to <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/wellbeing/policy.htm>

Figure 4.1: Student wellbeing planning framework



While this framework may inform regional and network planning regarding the delivery of student support services, local identification of need will be a significant consideration in directing the work of the network/sub-regional student support services team.

It is also important to consider that within the continuum of services and supports that can be provided to students and their families, schools and student support services have varying areas of expertise and responsibility. The hierarchy of student wellbeing prevention activities below outlines the essential contributions of schools and student support services to preventing and responding to student wellbeing and engagement concerns.

It is the role of schools to plan and implement whole-school prevention activities and to develop early intervention and intervention strategies to identify and support students requiring additional assistance. A focus on primary prevention and early intervention contributes to maximising all students' access to teaching and learning and helps them develop as healthy, secure and resilient people.

Collaboration with schools on primary prevention and early intervention activities is an important function of the Student Support Services Program. However, the work of student support services has a greater focus on provision of targeted support for children and young people with additional needs or at high risk of disengagement from education.

Planning at the regional and network/sub-regional levels is essential for determining the appropriate proportion of time to be spent on the different levels of activity when delivering student support services.

The public health model¹ of preventing adverse health and wellbeing outcomes uses a three-tiered approach to preventative interventions: primary, secondary or tertiary prevention. This widely applied model is useful for strategically planning service provision of health and wellbeing programs, including student support services.

In the education context:

- **Primary prevention** or universal prevention strategies apply to whole-school communities or large groups such as a whole year level or class. These strategies promote positive student health and wellbeing and seek to prevent the emergence of problems.
- **Secondary prevention** strategies target students who are at risk of poor learning outcomes, disengagement from education and health and wellbeing problems. These more intensive strategies may be implemented with groups of students who have been identified as at risk, in order to prevent escalation of concerns or problems.
- **Tertiary prevention** and intervention strategies seek to address concerns and prevent them recurring or becoming entrenched in the long term. These strategies are implemented with individual students when specific concerns have already been identified and intervention is required.

The diagram on the following page outlines how schools and student support services teams plan and deliver prevention, intervention and support strategies.

4.2 Delivering student support services

Student support services are provided on a network or sub-regional basis depending on local requirements (particularly geographic issues) in order to provide equitable distribution of services across schools, networks and regions.

Targeted service delivery ensures that all children, young people and schools have access to support while also taking into account the higher rates of need and disadvantage in some schools and areas. The targeting of services to students and schools requiring additional support is critical to this process.

There are five stages of access to and delivery of student support services:

Figure 4.3: The four stages of student support services delivery



Monitoring and reviewing service delivery is covered in more detail in Section 7.

The student support services pre-referral, referral, intake and service delivery process identifies and targets children and young people with the greatest need, and matches student/school needs with the expertise of network/sub-regional student support services team members.

Schools are able to regularly liaise and consult with student support services staff regarding referrals or student wellbeing issues. This ensures that support is targeted to areas of greatest need by making the best use of the range of staff expertise and knowledge across the network or sub-region. Student support services network and sub/regional teams will build strong professional relationships with schools by maintaining a consistent student support services school liaison person available to provide initial advice on referrals.

Regional and Network/Sub-regional Student Support Services Coordinators are responsible for ensuring that all schools and staff are aware of the pre-referral, referral and intake process and the process is clearly documented. A broad service delivery process checklist is provided at Appendix 4G.

¹ Holzer, P., 2007, Defining the Public Health Model for the Child Welfare Services Context, National Child Protection Clearinghouse, Child Abuse Prevention Resource Sheet No. 11, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne.

Requests for student support services may be made at network or regional levels. This may be where there is an identified need for student support services to contribute to school and network improvement activities. The annual student support services workplan will also identify a range of actions and activities for the network/sub-regional team across the network.

In addition, regions, networks and/or streams may develop more detailed operational procedures or service delivery guidelines at local levels.

4.2.1 Pre-referral

The pre-referral process provides an opportunity for schools to conduct an informal assessment of students identified as requiring additional assistance, at risk of disengagement, or experiencing difficulties with learning or wellbeing.

Schools should follow a pre-referral process before making a referral to student support services. The pre-referral process will not necessarily lead to referral to student support services. This will depend on the nature of the issues referred and the effectiveness of pre-referral support.

Pre-referral phase activities include:

- identification of students or groups of students who require additional assistance and the type of support they require
- collection of information on students' engagement and learning progress or difficulties
- review of relevant information available to the school which might help to clarify issues affecting student learning or wellbeing, such as specialist reports
- development of individual learning plans for students outlining a range of actions and classroom- and school-based strategies to address concerns
- evaluation of the effectiveness of individual learning plan actions and strategies
- identification of broader advice, expertise or services that may be required, such as consultation, professional learning, early intervention programs or group work with students
- consultation with network/sub-regional student support services liaison person/team regarding potential referral
- referral to appropriate services such as student support services if required.

The pre-referral process ensures that referrals are prioritised in the most effective way to optimise support and encourage positive learning and engagement outcomes. This allows for a more focused approach to referral and helps to consolidate or clarify the nature of the issues identified.

Not all matters identified for potential referral to student support services will relate to an individual student. Referrals may also be made for groups of students or for professional development or guidance for teaching staff. For these matters, schools should discuss options for possible referral with their student support services liaison person.

Consultation

Regions and Network/Sub-regional Student Support Services Coordinators are responsible for the establishment of a clear consultation process to ensure each school has access to a student support services staff member as the first point of contact regarding potential referrals or student wellbeing issues that may require intervention.

Strong communication processes between schools and student support services staff are key features of the pre-referral and later the referral and intake processes, ensuring that appropriate liaison and consultation can occur. The communication and liaison mechanism may include an identified student support services liaison person for each school or an alternative process such as a consultation and intake phone line.

This consultation assists in directing schools to the most appropriate support service, which may be student support services, another Departmental program or an external organisation.

4.2.2 Referral

Following the pre-referral process, schools may commence a referral to the network/sub-regional student support services team.

In undertaking a referral to student support services, the school will:

- identify the type of service being requested; that is, individual student assessment/intervention or other services such as consultation, professional learning, involvement in early intervention programs or group work, and clarify whether allied health or visiting teacher support is required
- complete the student support services referral form (see Appendix 4B)
- obtain informed consent when the referral is for direct work with an individual student or group of students (see Appendix 4C)
- provide privacy and informed consent notice (see Appendix 4D).

When initially consulting the network/sub-regional student support team, the school may be asked to provide background information or documentation regarding pre-referral analysis, planning and processes undertaken to date. This will inform the referral process and help to strengthen collaboration between teaching staff and student support services staff.

Provision of consent for student support services

In general, when an activity at school is not covered by implied parental consent, specific authorisation from a parent/guardian is required, unless the student is deemed to be a 'mature-minor'. This requirement applies to services provided by student support services staff.

Informed consent for the provision of student support services and the release of student information must be obtained by schools prior to the initiation of student referral. Consent must be sought from a parent/guardian, or, in exceptional circumstances, the student, if the student, is deemed to be a 'mature-minor'.

Consent is sought from the parent/guardian or student (whichever is relevant) for student support services to provide support, which may include a range of assessments, both formal and informal, and intervention services. Consent is also sought for the release of personal student details from the school to student support services. Schools should contact the student support services network or sub-regional team nominated liaison person if they are unclear about the services or information that may need to be provided.

The Student Support Services Consent Form (refer Appendix 4C) states that information will be kept confidential. A privacy statement must be included with the form (refer Appendix 4D). Consent is sought from parents/guardians or students (whichever is relevant) for the exchange of information about the student between the school and the student support services team. The parent/guardian or student is asked to acknowledge their understanding that information will be provided on a strictly 'need to know' basis. The parent/guardian or student has the opportunity to refuse consent or consent to a full or limited range of services.

Criteria for determining legal guardianship

Various provisions of the Education and Training Reform Act 2006, the Family Law Act 1975 and the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 are relevant to the question of legal guardianship. For the purpose of the Student Support Services Consent Form, the following persons may be treated as having legal guardianship of a student depending on the legal arrangements in place:

- a biological or adoptive parent
- a foster parent, where an order under the Family Law Act grants that person parental responsibility, or if they are the temporary guardian of the child or if the child normally or regularly resides with the foster parent (at least for the period that the child lives with the foster parent)
- a step-parent, where an order under the Family Law Act grants them parental responsibility, where they are deemed to be a relative of the child of where the child normally or regularly resides with the step-parent. In most circumstances, the step-parent would include the spouse or domestic partner of the mother or father

- a grandparent, where an order under the Family Law Act grants them parental responsibility, where they are deemed to be a relative of the child or where the child normally or regularly resides with the grandparent
- the Secretary of the Department of Human Services (DHS), if the child is in out-of-home care or any other person to whom custody is given pursuant to an order made under the Children, Youth and Families Act
- informal carers who have completed the appropriate Statutory Declaration, which has been authorised by DEECD (see http://www.ocsc.vic.gov.au/publications/parents_resources.htm for more information).

Legal guardianship for the purpose of consent to the provision of student support services in the form of direct assistance should be determined on the basis of whether the person fits into any of the categories above. The ability to consent may be affected by the existence of court orders in relation to a student as listed above. In these circumstances, a particular parent or guardian may not be able to provide consent, or the consent of more than one parent or guardian may be required. These matters will be governed by the particular court order.

Court orders may be made by the Family Court or the Children's Court of Victoria. The Family Court makes various parenting orders. The Children's Court makes a variety of orders, including:

- protection orders, which may grant custody or guardianship of a child to the Secretary of DHS to the exclusion of all other persons
- permanent care orders, which grant a person (other than a parent or the Secretary of DHS) custody and guardianship of a child
- supervision orders, which are protection orders that give the Secretary of DHS responsibility for the supervision of a child but do not affect the custody or guardianship of the child
- orders as to sole custody
- intervention orders, which impose prohibitions or restrictions on one person in order to regulate the conduct of that person towards another person.

Principals should ensure they are aware of the existence, content and currency of court orders so that consent is sought from the appropriate person.

Mature-minor principle

Whatever the age or maturity of the student, parent/guardian consent must be sought for referral to student support services unless there are compelling and exceptional circumstances that should be considered on a case-by-case basis. Student support services are more effectively provided where there is parent/guardian consent and liaison with the student's family.

A student aged 16 years or over is not necessarily legally capable of providing consent; there are specific criteria for determining whether a student is a mature-minor.

While all students should be assessed using the same criteria, particular issues, such as mental health and developmental and behavioural issues, should be taken into consideration when making an assessment about whether the student can be considered a mature-minor.

A student can consent to being provided with student support services in the form of direct assistance only if that student is assessed as a mature-minor. A mature-minor is a young person who is sufficiently mature and competent to make decisions about their own healthcare and wellbeing.

The common law recognises the capacity of children assessed as mature-minors to make decisions about medical treatment without parental involvement². Thus, at common law, parents, guardians and their children may hold concurrent rights to consent to the student's medical treatment. In terms of health and wellbeing services, there is no minimum age for students to give their own consent to receiving support. However, as with medical treatment, the common law provides authority for the application of the mature-minor principle for the purpose of providing consent. Therefore, a school principal can undertake the mature-minor assessment of an

² *Gillick v West Norfolk Area Health Authority* [1986] AC 112, affirmed by the High Court in *Department of Health and Community Services (NT) v JWB & SMB (Marion's Case)* (1992) 175 CLR 218.

individual student to determine whether a student is capable of providing consent to the provision of student support services in the form of direct assistance. However, this should only be undertaken in exceptional circumstances, as it is preferable that the consent of parents or guardians is sought for the provision of student support services. Guidance on how a principal should undertake that assessment is provided below.

Criteria to assess when a student can authorise their own consent form

The mature-minor principle provides an appropriate guide for an assessment by a principal or suitable staff member for determining whether an individual student may provide consent to the provision of student support services in the form of direct assistance.

In the medical treatment context, the mature-minor principle states that to be considered sufficiently mature and competent, the young person needs to understand the:

- nature of the issue for which they are seeking treatment
- nature of the treatment being proposed, including treatment options
- possible outcomes of that treatment
- likely outcomes if the treatment is not provided.³

It follows that, in the context of consenting to student support services in the form of direct assistance, a judgement regarding the individual student's capacity to consent requires consideration of whether the student has the ability to understand the issues and circumstances. The following criteria should be used:

- Age - Generally speaking, the older the student, the more likely they are to understand the implications of receiving support from student support services. However, age is not determinative, as maturity levels vary greatly within the same age groups.
- Maturity and degree of autonomy - Consideration should be given to whether the student is socially independent of their parents or guardians. The student's apparent maturity, intelligence and attitude should be considered, along with the family dynamic. Consideration of the student's social history and personality can help to ascertain their level of maturity and degree of autonomy.
- Nature of the condition - The ability of the student to comprehend the decision to consent is influenced by the complexity of the issues being addressed. Insight into their condition or reason for the student support services referral is a relevant indicator. Greater insight indicates a greater capacity to understand the issues for the purpose of providing consent.
- Nature of the service - More complex interventions and more formal assessments by student support services require a greater capacity for understanding on the part of the student. The sensitivity of information that will be disclosed should also be taken into account.

An additional consideration is the best interests of the child.⁴ While this does not influence the assessment of capacity to consent, it should be taken into account.

Students who are unable to authorise consent

Students who do not meet the criteria for a mature-minor are unable to provide consent.

All students should be individually assessed using the same criteria. Students with particular conditions or concerns will be less likely to meet some of the criteria.

4.2.3 Intake

Student support services intake involves consideration of the referral request and assessment about the services to be provided, where appropriate. The intake process is as follows:

- referral form received by network/sub-regional student support services team

³ Medical Practitioners Board of Victoria 2004, Consent for Treatment and Confidentiality in Young People, Melbourne.

⁴ Section 17(2) of the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities 2006, Victoria.

- network/sub-regional student support services team reviews referral and verifies provision of informed consent
- referral assigned to appropriate student support services staff member/s
- in the case of visiting teacher referrals, the referral should be forwarded to the Visiting Teacher Team Leader who assigns the referral to the appropriate member of the visiting teacher team.

If the referral is determined by the network/sub-regional student support services team to be inappropriate, or another program is considered to be better placed to deliver the support required, this will be discussed with the school as a matter of priority. It is the role of the network/sub-regional student support services team to provide advice to the school about other appropriate services or programs and to provide information about access and referral processes as required.

Regions have established processes to manage student support services referrals on a network/sub-regional basis, taking into account the size of networks, the number of staff in student support services teams, local needs and priorities, and geographical issues.

Referrals are considered on a network/sub-regional basis to ensure prioritisation of need across the local area. This allows greater needs in some areas to be accommodated.

Each region has established a process to be followed by schools when making a referral. The referral will be reviewed in consultation with the student support services multidisciplinary team and assigned to the most appropriate team members. Assessment of referrals by the multidisciplinary team rather than a particular stream allows for collaboration and discussion on the most suitable response to referral issues. In the majority of instances, the referral will be allocated to the team member (or team members, if multidisciplinary intervention is required) with the greatest knowledge of the school or family, or appropriate expertise related to the referral.

4.2.4 Service delivery

Following the intake process, the student support services network/sub-regional team will:

- establish aims for the service intervention
- advise the designated school contact person of the intake outcome and confirm the service intervention aims and strategies
- arrange and provide agreed delivery of services
- develop an individual support plan where appropriate (refer to section 4.3)
- report progress and outcomes to school, family and student
- review service delivery to ensure that outcomes have been achieved
- communicate the conclusion of services to the school, family and student.

Once a referral is assigned to a student support services staff member, the school will be advised of the details, along with the anticipated timeline for service delivery. The range of services provided by student support services is outlined in Section 3.1.3. Broadly, services can include:

- providing advice and intervention relating to student learning, wellbeing and engagement
- providing diagnostic and/or assessment services
- building the capacity of others, including teachers, parents and guardians
- providing therapy, counselling and/or intervention to individual students or groups of students
- contributing to the development of school-wide student wellbeing and engagement policies, processes and programs
- providing direct teaching and learning of students and consultancy support (visiting teachers)
- assisting with recovery support following critical incidents or distressing events
- working collaboratively with other programs and services to meet the needs of students and schools
- contributing to network and school improvement priorities.

Student support services staff may deliver services in a variety of ways depending on the method most appropriate for the referral and particular circumstances. These services may include:

- consulting with staff or parents
- providing professional learning (for example a presentation or workshop to teachers or parents)
- working with a group or individual student
- coaching or advising teachers and other school staff.

Outsourced service providers

While student support services staff for each stream are available in most networks/sub-regions, depending on local circumstances and demand, it may also be necessary to use outsourced service providers sometimes. Outsourced service providers may be used to deliver services across any of the existing student support services streams, or when specialised professional support (e.g. occupational therapy) is required.

Outsourced service providers may be engaged on a case-by-case basis or a time-limited contractual basis, or they may be listed as part of a regional service provider pool.

The outsourced service provider should be engaged subject to the development of a service agreement with the Department.

A sample outsourced service agreement is provided at Appendix 4F.

It should be noted that the appointment of outsourced providers must comply with DEECD procurement requirements. Further information on procurement requirements is available at <https://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/intranet/employeeecatalogue/financialcompservices/procurement.htm>.

4.2.5 Service Review

It is important that impacts of services are regularly reviewed and informed decisions made regarding continuing with the current program, making changes or reaching closure. The Service Review involves:

- assessing progress against the service intervention aims. Depending on individual circumstances it may be useful to gauge overall progress in the school through discussion with the relevant stakeholders (E.g. teachers, guardians, school wellbeing staff) subject to the applicable privacy provisions
- determining any changes to service activities and/or confirm that services have achieved their anticipated aims and therefore closing the case
- communicating the decision regarding service modification and service closure to key stakeholders.

4.3 Support planning for individual students

All Victorian government schools are required to develop individual learning plans for a range of students, including those supported through the Program for Students with Disabilities, Koorie students in Years 8 and 9 supported through Wannik, students in out-of-home care and students in Years 10–12 supported through the Managed Individual Pathways initiative. Plans may also be developed for other students who have specific needs. For more information on individual plans for students see

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/studentlearning/studentreports/schools/reportindivlplans.htm>

Individual Support Plans

In some cases, student support services staff may decide that it is appropriate to develop an Individual Support Plan for the delivery of support services to a student. Student support services staff will make a professional judgement about when an Individual Support Plan will be developed. This would usually occur when a student requires ongoing targeted and tailored support beyond a brief intervention. The Individual Support Plan guides intervention in consultation with all staff on the support team, and can support service provision by helping to deliver a consistent, customised support service to achieve the best outcomes for the student over the longer term. The plan provides a reference point for student support services staff to monitor progress and identify areas for further support or assistance, and also acts as a record of service provision.

An Individual Support Plan template is provided at Appendix 4E. This template can be adapted to local requirements and preferences.

Appendix 4A: Student Support Services Workplan

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES NETWORK/SUB-REGIONAL WORKPLAN TEMPLATE

[INSERT WORKPLAN PERIOD i.e. calendar year]

Team overview and responsibilities

This section should include relevant information about the network/sub-regional student support services team such as:

- the role and responsibilities of the team
- where the team is located and basic information about the network/sub-region
- the staffing composition of the team
-

The [insert network/sub-region name] student support services team is located in the [insert network/sub-region name] network of the [insert region name] region. The [insert network/sub-region name] network/sub-region is situated in the [insert geographic area] of the region and comprises [insert number and type of schools in the network] across the local government area/s of [insert LGA information as appropriate].

Outline the objectives of the team, taking into account the statewide objectives of the Student Support Services Program and Regional and Network Strategic Plans.

For example:

The objectives of the team are to:

- work in collaboration with schools, networks and services within the community to identify and intervene early with children and young people who have additional needs or are at risk of disengagement
- strengthen the capacity of the workforce within schools to meet the needs of children and young people who have additional needs, or are disadvantaged or vulnerable, to enable them to achieve successful education and wellbeing outcomes
- target the delivery of individual support services to those who require specialised expertise, assessment and intervention in order to overcome barriers to learning
- respond to emerging student wellbeing needs and contribute to identified school, network and regional improvement priorities
- respond to critical incidents and emergencies working collaboratively with senior regional staff as appropriate
- facilitate and strengthen partnerships between schools; student support services; early childhood services; community organisations; and health, family, child and youth services in order to provide greater options and coordinated service provision for children, young people and their families.
-

It is the role of the [insert network/sub-region name] student support services team to [adapt below as appropriate for the network team]:

- assist schools to identify students with additional learning, wellbeing, or communication needs in order to commence earlier support planning and prevent disengagement
- work with schools to strengthen student wellbeing structures, processes and programs to benefit all students
- provide advice and expertise regarding promoting student wellbeing, engagement and inclusion
- contribute to the development and implementation of student wellbeing primary prevention and early intervention programs and strategies in schools
- improve school capacity to meet the needs of students with additional needs through consultancy, professional learning, teaching and learning strategies, service coordination and referral
- undertake needs assessments, cognitive assessments, speech and language assessments and other relevant assessments as required to identify additional learning needs
- contribute to the development of student learning or support plans for students with disabilities, behavioural issues or other learning and wellbeing needs, including identifying and facilitating the involvement of other services
- provide direct support or intervention with individual or groups of students where required to address barriers to learning and engagement
- work with Regional Network Leaders to implement student wellbeing and engagement strategies that contribute to school and network improvement
- facilitate the strengthening of service partnerships between schools and support agencies and services
- respond to critical incidents and provide recovery support.
-

The team is also responsible for facilitating, strengthening and maintaining the development, maintenance and enhancement of relationships and referral pathways between relevant departments, services, community organisations and schools in the network/sub-region that have a shared mandate and responsibility to provide support for children, young people and their families within the community.

The [insert network/sub-region name] student support services is a multidisciplinary team staffed by:

- [insert the profile of the team including staff numbers and streams/disciplines]

Workplan priorities

[This section should identify the **priorities of the workplan** for the relevant time period – approximately 3–5 priorities are recommended. The priorities should **strongly link to the Network Strategic Plan**, as this is the framework that outlines the network improvement priorities and the responsibilities for contributing to the strategies and initiatives. **The priorities or associated actions should also include the targeted professional learning needs of the team in order to deliver the actions and services outlined in the plan.**]

The [insert network/sub-region name] student support services annual workplan draws on the priorities and activities of relevant regional and network planning processes, including the regional strategic planning, network strategic planning and regional student support services planning. The workplan details the responsibilities of the [insert network/sub-region name] student support services team in contributing to the strategies and initiatives across the region and within the network to achieve improved student learning, engagement and wellbeing outcomes.

The [insert network/sub-region name] student support services annual workplan has been developed in line with the key documents from the Network and Accountability and Improvement Framework; that is, the Network Strategic Plan (four-year plan) and Network Annual Implementation Plan, which outlines the specific actions required to implement improvement strategies, defines how they will be resourced and determines who will be responsible.

Some [insert network/sub-region name] student support services workplan priorities will extend beyond (insert appropriate date, e.g. 31 December 2009) but for the purposes of this plan, actions or milestones will be developed to be achieved by the end of the workplan period. The priorities of the [insert network/sub-region name] student support services team are:

... [list broad priorities as linked to the Network Strategic Plan]

...

...

...

An end-of-year report on the progress and outcomes of the [insert network/sub-region name] student support services workplan will be provided to the Regional Network Leader (RNL) for the [insert network/sub-region name] network and the Regional Student Support Services Coordinator by [insert date negotiated with RNL and Regional Student Support Services Coordinator, e.g. 13 February 2010] to inform the Network Annual Report, which is due on [insert date, e.g. 31 March 2010].

Detailed actions to achieve priorities

Priority A:

Actions to deliver on this Priority		Timeline	Measure or milestones of achievement
1	[Insert actions to be taken or strategies to be implemented to achieve the priority area]		
2			
3			
4			

Priority B:

Actions to deliver on this Priority		Timeline	Measure or milestones of achievement
1	[Insert actions to be taken or strategies to be implemented to achieve the priority area]		

2			
3			
4			

Priority C:

Actions to deliver on this Priority		Timeline	Measure or milestones of achievement
1	[Insert actions to be taken or strategies to be implemented to achieve the priority area]		
2			
3			
4			

Priority D:

Actions to deliver on this Priority		Timeline	Measure or milestones of achievement
1	[Insert actions to be taken or strategies to be implemented to achieve the priority area]		
2			
3			
4			

Appendix 4B: Student Support Services School Referral Form

This form must be completed when making a referral to student support services. A signed copy of the parent/guardian consent form must be provided to the network/sub-regional student support services with this form.

School name:		Referral date:		
School contact for referral:		Phone:		
Referral request - student-focused service				
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual student <input type="checkbox"/> Student and family <input type="checkbox"/> Group of students <input type="checkbox"/> Student family and teacher <input type="checkbox"/> Group of parents and guardians				
Referral request – school program focused service				
<input type="checkbox"/> Teaching staff <input type="checkbox"/> Leadership team <input type="checkbox"/> Wellbeing staff <input type="checkbox"/> School community <input type="checkbox"/> Whole community				
Service/s requested:				
<input type="checkbox"/> Assessment, including preliminary advice	<input type="checkbox"/> Family counselling	<input type="checkbox"/> Student counselling		
<input type="checkbox"/> Therapy	<input type="checkbox"/> Group work	<input type="checkbox"/> Class observation		
<input type="checkbox"/> Consultation	<input type="checkbox"/> Staff advice/support	<input type="checkbox"/> Presentation/workshop		
<input type="checkbox"/> Teaching support	<input type="checkbox"/> External program	<input type="checkbox"/> Visiting teacher referral		
Complete the following for individual student referral only:				
Student family name:	Student given name:	Previously referred to student support services?	<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N	
Student date of birth:	Year level (K–12):			
Is the referral related to the Program for Students with Disabilities?				
<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes – Years 6–7 review <input type="checkbox"/> Yes – SSG nominee requested	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes – a reappraisal <input type="checkbox"/> Yes - other	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes – possible new assessment	
Primary reason/s for student referral				
<input type="checkbox"/> Attendance	<input type="checkbox"/> Developmental delay	<input type="checkbox"/> Oral language	<input type="checkbox"/> Hearing	<input type="checkbox"/> Health/ personal care
<input type="checkbox"/> Behaviour	<input type="checkbox"/> Curriculum learning	<input type="checkbox"/> Speech	<input type="checkbox"/> Vision	<input type="checkbox"/> Disability
<input type="checkbox"/> Social emotional	<input type="checkbox"/> Family concerns	<input type="checkbox"/> Orofacial disorder E.g. swallowing	<input type="checkbox"/> Complaint investigation	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify)

Formal assessments undertaken relevant to this referral including academic, speech, language, audiological, vision (including EVAC), paediatric, psychosocial etc
Additional information about this student service or staff program request?
Any relevant information about the student at the school including academic progress, school programs or support services?
Any specific concerns or expected outcomes?
Any relevant information from specialists or other agencies including academic, speech, language, audiological, vision (including EVAC), paediatric or psychosocial assessments?
Other agencies/services or professionals involved?
Any relevant information from the family?
Has informed consent been obtained? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Note: A signed and completed consent form must be attached.
Principal's signature: _____ Date: / /
Student support services use only:
Date referral received: / / Date referral allocated: / /
Referral allocated to (student support services staff member name):
Service allocated: <input type="checkbox"/> Psychology/guidance <input type="checkbox"/> Social work <input type="checkbox"/> Speech pathology <input type="checkbox"/> Visiting teacher <input type="checkbox"/> Other

Appendix 4C: Parent/guardian Consent Form

This form must be completed before a referral for direct work with student can be made to the Student Support Services Program. Express consent for the provision of student support services must be obtained from a parent or guardian (or student in exceptional circumstances where the student is deemed to be a mature-minor).

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES CONSENT FORM

Parent or guardian consent is required for all students (except in exceptional circumstances where the student is deemed to be a mature-minor and may therefore provide their own consent). The consent page original must be retained at the referring school. A copy of this page must be provided to the parent/guardian or the mature-minor student and to student support services.

School:

Student name:

Within Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD), student support services staff provide specialist services. Student support services staff include visiting teachers, psychologists, guidance officers, social workers, speech pathologists, welfare officers and other allied health officers. Their role is to provide different forms of assistance to students, families and schools and in relation to student learning and wellbeing at school.

This work involves consultancy with teachers, and can involve more direct forms of assistance to students and their families. This consent form is to enable one or more of these specialist staff to provide more direct assistance to your child (or you, if it has been determined that you are able to provide your own consent) as may be appropriate.

Relevant information will be recorded, stored in an individual student support services file and kept within the student support services recording system. It may, if necessary, be shared with other student support services staff in order for them to provide services. This information will remain confidential within DEECD and may only be disclosed outside DEECD with your written permission or as required by law.

I consent to staff from student support services providing support to my child/me and the school, which may include a range of assessments (formal and informal) and intervention services.

However, I do not wish to have any of the following student support services provided to my child/me (please specify if relevant):

I consent to the exchange of information about my child/me between the school and the student support services team as necessary for the purposes of providing a coordinated approach in supporting the school to provide the best education and care for my child/me.

I understand that any information, including health information, will be provided on a strictly 'need to know' basis to the school and staff working with my child/me.

I understand that this consent remains valid while my child is/I am enrolled at a DEECD school or until withdrawn by the parent/guardian/myself in writing, or until formal case closure by the student support services team.

I have received and read the Privacy Statement.

Signed: _____ Date: ____/____/____

Print name Parent/guardian/student (if deemed a mature-minor)

Appendix 4D: Privacy Statement and Informed Consent

This privacy notice must be supplied to the parent/guardian/mature-minor student at the same time as the Student Support Services Consent Form.

PRIVACY STATEMENT FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS/MATURE-MINOR STUDENTS STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

Who are student support services?

Within the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD), student support services staff provide specialist consultancy services. Student support services staff include visiting teachers, psychologists, guidance officers, social workers, speech pathologists, welfare officers and other allied health officers. The role of student support services is to provide different forms of assistance to teachers, parents and students in relation to student learning and wellbeing at school. The Student Support Services Consent Form is provided to enable one or more student support services staff to provide more direct assistance to your child/you as may be appropriate.

Student support services

Student support services staff visiting teachers, psychologists, guidance officers, social workers, speech pathologists, welfare officers and other allied health officers. .

Visiting teachers provide direct teaching and assessment of students including monitoring, evaluating and reporting progress and advice to teachers. Visiting teachers conduct hearing, vision, health, physical and other educational needs assessments and work closely with classroom teachers, integration aides and parents in supporting students.

Psychologists and guidance officers provide a comprehensive psychology service to students, their families and schools, working with individuals, groups and families; providing psychological assessments, learning and teaching advice to schools; supporting the Program for Students with Disabilities; and attending critical incidents in schools where appropriate.

Speech pathologists provide speech pathology services, conduct speech and language assessments and provide support to principals, school staff and parents about the requirements of the Program for Students with Disabilities and the implementation of the Language Support Program.

Social workers provide support to students, their families and schools through involvement in individual, group and family work and attending critical incidents in schools where appropriate.

Why do student support services collect information about your child/you?

Student support services staff request personal information about your child/you and your family, including health information, conditions or impairments, to help clarify what support your child/you may require. Information may also be requested from school staff such as teachers, wellbeing coordinators, and other senior school staff members, along with information from any previous contact your child/you may have had with student support services. The aim is to work together to provide your child/you with the best possible service. If you choose not to share relevant information with student support services this may affect the ability of staff to assist your child/you.

With whom do student support services share this information?

The work of student support services involves consultancy with teachers and can involve more direct forms of assistance to individual students or groups of students. If an assessment of your child's/your cognitive, academic, or socio-emotional functioning is to be undertaken, a report is often written. The outcome of your child's/your assessment will be provided only to DEECD teachers, staff and professionals involved in planning for your child's/your individual needs. You will be advised of the outcomes of the assessment. A copy of the report, along with other relevant information, is kept in your child's/your confidential student support services file.

Student support services staff are required by law to protect your child's/your personal and health information and keep it securely. This information is not released to anyone outside the DEECD unless you provide written agreement, or if it is required, such as in a medical emergency, or by law. There may be circumstances in which confidentiality cannot be maintained, for example where disclosure of information is required by law, such as the mandatory reporting requirements under the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005.

Can you access your child's/your information?

You have the right to check information you have given us to make sure it is up to date and accurate. If you want to see your information, or if you have any concerns about your privacy or any aspect of our services, please contact:

The Network Student Support Services Coordinator

[Insert contact details]

For further information about privacy issues contact:

The Privacy Contact Officer

Insert Regional Office Address

Informed consent

Consent to student support services referral

Informed consent must be given by a parent, guardian or student deemed to be a mature-minor when making a referral to student support services. Informed consent means that you understand what is going to happen and that you give your permission (consent) for the action to go ahead.

The consent process

Informed consent is an exchange of information that takes place between you and school staff. This is usually the school principal.

The consent process contains four parts:

Information: You should be provided with sufficient information to understand what your consent means. It is important that you clearly understand all components of consent, which include:

- **Student support services:** their role and type of services they can provide
- **Exchange of information:** in order to provide services, information may be shared between student support services and the school. Information may also be exchanged with other agencies providing services to your child/you with your permission.
- **Records management:** how files are kept, the kind of information that is recorded in the files and on databases, and who has access to them.
- **Expiry of consent:** how long your consent is valid
- **Closure:** how you can withdraw your consent and the service closure process.
- **Understanding:** It is important that you understand each of the above parts.

You should be given enough time to review the consent form and ask any questions before signing the form. When you talk about the referral with school staff, the discussion should be held in a confidential area, such as a private office or room.

Willingness to consent: You have the right to withhold your consent. School staff should discuss what may happen if you do not give consent and how this may affect your child/you if support services are not involved. You also have the right to withdraw your consent at any point.

Signatures: When you sign the referral consent form you give your permission for your child/yourself (if deemed a mature-minor) to be referred to support services. It is important that you also write the date you signed the form in the space provided.

All referrals for individual students to student support services require informed consent. Student support services staff cannot provide services to your child/you until consent is obtained.

Qualified consent

When a consent form is signed, it establishes consent for the full range of student support services to be provided (as appropriate). You may provide qualified consent, which means you consent to a limited type of service, or specify that there are particular services you do not wish to have provided. This may include a range of disciplines. Consent may also be given for some disciplines, but not others (e.g. only speech pathology).

You should draw attention to any qualifications in terms of your consent when completing the Student Support Services Consent Form.

Exchange of information

The sharing of information between student support services, school-based staff and other agencies where appropriate helps to provide a more coordinated approach supporting students. Any information will be shared on a strictly need-to-know basis for the purpose of planning and providing the most appropriate support.

The sharing of information may occur verbally and/or through the exchange of written information.

If you wish to provide confidential information that you do not want shared with other student support services staff or school-based staff, you must tell the student support staff member about this.

Records management

When student support services receive a referral, a file is established for the referral and any further information about the services provided. This information may include case notes, reports, recommendations, programs and plans. The file will be kept by student support services staff in a secured area in the network/sub-regional student support services office in accordance with Departmental records management guidelines.

If the student transfers to a school in another network or region, and student support services are still required, the previously supporting network team will close the case at the old network. You will need to inform your new school of the continuing need for service and your new school will make a referral to the new student support services network team.

The school will need to forward a current guardian consent form to the new student support services network team. The file for your child/you will be transferred from the old network to the relevant network/sub-regional office.

If the student transfers to a non-government school, information will only be exchanged with the new school with your consent.

Expiry of consent and closure

In signing the consent form, you are providing permission for student support services to be involved while your child is/you are enrolled at a Victorian government school and services are continuing to be provided (i.e. while the referral to student support services remains open).

If you/your child transfers to any other Victorian government school, consent continues to remain valid as above unless you withdraw your consent.

Consent may be withdrawn at any time through advice in writing. If you/your child is considering withdrawing consent for student support services, it is recommended that a discussion be held first with school staff and/or student support services staff.

Formal service closure means that student support services are no longer required and their involvement will cease. This will occur when there is agreement between you, student support services staff and school staff that services are no longer required at that time. If at a future date student support services are again required, a new referral will need to be made and a new consent form completed and signed.

Appendix 4E: Individual Support Plan Template

For use by student support services staff when planning and providing delivery of supports services to an individual student.

Student name:	
Date of birth:	
School:	
Date of plan:	
Referral and service summary	
Date of referral:	
Reason for referral:	
Referral provided by:	
Parent/guardian consent obtained:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Support required:	<input type="checkbox"/> Psychologist <input type="checkbox"/> Guidance officer <input type="checkbox"/> Speech pathologist <input type="checkbox"/> Social worker <input type="checkbox"/> Visiting teacher <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)
Schedule/format of services/support:	
What are the issues affecting the student's performance and/or engagement?	

What services/support are proposed?	
What are the goals and targets of student support services involvement?	
What is the involvement of the parent/guardian in the assessment and support process?	
Closing review	
Date of closing review:	
Have the goals and targets of student support services involvement been achieved? If not, what additional or alternative support is required?	
What services and support were provided by student support services?	
What recommendations and advice have been provided to the school, student and family?	
<p>RECOMMENDATION:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Support plan complete; no further action.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Follow-up action recommended (as outlined above).</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> External support recommended (as outlined above).</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Review progress again in _____ weeks/months.</p>	

Student support services staff member:

Signature: Date:

Appendix 4F: Sample Outsourced Service Provider Agreement

SERVICE AGREEMENT between

[DEECD REGION] and [SERVICE PROVIDER]

The service agreement is for outsourced provision of student support services functions for the period [start date] to [end date] in the [name of region].

1. Service provision

- Details of the services to be provided to the region – case by case, service pool, time-limited contract etc.
- Details and scope of network/sub-region/region to be serviced as appropriate.
- Details regarding method of referral (e.g. through Network/Sub-regional Student Support Services Coordinator).
- Details of any other limitations or specifics of agreement.

2. Nature of services

- Eligibility of students for referral; specify if limited to particular stream/s.
- Provide details and timeline of service provision, e.g.
 - preparatory work
 - extent assessment services
 - reporting and feedback arrangements
 - accommodation and travel
 - reporting requirements
 - cost of service.

3. Referral process

- Referral intake and allocation procedure.
- Informed consent.
- Confidentiality.

4. Reporting arrangements

- Expectations regarding reports to be provided during and/or at conclusion of case.
- Expectation regarding the collection of service delivery information for network/sub-regional data collection and reporting systems
- DEECD documentation requirements
- Details of file and record management requirements.
- Mutual obligations of service provider and DEECD.
- Arrangements for file and data management at end of case.
- Invoicing arrangements
- DEECD contact details for payment for services.
- Agreed frequency of invoicing.

Appendix 4G: Delivering Student Support Services: Process Checklist

The following checklist may assist schools and student support services staff to ensure that the appropriate processes and actions have been implemented for each stage of service delivery. It should be noted that the informed consent and privacy steps of the referral process are compulsory and student support services must not be delivered without completion of these steps.

Pre-referral	<p>Schools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify students or groups of students who require additional assistance and the type of support they require collect information on each student's current engagement and learning progress or difficulties develop an individual learning plan for the student, outlining a range of actions and classroom- and school-based strategies to address concerns evaluate the effectiveness of individual learning plan actions and strategies identify broader advice, expertise or services that may be required, such as consultation, professional learning, early intervention programs or group work with students consult with network/sub-regional student support services liaison person/team regarding potential referral refer to appropriate services, such as student support services, if required.
Referral	<p>Schools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify the type of service being requested, i.e. individual student assessment/intervention or other services such as consultation, professional learning, involvement in early intervention programs or group work complete the student support services school referral form (see Appendix 4B) obtain informed consent for referral where the referral is for direct work with an individual student or group of students (see Appendix 4C) provide privacy and informed consent form (see Appendix 4D).
Intake	<p>Network/sub-regional student support services teams:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> receive referral form review referral and verify provision of informed consent assign referral to appropriate student support services staff member/s.
Service delivery	<p>Network/sub-regional student support services teams:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> advise the designated school contact person of the intake outcome. arrange and provide agreed delivery of services develop an individual support plan, where appropriate report progress and outcomes to school, family and student review service delivery to ensure that outcomes have been achieved communicate conclusion of services to school, family and student.

5. Service Partnerships

Strong partnerships between schools, student support services staff and other programs providing support to children, young people and their families maximise the opportunities for collaboration, coordination and effective delivery of services. Facilitating the development and maintenance of strong service partnerships between schools and local services is a core component of the work of network/sub-regional student support services teams. Through effective working partnerships, student support services staff can provide comprehensive services and continuity of care for students.

5.1 Effective service partnerships

In the student support services context, an effective partnership provides opportunities to achieve improved learning, enhance engagement, wellbeing and development; and contribute to successful transitions and pathways for children and young people. An effective partnership is a mutually beneficial relationship that achieves outcomes beyond those that organisations can achieve in isolation.

Service partnerships for student support services recognise that the provision of support for children and young people is a shared responsibility and requires input from schools, student support and wellbeing staff, parents, students (where appropriate) other Departmental programs and external services and organisations.

The network/sub-regional student support services team is also responsible for the facilitation and enhancement of relationships and referral pathways between relevant departments, services, community organisations and schools in the network/sub-region. Effective service partnerships allow for a mutually beneficial exchange of information about availability of and access to support, helping to ensure that children and young people receive the most appropriate services when and where they need them.

5.1.1 Benefits of service partnerships

Working with other service providers helps student support services staff to expand their knowledge and expertise while contributing to positive outcomes for children, young people and their families. Where a child or young person has multiple additional needs, a range of services may be involved to provide holistic support.

Service partnerships also ensure that student support services staff are aware of protocols and best practice in their network/sub-region, region and across Victoria. Service partnerships can benefit schools and the Student Support Services Program by:

- providing a clear understanding of scope of services available to children, young people and their families
- clarifying the relationships between schools, student support services and other services, including mutual responsibilities
- clarifying duty of care and legal obligations
- facilitating further programs or initiatives that build school capacity
- ensuring ongoing communication between schools, student support services and other services.

Service partnerships require a consistent approach, ensuring that positive communication is maintained between programs or organisations. Regular information sharing and clear paths of communication contribute to building and maintaining strong partnerships.

5.1.2 Formal and informal partnerships

Partnerships between student support services, schools and other services and organisations can be formal or informal. Informal partnerships are those that do not require formal agreements or protocols, where there is a strong feeling of trust and a history of partnership already in place. Partnerships can be informally supported by consultative arrangements, personal and professional networks, and organisational commitment and shared goals.

For some service partnerships it may be advisable to establish written protocols or Memoranda of Understanding. Effective protocols and agreements can provide a framework for effective, beneficial service delivery arrangements between student support services staff, schools and other services.

A written service agreement may also be developed to establish how schools and student support services will work together with other programs or organisations. The service agreement may cover a protocol relating to a particular project-based activity, or an ongoing partnership covering a range of activities. These agreements help to clarify the nature of the service partnerships, and also ensure continuity of relationships in the case of staff turnover.

Service partnership agreements or protocols should cover:

- referral protocols for children and young people
- management of sensitive and confidential information and arrangements for gaining guardian consent when information is shared between services
- roles and responsibilities
- aims and purpose of working together
- capacity-building of each organisation and school.

Establishing a service partnership agreement or Memorandum of Understanding can strengthen the provision of support to children and young people by:

- helping to establish a common language and understanding of how schools, student support services and other services operate and intersect
- providing an opportunity to share a vision and goals
- providing a systemic approach to supporting the child or young person from initial referral to closure of case
- ensuring continuity of partnerships in the event of staffing changes or organisational developments
- providing an opportunity to evaluate activities and arrangements.

Education and early childhood partnerships

Partnerships between education and early childhood services are a key component of the Blueprint. Partnership development is based on the following principles:

- The learning, development, health and wellbeing of children and young people is a collective responsibility of families, community and government, requiring shared action and accountability.
- All families and schools want the best for children and young people.
- All children and young people have the right to the opportunity to reach their full potential regardless of their location, cultural background or other barriers to success.
- Some children and young people will benefit from additional or more flexible development and learning opportunities and support to achieve their full potential.

In response to this, partnerships between education and early childhood services aim to:

- maximise participation and improve outcomes in education and early childhood by supporting the health and wellbeing of children and young people
- provide support for ongoing improvement in learning and development outcomes from birth through to adulthood
- improve access and equity to targeted support for children and young people and their families
- generate greater connections and transitions between early childhood services, schools and community (including business) to enhance social inclusion
- improve opportunities for communities experiencing disadvantage to participate equally in education and early years services and build connections within communities
- increase options for delivering services and curriculum to children and young people
- improve opportunities for professional and leadership development for school staff, children and young people
- include a willingness to reciprocally build capacity of partner organisations for a common purpose.

5.2 DEECD health and wellbeing workforces and programs

Student support services are part of a range of student wellbeing, health and child and family support services. Support services for children, young people and their families play a variety of roles, depending on individual needs. Support may be provided by one or more services working together to optimise support service provision.

Development of connections between schools and local service providers is essential to effective delivery of student support services. Local service providers may be able to provide timely and ongoing support to children, young people and their families, particularly those with additional needs or vulnerabilities. Student support services planning should include strategies for:

- strengthening school–parent partnerships
- strengthening the relationship between student support services and other DEECD staff, including early childhood services, school nurses and School-Focused Youth Service coordinators
- strengthening partnerships between student support services network or sub-regional teams and key government and community support agencies.

As partnership development is a key component of student support services responsibilities, appropriate time must be allocated within the network/sub-regional team for strategic development in this area. Regional and Network/Sub-regional Student Support Services Coordinators take a lead role in:

- developing formal agreements and protocols as appropriate
- regularly reviewing partnership agreements and protocols
- resolving partnership issues if and when they emerge.

Child, youth and family health and wellbeing workforces and programs within DEECD include the following roles.

Primary Welfare Officers

The Primary Welfare Officer (PWO) program provides support to students in high-needs Victorian government primary schools considered to have a significant population at risk of disengagement from education. PWOs may coordinate the school's welfare team, and organise and deliver (often with classroom teachers) primary prevention and early intervention programs, and early intervention support for groups of at-risk children; and coordinate external program providers and welfare support in the school. PWOs often work closely with network/sub-regional student support services teams to deliver support services in schools. In 2009, a total of 573 Victorian government schools received funding for the PWO initiative. More information on PWOs is available at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/support/primarywelfare/default.htm>

Student Welfare Coordinators

There is a Student Welfare Coordinator (SWC) in every Victorian government secondary school. The role is undertaken by teachers and the time allocation may vary across schools. The program provides support to students who are at risk of disengagement from school and are not fulfilling their educational potential due to issues such as truancy, bullying, drug use and mental health concerns. SWCs help to identify students who may require additional assistance and ensure access to support services. SWCs work directly with students and their families or contact other services to provide appropriate advice and support, including student support services. The SWC is a key point of contact for student support services within secondary schools. More information on SWCs is available at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/support/studentwelfare.htm>

Secondary School Nurses

The Secondary School Nursing program aims to reduce the risks faced by young people and to promote better health in the school community.

The program is primarily focused on health promotion in schools; however, young people often seek confidential clinical support and referral to specialist medical services. Secondary schools nurses are in a unique position to identify the health and wellbeing issues of young people and provide appropriate referral for young people. Student support services staff often work closely together in delivering wellbeing services. In 2009, 100 Secondary School Nurses were placed in 1998 Victorian schools.

More information on the Secondary School Nursing program is available at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/health/schoolnursing/default.htm>

Primary School Nurses

The Primary School Nursing program offers a universal screening service to Prep children in Victorian government, Catholic and independent primary schools and English Language Schools and Centres. The program provides assessment and support for children in Years 1 to 6 where a parent, teacher or nurse identifies a concern. The program is designed to identify children with potential health-related learning difficulties and to respond to parental concerns and observations about their children's health and wellbeing. Parental concerns and observations are collected through the School Entrant Health Questionnaire (SEHQ) at the commencement of the first year of school. Currently, there are 75.8 FTE Primary School Nurses in Victorian government schools. Services provided by Primary School Nurses include:

- responding to health issues raised through the SEHQ
- undertaking vision, hearing and oral health checks for children where concerns have been identified
- providing advice to parents and teachers
- developing strategies to assist families in accessing specific local family support services
- referring students to health service providers for further assessment and treatment where appropriate
- promoting health education and health advice.

The Primary School Nursing program works with student support services by assisting with early identification of students with additional needs in need of learning, wellbeing and health support.

More information on the Primary School Nursing program is available at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/health/schoolnursing/default.htm>

School-appointed wellbeing and engagement staff

School-appointed wellbeing and engagement staff are appointed by individual Victorian government schools using their School Resource Package. These staff support local wellbeing and engagement needs for students within individual schools, and comprise a variety of professionals depending upon local school needs, including nurses, youth workers, psychologists and integration aides. Strong partnerships and networks between school-appointed wellbeing staff and student support services staff help to provide a wide range of support to students. More information on the range of health and wellbeing staff in government schools is available at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/schoolprofessionals/health/default.htm>

Chaplains

The Chaplaincy program assists Victorian schools and their communities to support the wellbeing of students by providing guidance about ethics, values, relationships, spirituality and religion, as well as pastoral care and community support. In 2009, there were 262 chaplains providing pastoral care across 280 primary, secondary and special developmental schools. Chaplains are part of the school's welfare/wellbeing team and work with the school leadership team to provide a range of services for nurturing student wellbeing as well as supporting parent and school community-building.

School-Focused Youth Service

The School-Focused Youth Service (SFYS) is a DEECD initiative focused on the coordination of preventative and early intervention strategies for young people aged 10 to 18 years. It is delivered through schools and the community sector. The SFYS has been designed to support effective links between primary prevention services provided through school-based support services within the education sector and the early intervention provided by the community sector. The SFYS provides valuable support to the Student Support Services Program by facilitating partnerships and support between schools and community sector support services.

The SFYS partnership approach strengthens the capacity of local services, communities and schools to collaborate, develop and coordinate stronger prevention and early intervention strategies as part of a service continuum for vulnerable children and young people. The SFYS program provides brokerage funding to address gaps in the current service system. Service gaps are identified by schools, community and/or the community services sector.

Network/sub-regional student support services teams often work closely with SFYS Coordinators to identify and address service gaps and implement student wellbeing related initiatives. More information on the SFYS is available at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/wellbeing/sfyouthservices/default.htm>

The School-Focused Youth Service search function provides information on service providers and services throughout Victoria and is available at <http://www.sfys.infoxchange.net.au/servicesseeker.shtml> In addition, information on SFYS service provider contacts in each region is available at <http://www.sfys.infoxchange.net.au/coordinator.shtml>

Early Childhood Intervention Services (including specialist children's services)

The Early Childhood Intervention Services (ECIS) program provides support to children from birth to 6 years with a disability or developmental delay, along with their families. Services include special education, therapy, counselling, service planning and coordination, and assistance and support in settings prior to schooling, such as kindergartens and childcare services. The program is targeted at families experiencing significant challenges, new arrivals, Indigenous children and their families, and children entering into out-of-home care. Provision of support is prioritised according to clinical need. One-third of the ECIS workforce is directly employed by DEECD, with the remainder contracted from local government and non-government organisations. The ECIS program works with the Student Support Services Program by assisting with early identification of children who may require assistance in order to identify the most appropriate form of support. Further information about ECIS is available at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/ecsmanagement/intervention/default.htm>

Pre-School Field Officers

The Pre-School Field Officer program supports kindergarten teachers to include children with additional needs in kindergarten through provision of consultation, advice, assessment and referral. Children with a disability or development delay who are not supported through ECIS are prioritised for support. Effective communication and partnership between Pre-School Field Officers and schools enables children identified as requiring extra support to be supported during and after transition to school, including referral to student support services if appropriate. Further information regarding the program is available at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/ecsmanagement/intervention/services/inclusion.htm>

School Care Program

The School Care Program is a service delivered through Home and Community Care at the Royal Children's Hospital. This program enables students attending Victorian government schools who have ongoing complex medical needs to have their health care needs met safely at school by providing training to the school staff who care for them. Examples of complex medical needs include tracheostomy care and management of gastrostomy feeding. For further information regarding this service contact Home and Community Care on 9345 7983.

Program for Students with Disabilities, including the Language Support Program

The Program for Students with Disabilities (PSD) provides funding support for eligible students with moderate to severe disabilities in Victorian government schools to ensure they can meet their educational objectives. The program supports the education of eligible students by providing schools with additional resources. Resources are allocated to schools, rather than individual students. Student support services staff, particularly psychologists/guidance officers and speech pathologists may provide substantial assistance to schools in identifying students who may be eligible for assistance through the PSD. Further information is available at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/wellbeing/disability/>

Incorporated within this initiative is the Language Support Program, (<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/studentlearning/programs/lsp/default.htm>), which provides direct assistance to teachers in developing strong oral language competency in children and young people to maximise their learning potential.

Student support services staff contribute to the PSD by assessing students, consulting with and supporting schools, attending Student Support Groups, helping with developing PSD programming and evaluation, meeting with and supporting teachers and parents, developing behaviour management plans, assisting schools with preparing PSD applications and coordinating and liaising with external support agencies.

The PSD Assessment Service was established in May 2007 to identify students with Intellectual Disability and Severe Language Disorder with Critical Educational Needs requiring support through the program. This enables student support services staff to identify those in need of disability support. Support services staff also participate in PSD assessment by providing direct assessment of students, consulting with and supporting schools, helping with program development and evaluation, and coordinating external support.

Kindergarten Inclusion Support Services

The Kindergarten Inclusion Support Services program provides funding for the employment of kindergarten assistants to provide children with severe disabilities and complex needs with the support they need to access kindergarten. Services can range from individual support and the provision of equipment or modifications to the existing environment according to need. This service works with schools and student support services by providing transitional advice and support for children with severe disabilities and complex needs during and after transition to school. Further information is available at

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/ecsmangement/careankinder/inclusion/disabilities.htm>

Maternal and Child Health Services

The Maternal and Child Health Service is a universal primary care service for Victorian families with children from birth to school age. The service is provided in partnership with the Municipal Association of Victoria, local government and DEECD, and aims to promote healthy outcomes for children and their families. The service provides a comprehensive and focused approach on programs for the promotion, prevention and early detection of, and intervention in, the physical, emotional or social factors affecting young children and their families in contemporary communities.

A number of resources are available to Maternal and Child Health service professionals to support them in maintaining high service standards for Victorian families. Further information is available at

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/ecsmangement/mch/default.htm>

5.3 Other key health and wellbeing services

In addition to DEECD health and wellbeing services, student support services work with a range of external programs and organisations that provide support for children, young people and their families. Support may be provided by a number of organisations in order to meet a range of needs.

Some schools may independently develop partnerships with key health and wellbeing services, and may have external support workers based at the school. For example, local government youth workers may be based at a school for a certain period each week. These arrangements will depend on individual schools and local government areas, and schools and student support services teams should be made aware of these arrangements where necessary.

5.3.1 Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)

The Student Support Services Program works closely with specialist child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS). CAMHS is a Department of Health funded initiative, delivered through health services, which provides specialist mental health assessment and treatment for children and young people with mental health problems. CAMHS provides specialist support for children and young people up to the age of 18 years who have serious emotional disturbances. This includes young people with diagnosable psychiatric disorders whose condition is considered seriously detrimental to their growth or development and/or who face substantial difficulties in their social or family environments.

Currently, there are 13 CAMHS operating in Victoria. Most provide support for children and young people from birth to 18 years of age, while some provide services to a more targeted age group (e.g. CAMHS at the Royal Children's Hospital and Barwon Health provide support for children and young people up to 14 years – these two services are complemented by local youth-specific services, Orygen Youth Health for most of the Western Region and Clockwork and Jigsaw for the City of Geelong). Young people between 16 and 18 years may also be seen by adult mental health services, depending on their needs.

Building systematic capacity to intervene early in life is a cornerstone of the Mental Health Reform Strategy (refer to section 2.1.2). Over time, a comprehensive system of child and youth mental health care (birth to 25 years) will be developed. In the period 2009–12 there will be a substantial start to the redesign of specialist mental health care for children and young people emphasising early intervention across the early years, childhood, adolescence and young adulthood.

Two Child and Youth Mental Health Service Redesign Demonstration Projects are focused on delivering earlier, more accessible age-appropriate interventions, involving partnerships between specialist mental health services, primary health services, schools, early years services and a range of community services. Other sites are also undertaking selected redevelopment activity through one-off development grants.

The experience of the Redesign Demonstration Projects will inform implementation of new youth teams at four metropolitan sites. The teams will be developed from existing and new resources, and respond early to a wider range of conditions across the age range of 12 to 25 years. They will, in partnership with youth-friendly headspace sites where available, respond to young people with mental health problems that are significantly impacting on their personal and social functioning and wellbeing, and who are not currently receiving appropriate care.

The teams will also provide strengthened responses for young people with severe and complex conditions requiring intensive specialist mental health treatment, including an integrated clinical and psychosocial recovery model.

Youth-specific mental health services include the following:

Headspace was established by the Commonwealth in 2003 to provide mental health support for young people aged 12 to 25 years through a website and 30 'one-stop-shops' across Australia, including seven in Victoria (located in Barwon South Western Region, Northern Metropolitan Region, Southern Metropolitan Region, Western Metropolitan Region and Gippsland). headspace centres offer general and mental health support, counselling, education and employment services, and alcohol and drug support services. The headspace website offers comprehensive information for young people and their parents/carers, along with an online knowledge bank providing information about treatment interventions and models of care for young people with mental health and substance use issues. More information regarding headspace is available at <http://www.headspace.org.au/>

Orygen Youth Health offers mental health assessment and treatment services for young people aged 15 to 24 years who live in the western and north-western areas of Melbourne. Key activities include a clinical program, a research centre and provision of professional development and community awareness materials. More information on Orygen Youth Health is available at <http://oyh.org.au/>

Clockwork and JIGSAW Young People's Health Services are free, confidential holistic health services for young people aged 12 to 25 years located in the Barwon South Western Region. They promote the need for the accessibility and quality of health care for young people. Services include medical services, counselling, alcohol and drug support, and peer support groups. Staff include doctors, community health nurses, psychologists, social workers and youth workers. More information about Clockwork Young People's Health Service is available at <http://www.beanbag.net.au/clockwork/sub10.cfm>

CAMHS and schools collaboration

CAMHS and schools have historically developed close working relationships in some instances but not necessarily broadly across Victoria. The CAMHS and Schools Project was developed in 2004 to provide a framework for schools and specialist child and adolescent mental health services to work together to promote the social and emotional wellbeing of children and young people and intervene early where problems are identified.

A collaborative partnership approach between Victorian government schools and CAMHS can enhance the timely treatment of children's and young people's mental health problems in the school environment. Student support services staff and CAMHS can engage in respectful consultation through a sharing of ideas and working collaboratively. CAMHS staff are able to consult with student support service staff regarding school-based interventions, while student support service staff can consult with CAMHS staff regarding specialist professional advice, such as seeking a psychiatric opinion. Opportunities for joint training are encouraged.

This partnership has also delivered early intervention programs such as CAMHS and Schools Early Action programs, multi-level school-based interventions for children in Prep to Grade 3 who have severe behavioural problems. This program involves universal and targeted programs with teachers, parents and children. It operates in six regions and two more will be developed in 2010.

Detailed information relating to the locations of CAMHS in Victoria is available at <http://www.health.vic.gov.au/mentalhealth/services/child/index.htm>

5.3.2 Local government youth services

Local government youth services operate in all regions, providing a range of health support, recreation and assistance programs for young people. Many offer individual outreach and support to young people, while some local governments have established youth hubs. Youth hubs are 'one-stop-shops' for young people, providing a range of support services. Partnerships with local government youth services can benefit the student support service program by providing a non-school-based option for youth support with a potentially broader range of services.

5.3.3 Child FIRST/Family Services

Child FIRST (Child and Family Information, Referral and Support Teams) have been established in 24 designated sub-regional catchments across Victoria to provide community-based referral points to Family Services. Child FIRST is staffed by Family Service practitioners with experience in assessing the needs of vulnerable children, young people and families. In addition, community-based child protection staff facilitate collaboration between these community-based intake services and Child Protection, providing advice to Child FIRST and Family Services about the engagement of families with complex needs and the identification of significant risk factors, and ensuring timely Child Protection involvement if a child is at risk of significant harm. More information about Child FIRST/Family Services is available at <http://www.cyf.vic.gov.au/family-services/child-first>

5.3.4 Disability Services

Student support services staff often liaise with the Department of Human Services Disability Services regarding children and young people with disabilities. Within Disability Services, Disability Client Services provides services to people with a disability in accordance with the Disability Act 2006. The Act ensures that services to people with disabilities are provided in ways that meet each person's individual needs as much as possible, and that people have more choice in the services and service providers they use. Disability Client Services provide a range of services including:

- disseminating information about and making referrals to Disability Client Services and other services in the community
- supporting and encouraging families and individuals to make their own decisions about the services they are interested in or receive
- examining a person's needs in relation to their disability and planning how these can be best met
- providing support to assist families and individuals with behaviour about which they may be concerned.

There are a range of different supports available for families and carers of people with a disability. The following DHS-funded supports are provided in partnership with agencies or managed by regional DHS staff:

- Individual Support Packages provide flexible funding to suit the particular needs of people with a disability.
- Flexible Support Packages provide case management and/or discretionary funding to support individuals, families and carers on a short- or long-term basis.
- Family Options provides short-term and long-term alternative family placements for people with a disability who are unable to live with their own family.
- Respite support provides short-term breaks for carers of people with a disability.

Specialist supports are also available to assist people with a disability, their families, carers and support providers in matters relating to behaviour intervention or the criminal justice system involving people with a disability. The following supports are also funded by DHS and are provided in partnership with agencies or managed by regional DHS staff:

- Behaviour Intervention Services provide specialist support for people who demonstrate challenging behaviour.
- Criminal Justice Services provide specialist support for people with an intellectual disability who are or at risk of becoming involved in the criminal justice system due to offending behaviour.

Further information is available at <http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/disability> The Disability Online Service Directory provides information about recreation and leisure services in local areas and is available at <http://www.disability.vic.gov.au/dsonline/dssite.nsf/disabilitylsdsearch/byname?opendocument>

Futures for Young Adults provides support to eligible young people with a disability to make the transition to post-school destinations. It is available to eligible students from when they complete their schooling until they turn 21. Futures for Young Adults transition planners are available to assist school personnel, students and families to explore a range of post-school options.

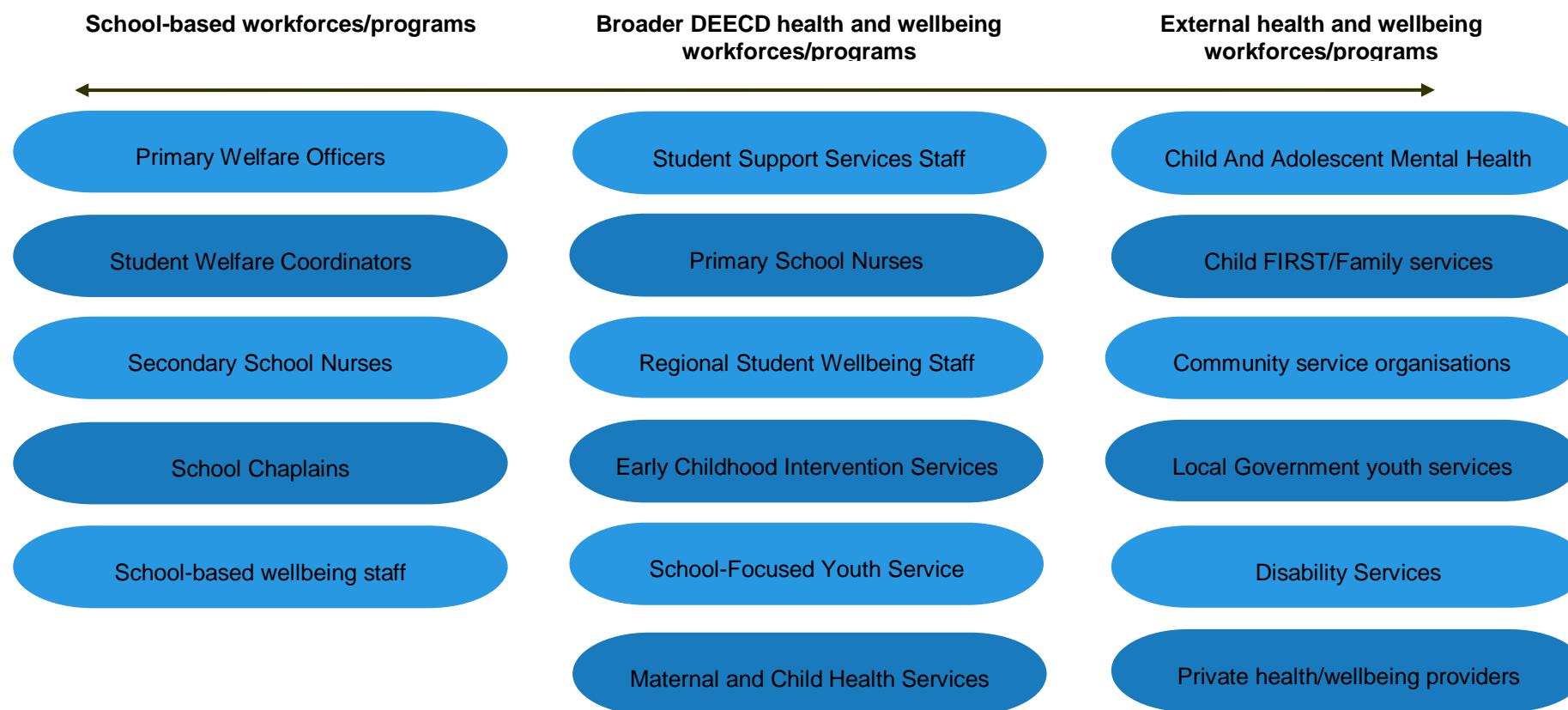
Further information about Futures for Young Adults is available at http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/disability/supports_for_people/being_part_of_my_community/futures_for_young_adults

5.3.5 Community service organisations

Community service organisations provide support for members of their local community across a range of areas, including child and youth health and wellbeing. Through the development of strong partnerships with community

service organisations, student support services teams can deliver a better service in terms of appropriate referral, accessing local advice and support, and coordinated service provision between organisations. Contact details for community service organisations can be found at <http://www.serviceseeker.com.au/>

Figure 5.1: Victorian service spectrum: Health and wellbeing workforces and programs for children and young people



6. Workforce Support and Development

Workforce support and development is an important component of the Student Support Services Program, enabling staff to maintain and further develop their skills, strengthen their capacity to support students with additional needs, and contribute to school and network improvement.

Professional support and development includes a range of activities tailored to the needs and experience of individual staff members including:

- induction
- professional learning activities
- performance and development
- mentoring
- teamwork
- supervision.

Within the student support services management and leadership structure, Network/Sub-regional Student Support Services Coordinators have delegated responsibility to oversee the work of staff within the network/sub-regional team. This includes overall responsibility for line management and supervision of staff in the team. Visiting Teacher Team Leaders have the same delegated responsibilities with regard to Visiting Teachers within the region. Stream Leaders also have an important role in staff support and development.

6.1 Induction

The induction process provides student support services staff with a knowledge base and broad range of contacts essential to operating effectively within the Department.

Induction provides an introduction to student support services staff new to their position and is designed to communicate the importance of the Student Support Services Program in contributing to student learning and outcomes.

Through the induction process, staff members gain a broad understanding of the conditions and responsibilities of the Student Support Services Program and an awareness of the wider Department, government context and local work environment, and have an opportunity to reflect on the responsibilities of the role. Induction is the starting point for the ongoing management, support and development of new staff and for setting clear expectations of the role.

The induction process, in general, provides more intensive support in the first few days to a week but there may be induction activities three months or longer after job commencement. Induction includes the provision of information about the Department and whole-of-government systems, policies, procedures, organisational and workplace priorities, values and standards of behaviour. It includes the facilitation of good working relationships with colleagues and management.

The specific purpose of induction is to assist newly appointed student support services staff at all levels to:

- understand DEECD structure, purpose and priorities
- gain a clear understanding of the role and work requirements, including the roles and responsibilities of other staff
- understand professional values, standards and behaviour
- be clear about their responsibilities and accountabilities
- establish and maintain good working relationships
- know who to approach for assistance and support
- easily locate the resources and facilities required to perform the role
- participate in the performance planning process and associated activity to meet individual and workplace needs.

6.1.1 Effective induction

There are many factors that contribute to an effective and productive induction process for new student support services staff. The different elements of induction can be coordinated by and shared between a variety of student support services staff, including:

- Regional Student Support Services Coordinators
- Network/Sub-regional Student Support Services Coordinators
- Visiting Teacher Team Leaders
- Stream Leaders.

Staff should also drive their own induction process by using the induction checklist at Appendix 6A.

When planning an induction program for a newly appointed or returning student support services staff member, the Network/Sub-regional Student Support Services Coordinator and Visiting Teacher Team Leader should ensure the four levels of effective induction for student support services staff are addressed within the induction plan:

- network/sub-regional
- regional
- stream-specific
- Departmental.

Network/sub-regional team induction

It is the responsibility of the Network/Sub-regional Student Support Services Coordinator or Visiting Teacher Team Leader to ensure an appropriate induction process is completed for new student support services staff. Induction and support arrangements will be particular to individual networks/sub-regions and determined by local circumstances.

A sample checklist for topics to be covered in the network/sub-regional induction is provided at Appendix 6A.

While student support services staff do not report to school principals, new staff require induction to the culture, operations and processes of the school or location at which they are primarily based and the schools in which they will work.

The Induction in Effective Schools program can also provide guidance regarding school-based induction for student support services staff. Information on Induction in Effective Schools is available online at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/proflearning/teacher/induct.htm>

A sample checklist for school induction is provided at Appendix 6A.

Regional induction

Regional induction for student support services staff should provide information about the Student Support Services Program, service delivery and the region. While regions should develop their own induction program for student support services staff depending on local needs, a sample checklist for topics that can be considered for inclusion in the induction is provided at Appendix 6A.

Stream-specific induction

Stream Leaders are responsible for providing an introduction for new student support services staff to professional stream colleagues within the network/sub-region, ensuring that new staff members are provided with an overview of practice methods within the network/sub-region, and ensuring they are encouraged to seek advice or clarification as required. The Stream Leader provides a point of contact for stream-specific queries and for clarifying any work practices particular to that stream.

Departmental induction

The Department offers a half-day induction session at central office for all new Victorian Public Service (VPS) staff, including student support services staff. The induction sessions are provided on a quarterly basis and are scheduled to allow regional staff to attend. Topics covered in the induction include:

- overview of government and DEECD

- requirements regarding internal communications, internet and email
- learning and development opportunities
- safety, health and wellbeing requirements
- staff assistance and support mechanisms
- the VPS employment framework, terms and conditions
- performance planning and development and the Performance Enhancement Cycle.

The Departmental induction provides new staff with a broad understanding of the conditions and responsibilities of employment and an awareness of the wider Department and government context. More information on the Departmental induction program is available at <http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/hrweb/workm/induct/default.htm>

6.2 Professional learning activities

Quality professional learning is essential to the ongoing professional development of student support services staff. It allows staff to develop the skills and knowledge they need to improve their practice and is central to improving provision of support to children and young people. Professional learning includes both formal training and informal learning opportunities and may be provided internally or externally. Opportunities for professional learning should be considered by student support services staff in consultation with their Network/Sub-regional Student Support Services Coordinator or Visiting Teacher Team Leader. Professional learning activities should be relevant to the role of the student support services staff member, aligned with the priorities of the network, region or Department, and incorporated into the staff member's Performance and Development Plan.

6.3 Performance and development

The DEECD Performance Enhancement Cycle (PEC) – or the Performance Development Plan (PDP) for teaching staff – is designed to capture the relationship between strategic planning, the Department's People Principles and performance and development planning. The PEC enables each student support services staff member to gain a clear understanding of the work they do and how it connects to the broader vision, mission, objectives and values of the Department.

The PEC enables Network/Sub-regional Student Support Services Coordinators or Visiting Teacher Team Leaders and staff to support the continuous improvement of their team members and to:

- align the PEC with individual and team/regional/network responsibilities as well as the Department's vision, mission and objectives
- clarify work roles for staff members
- identify individual learning and development needs
- recognise individual career goals and establish plans to support them
- encourage and facilitate feedback on performance
- recognise good performance and individual contributions within a diverse workforce
- provide a structure for pay progression.

Network/Sub-regional Student Support Services Coordinators or Visiting Teacher Team Leaders are responsible for developing and monitoring a PEC or PDP plan with student support services staff in their team. This can be done in consultation with Stream Leaders to provide an accurate assessment of each student support service member's learning and development needs.

The Regional Student Support Services Coordinator or the Assistant Regional Director is responsible for developing and monitoring a PEC plan with Network/Sub-regional Student Support Services Coordinators and Visiting Teacher Team Leaders within their region. Stream Leaders may also work within network/sub-regional student support services team part of the time. Either the Regional Student Support Services Coordinator/Student Wellbeing Manager or the Network/Sub-regional Student Support Services Coordinator should be responsible for the performance plans of Stream Leaders, depending upon the role in which the staff member spends the greater proportion of their time.

The PEC plan for student support services staff should be based on the Allied Health Adaptive Descriptors, which should be read in conjunction with the VPS Grade and Value Range Descriptors with which they are aligned.

Further information about the descriptors is available at
<http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/hrweb/workm/perform/pmgmntpss.htm>

All student support services staff, with exception of Visiting Teachers, are required to develop a PEC under the VPS PEC cycle. Further information on the PEC process is available at
<http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/hrweb/workm/perform/pmgmntPSS.htm>

Visiting Teachers are required to develop a PDP plan with the Visiting Teacher Team Leader in line with procedures designed for the principal class, teacher class and education support class as outlined in the guidelines at <http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/hr/perform/Teachers-PerformDev-2008.pdf> Under these guidelines, the Visiting Teacher Team Leader has responsibility for managing the PDP.

6.4 Operational Debriefing

Professional operational debriefing assists student support services staff dealing with a traumatic or critical incident to minimise potential short-term and long-term stress. Operational debriefing is confidential support provided by a psychologist with operational debriefing skills to assist staff to manage their responses in the immediate aftermath of an incident. Operational debriefing is a procedure that allows those involved in an incident to discuss the response to the incident. Where required, debriefing should be facilitated by the Network/Sub-regional Student Support Services Coordinator or Visiting Teacher Team Leader, which may involve referral to a psychologist/guidance officer with specialist debriefing expertise. DEECD's Employee Assistance Program is also available to provide short term counselling support to all Department staff. See
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/hr/ohs/about/EAP.htm>

6.5 Mentoring

Mentoring provides valuable informal professional support for new and less experienced student support services staff by encouraging them to seek guidance from and work with more experienced student support services staff. A mentoring arrangement should be established by the Network/Sub-regional Student Support Services Coordinator or Visiting Teacher Team Leader on a mutually agreed basis as part of the induction process. The student support services staff mentee enters into the mentoring arrangement with a more experienced staff member, who can provide guidance and feedback, as well as support within the team environment. Mentoring can be undertaken through professional conversations, feedback, reflective practice and advocacy.

6.6 Teamwork

Student support services staff are or will be co-located in multidisciplinary teams on a network/sub-regional basis. This enables a strong connection between student support services staff as a small team of professionals delivering services across the network or sub-region. The benefits of multidisciplinary teamwork include providing greater capacity to respond to differing and complex needs, and increasing opportunities for staff to communicate with and learn from each other when they are working with students, schools or issues in common, as is frequently the case. Staff can also work together on planned initiatives and activities to support the needs of the network/sub-region.

6.7 Supervision

Supervision is an important component of student support services staff support and development. Supervision has a long history within allied health professions and provides a forum for staff to reflect on the content, process and progress of their work. Supervision also creates a context in which professional learning can take place.

Supervision in general terms refers to ongoing activities that enhance and develop the knowledge, skills and effectiveness of the 'practitioner'⁵, in this case, the student support services staff member. Supervision is an ongoing, collaborative process between a supervisor and a staff member that focuses on promoting professional growth and support. Within a public service context such as student support services, supervision has three major functions: administrative, educative and supportive.⁶

⁵ Borders, L.D., 1990, 'Supervision... evaluation', School Counselor, Volume 37, Issue 3

⁶ Kadushin, A., 1992,. Supervision in social work. Columbia University Press: New York.

As student support services network/sub-regional teams comprise a number of different professional streams, Network/Sub-regional Student Support Services Coordinators should work in conjunction with Stream Leaders to ensure that the profession-specific supervision, educative and professional learning needs of each individual staff member are addressed. The Stream Leader provides guidance and support for student support services staff in their professional stream. Visiting Teacher Team Leaders are responsible for ensuring that the supervision needs of each visiting teacher in the region are addressed, and providing guidance and support to visiting teachers.

6.7.1 The supervisor

In the student support services context, Network/Sub-regional Student Support Services Coordinators have delegated responsibility for line management of staff within the network/sub-regional team. This includes overall responsibility for the supervision of staff.

Visiting Teacher Team Leaders have delegated responsibility for line management of visiting teachers across the region, including overall responsibility for supervision of staff.

In the student support services model, the supervisor is defined in line with the Kadushin model of supervision as: a staff member to whom authority is delegated to direct, coordinate, enhance and evaluate the on-the-job performance of the supervisee for whose work he/she is held accountable. In implementing this responsibility the supervisor performs administrative, educative and supportive functions in interaction with the supervisee in the context of a positive relationship. The supervisor's ultimate objective is to deliver to agency clients the best possible service, both quantitatively and qualitatively, in accordance with both agency policies and procedures.⁷

6.7.2 The purposes of supervision

Supervision provides a means of ensuring that student support services staff members are aware of relevant policies and procedures and are working towards Departmental regional and network goals. Specific purposes of supervision include:

- ensuring that the student support services staff member is clear about their role and responsibilities
- assisting the student support services staff member to meet individual and team objectives
- ensuring quality of service to schools, children, young people and their families
- providing assistance with access to professional development
- providing professional support to the student support services staff member.

Supervision is not intended to reduce or replace the individual staff member's responsibility for their own professional activity, development and achievement. Student support services staff are encouraged to seek formal and informal opportunities for professional learning and activity to continuously improve their knowledge and skill base.

6.7.3 Core functions of supervision

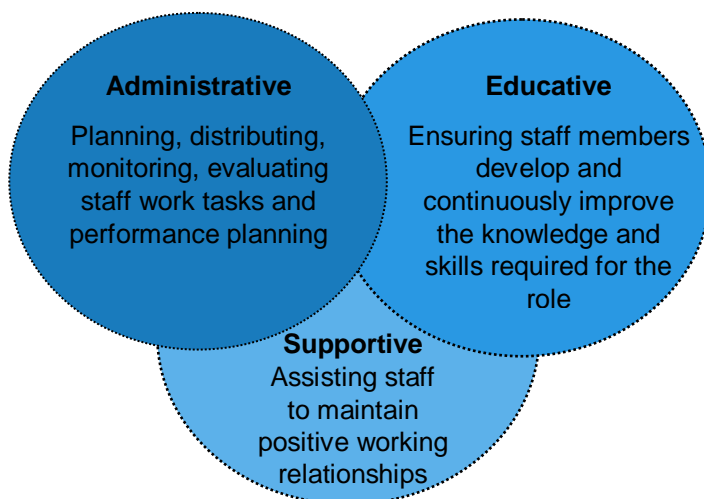
The three core interrelated functions of student support services staff supervision as adapted from the Kadushin model⁸ of supervision are:

- Administrative: planning, distributing, monitoring and evaluating staff work tasks and performance planning. In other settings, the administrative component of supervision may also be known as the managerial function.
- Educative: ensuring that staff members develop the knowledge and skills required for the role. This aspect of supervision is sometimes referred to as professional or clinical supervision, depending upon the work setting.
- Supportive: assisting staff to maintain positive working relationships and develop the skills to respond to challenges in the work environment.

Figure 6.1: The core functions of supervision

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.



The three functions outlined above are the essential components of student support services staff supervision. It is the role of regions and networks/sub-regions to implement structures and processes to enable the three core functions to be provided for staff. It is important to note that while Network/Sub-regional Student Support Services Coordinators and Visiting Teacher Team Leaders are responsible for the overall supervision of staff within their team, not all functions of supervision must be provided by the Coordinator/Team Leader. The educative function in particular may be negotiated to be provided by a Stream Leader to ensure that the student support services staff member receives guidance and support appropriate to the work of their professional stream.

Principles of supervision

The guiding principles of student support services supervision are as follows:

- Supervision involves administration, education and support.
- Each party is recognised as bringing strengths to the relationship and adding value to the process.
- Supervision arrangements should be negotiated on an individual basis by the staff member and Network/Sub-regional Student Support Services Coordinator or Visiting Teacher Team Leader.
- Both the staff member and Network/Sub-regional Student Support Services Coordinator or Visiting Teacher Team Leader must be committed to the process to ensure its effectiveness.

Supervision eligibility

All permanent, part-time, temporary and casual Departmental student support services staff should have access to supervision. The Network/Sub-regional Student Support Services Coordinator or Visiting Teacher Team Leader and the staff member should agree upon specific supervision arrangements, including frequency, as appropriate for their needs and experience. Staff with less professional experience, or with professional experience but new to DEECD, may require more structured or frequent supervision.

Supervision agreement

It is advisable that all staff and Network/Sub-regional Student Support Services Coordinators or Visiting Teacher Team Leaders develop a supervision agreement to establish common objectives and understanding of the supervision arrangements. A supervision agreement provides a basis for discussion and negotiation of the student support services role, helps to establish a meaningful working relationship, and creates a mechanism for addressing difficulties if and when they arise. A sample supervision agreement is provided at Appendix 6B.

Methods of supervision

Supervision methods will differ according to the needs of the individual student support services staff member, the composition of the multidisciplinary team and network/sub-regional arrangements. Examples of supervision methods are outlined below and a combination of these may be used according to the needs of the staff member and Network/Sub-regional Student Support Services Coordinator or Visiting Teacher Team Leader. These methods of supervision may also be used by Stream Leaders if the focus is on the educative function of supervision.

- Formal scheduled supervision: planned, one-to-one supervision between the student support services staff member and Network/Sub-regional Student Support Services Coordinator or Visiting Teacher Team Leader.
- Group supervision: supervision of more than one person at a time; this may include educative or learning activities, case studies, reflective practice and secondary consultation.

Group supervision can also include peer supervision – supportive and problem-solving discussions between staff during which suggestions can be made and information shared. Peer supervision can provide mutual support without the formal process of evaluation.

- Unscheduled supervision: ad hoc supervision occurring when the student support services staff member consults with the Network/Sub-regional Student Support Services Coordinator or Visiting Teacher Team Leader as questions or concerns arise.
- Direct or 'live' supervision: Network/Sub-regional Student Support Services Coordinator or Visiting Teacher Team Leader observes or participates in direct service activities with the student support services staff member and provides feedback.
- External supervision: provided by an appropriately qualified and skilled supervisor external to the Department with an understanding of the nature, policies and practice of student support services. External supervision needs to be approved by the Regional Student Support Services Coordinator or their manager, depending on regional arrangements.

A supervision checklist is available at Appendix 6C.

6.7.4 Roles and responsibilities

Network/Sub-regional Student Support Services Coordinators have overall responsibility for the supervision of staff within the network/sub-regional team. Network/Sub-regional Student Support Services Coordinators, with the support of Stream Leaders, are responsible for ensuring that legislative, policy, procedural and practice standards are met and that staff are supported, developed and monitored in their role.

Network/Sub-regional Student Support Services Coordinators are required to work in conjunction with Stream Leaders to ensure that the profession-specific supervision needs of individual staff members are addressed.

While the Coordinator's supervisory responsibilities in relation to individual staff may vary depending upon the professional stream, they will always include the administrative and supportive functions. Network/Sub-regional Student Support Services Coordinators should liaise with Stream Leaders to ensure that each staff member has access to the educative function of supervision and appropriate professional learning opportunities.

Network/Sub-regional Student Support Services Coordinators are responsible for:

- ensuring a regular supervision schedule with each member of the team and rescheduling cancelled sessions
- considering alternative methods of supervision (for example, alternative supervision arrangements may be required in rural and remote areas where there is a considerable geographical distance between the staff member and Network/Sub-regional Student Support Services Coordinator)
- developing a Performance and Development Plan with each team member in line with Departmental Performance Enhancement Cycle arrangements for student support services staff.

Stream Leaders are experienced and skilled senior staff within regions that provide guidance and support to student support services staff in a particular professional stream. Stream Leaders support the educative function of supervision for staff within their respective stream. Stream Leaders are responsible for coordinating professional support and supervision opportunities and for providing relevant information and materials to staff within their stream.

Stream Leaders must work closely with Network/Sub-regional Student Support Services Coordinators to ensure that staff in their stream have access to appropriate supervision, consultation and professional learning opportunities.

Visiting Teacher Team Leaders report to the Regional Student Support Services Coordinator, the Student Wellbeing Manager or an Assistant Regional Director, depending on regional arrangements. Visiting Teacher Team Leaders are responsible for service coordination and delivery, line management, professional support and supervision of visiting teachers across the region.

Visiting Teacher Team Leaders contribute to regional, network or sub-regional school improvement planning and support and coordinate the development and implementation referral, data and accountability systems for visiting

teachers. Visiting Teacher Team Leaders coordinate human resources management and visiting teacher workforce planning responsibilities, and participate as members of the regional student support services management team in all matters related to student support services delivery.

Summary of supervision roles and responsibilities	
Role	Functions
Network/Sub-regional Student Support Services Coordinator and Visiting Teacher Team Leader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop a Supervision Agreement in conjunction with each student support services staff member • schedule regular supervision with each student support services staff member in the team, and reschedule another time if a session is cancelled • arrange and chair team meetings • develop a Performance and Development Plan with each team member that addresses their goals and professional development needs • manage human resources issues and requirements (attendance, leave, performance) • address any performance or conduct issues • liaise with Stream Leaders to ensure that team members have access to the educative function of supervision.
Stream Leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • liaise with Network/Sub-regional Coordinators to ensure that staff members in the relevant stream have access to the educative component of supervision • contribute to the development of the professional learning section of each staff member's Supervision Agreement and Performance and Development Plan • provide professional learning opportunities for student support services staff to develop increased understanding and skills regarding relevant professional issues • provide consultation and advice to student support services staff in the stream regarding professional practice issues as required • provide or arrange mentoring opportunities for student support services staff as required • disseminate relevant information and resources to ensure that student support services staff are aware of materials available to enhance their knowledge and skills.
Regional Student Support Services Coordinators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide line management and overall supervision of Network/Sub-regional Student Support Services Coordinators and Visiting Teacher Team Leaders, including performance planning and evaluation and approval of external supervision arrangements • manage and coordinate resources across the region in consultation with the regional management team • provide leadership for Network/Sub-regional Student Support Services Coordinators • provide leadership support for professional supervision, learning

	and support for student support services staff through professional stream leaders and promotion of professional learning strategies.
Student support services staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • seek formal and informal opportunities for professional learning and activity to continuously improve knowledge and skill base • develop supervision agreement in collaboration with Network/Sub-regional Student Support Services Coordinator or Visiting Teacher Team Leader as appropriate for needs and experience.

Regional student support services management

As Student Support Services Program management and coordination will vary between regions, depending on the needs and arrangements of that region, the line manager for Network/Sub-regional Student Support Services Coordinators and the Visiting Teacher Team Leader may be the Regional Student Support Services Coordinator, the Student Wellbeing Manager or an Assistant Regional Director. The line manager provides support to ensure Network/Sub-regional Student Support Services Coordinators and Stream Leaders become skilled in effective supervision. In addition, the Line Manager Coordinators facilitate and/or arrange professional development activities to enhance the skills of supervisors and staff members.

Appendix 6A: Sample Student Support Services Induction Checklist

Induction provides an introduction to student support services staff new to their position and is designed to communicate the importance of the Student Support Services Program in contributing to student learning and outcomes. There are many factors that contribute to an effective and productive induction process. The various elements of induction can be coordinated by and shared between a variety of student support services staff. New staff are also able to drive their own induction process by using the induction checklist provided below.

Network/sub-regional student support services team induction	
Network/sub-regional environment	<p>Overview and introduction to network/sub-regional multidisciplinary team members and their respective roles and responsibilities, including network emergency management procedures</p> <p>Information about network/sub-regional management structure including priorities, decision-making processes, committees, meeting schedules</p> <p>Contact lists for network/sub-regional student support services staff</p> <p>Contact details for relevant school and network staff</p> <p>Information about schools, time allocations and staff member's base location</p> <p>Information about health and wellbeing roles, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • student welfare coordinators • primary welfare officers • chaplains • school-focused youth service • school nursing program • community partnerships. <p>Partnerships with government and support agencies in the local area</p> <p>Outline of administration procedures including mail, stationery, IT support, email and internet access, and leave procedures</p> <p>Tour of base location and introductions to staff</p> <p>Overview of geography and demographics of network</p>
Professional requirements	<p>Information about the network/sub-regional referral and service delivery process including school role, pre-referral, referral and intake, parent contact, consent, privacy notice, reporting</p> <p>Overview of file management requirements</p> <p>Outline of network planning processes for student support services.</p>
Staff development and support	<p>Information about performance planning processes and requirements</p> <p>Overview of procedures for supervision and support</p> <p>Organisation of mentoring or ongoing contact with designated staff member</p> <p>Information about local community partnerships, network connections</p>

	<p>Information about professional development opportunities</p> <p>Information about the provision of ongoing support and advice including introduction and contact details for relevant Stream Leader.</p>
Orientation to schools in network	<p>Orientation, tour and introduction to principals</p> <p>Principals provide information on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> school leadership and team structure overview of relevant staff roles school timetable meeting schedules: leadership, curriculum, wellbeing and integration teams photocopying, internet, computer and library access filing system and procedures conference/meeting room bookings school student engagement policy attendance policy and procedures classroom management policies and procedures emergency management processes. programs and supports for students with disabilities student support group arrangements individual learning plans processes and arrangements.
Regional student support services induction	
General	<p>Overview of regional operational organisational structures, including regional network structures and performance management procedures</p> <p>Outline of roles and responsibilities in the Student Support Services Program across the region and networks</p> <p>Information about regional accountability measures and procedures</p> <p>Overview of administrative and human resources procedures</p> <p>Information about emergency management processes</p> <p>Outline of regional protocols and programs, including Alternative Programs, Visiting Teachers, Senior Program Officers, Disability Services and outsourced services</p> <p>Overview of program for Students with Disabilities</p> <p>Information about Departmental health and wellbeing programs and workforces</p> <p>Overview of relevant programs in other government departments</p> <p>Overview of student wellbeing website</p> <p>Information about child protection and mandatory reporting</p> <p>Explanation of privacy/confidentiality requirements</p> <p>Explanation of record keeping and file management</p>

	<p>Information about employment conditions and Code of Conduct</p> <p>Overview of travel arrangements and procedures.</p>
Reading and documentation	<p>Copies of or information about the following provided?</p> <p>Strengthening Networks and School Communities: Guidelines for Student Support Services</p> <p>Framework for Student Support Services: Teacher Resource and Professional Support Materials http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/wellbeing/policy.htm</p> <p>Victorian Government Schools Reference Guide</p> <p>DEECD intervention and support initiatives, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School-Focused Youth Service http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/wellbeing/sfyouthservices/default.htm • Secondary School Nursing Program http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/health/schoolnursing/ <p>DHS programs, including:</p> <p>Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service http://www.health.vic.gov.au/mentalhealth/services/child/</p> <p>Child Protection (http://www.cyf.vic.gov.au/child-protection-family-services)</p> <p>Every Child Every Chance http://www.cyf.vic.gov.au/every-child-every-chance/home</p>

Appendix 6B: Sample Supervision Agreement

This form should be used by staff and Network/Sub-regional Student Support Services Coordinators or Visiting Teacher Team Leaders when developing a supervision agreement. This agreement should be reviewed periodically to ensure that it is still suitable for the staff member's supervision needs.

Student Support Services Staff Member:

Network/Sub-regional Student Support Services Coordinator/Visiting Teacher Team Leader:

Period of agreement:

Goals of supervision agreement	
Provide a list of the knowledge and skills the staff member would like to further develop. This list should be reviewed periodically by the staff member and Network/Sub-regional Student Support Services Coordinator/Visiting Teacher Team Leader to ensure the staff member's changing developmental needs are met over time.	
Expected outcomes	
Agreed professional objectives	
Mutual responsibilities	
Agreed responsibilities within the supervision process for both student support services staff member and Network/Sub-regional Student Support Services Coordinator/Visiting Teacher Team Leader	
Structure of supervision	
Frequency, duration, location, required resources, preparation, agenda arrangements, methods of supervision to be used	
Monitoring/evaluation	
Outline of preferred process for monitoring and evaluation of the supervision agreement and agreed timeline for review	
Issues resolution	
Outline of mechanisms for addressing any difficulties with supervision arrangements, including grievance processes	
Records management	
Details of how supervision information will be recorded and stored, and who will have access to supervision records	
Student Support Services staff member Signed: Date:	Network/Sub-regional Student Support Services Coordinator/Visiting Teacher Team Leader Signed: Date:

Appendix 6C: Supervision Checklist

This checklist should be used to ensure that all requirements of the student support services staff supervision process are being addressed and the student support services staff member is receiving appropriate support to perform and develop in their role.

Administrative function	
The aims of the administrative function are to ensure that the student support services staff member:	<p>correctly maintains records and completes relevant data collection</p> <p>consistently performs at or above the agreed expectations of the role</p> <p>understands and complies with Departmental policies and procedures</p> <p>understands their roles and responsibilities</p> <p>understands the functions of other relevant professionals, services and organisations and relates appropriately to them</p> <p>receives regular feedback</p> <p>has an agreed Performance Enhancement Cycle agreement or a Performance and Development review for visiting teachers</p> <p>negotiates appropriate hours and workload</p> <p>is included and works as a member of the team.</p>
Educative function	
The aims of the educative function are to develop, maintain and improve the student support service staff member's:	<p>professional competence and ethical practice</p> <p>theoretical base, skills, knowledge and contribution to the student support service program's purpose, objectives and priorities</p> <p>access to and use of professional learning opportunities as required</p> <p>ability to reflect on their professional practice through interaction with stream colleagues.</p>
Supportive function	
The aims of the supportive function are to work with the student support services staff member to:	<p>develop a clear understanding of the boundaries between support, consultation and confidentiality in supervision</p> <p>provide professional support and monitor professional wellbeing</p> <p>reflect on professional difficulties as required.</p>

7. Student Support Services Program Accountability

Strong accountability and performance reporting arrangements are an essential component of the Student Support Services Program. Regular performance reporting enables effectiveness to be measured while identifying opportunities for improvement.

Student support services accountability responsibilities

All levels of the Student Support Services Program have responsibility for accountability.

Student support services staff are responsible for:

- providing assigned services and programs
- maintaining comprehensive records
- undertaking service data collection
- establishing and maintaining regular communication and mechanisms for reporting back to students, families and schools.

Network/Sub-regional Student Support Services Coordinators are responsible for:

- ensuring that network student support services staff maintain strong accountability practices
- overseeing the use of locally collected student support services service demand and delivery information
- liaising with Regional Network Leaders regarding the planning and effective delivery of student support services in the network/sub-region
- resolving network/sub-regional service delivery issues.

Regional Student Support Services Coordinators are responsible for:

- ensuring consistency and effectiveness of service delivery in the region
- overseeing the collection of service demand and delivery information within networks/sub-regions
- analysing program data and information to inform regional planning
- resolving regional program and service delivery issues.

The Student Wellbeing Division is responsible for:

- ensuring consistency and effectiveness of service delivery across the state
- overseeing the collection of service demand and delivery information by regions
- analysing program data and information to inform statewide planning
- resolving statewide program and service delivery issues.

7.1 Accountability within the planning cycle

Student support services accountability and performance reporting is an integral part of the annual planning and service delivery cycle linking service planning, delivery, data collection, reporting and analysis.

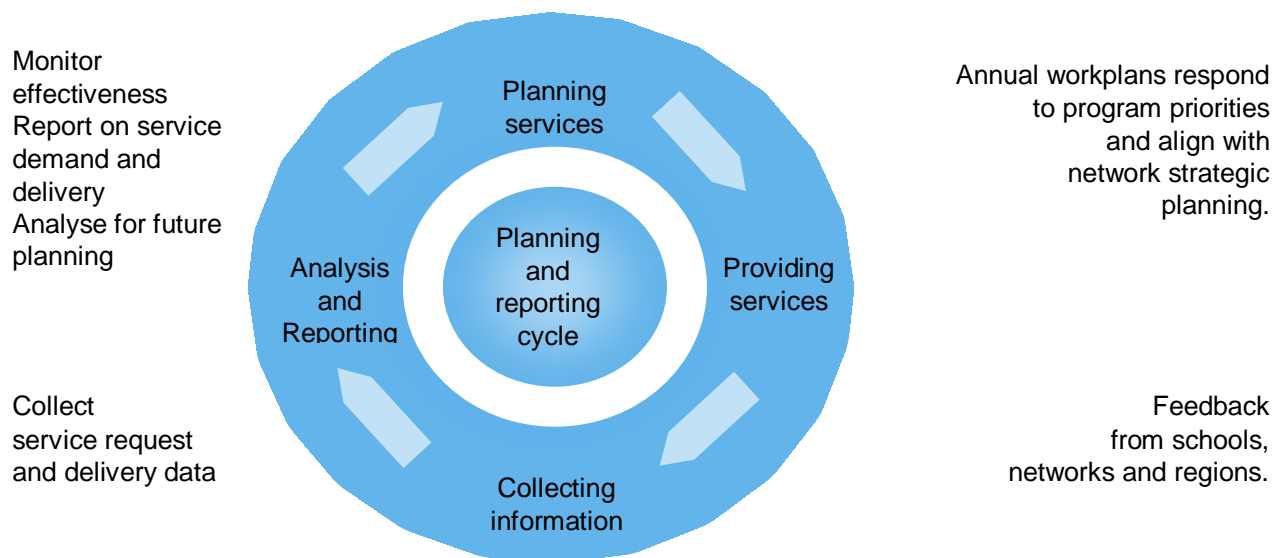
Monitoring and reviewing service delivery is an important aspect of the student support services planning cycle and provides opportunity for continuous service improvement. Analysing the effectiveness of service delivery is an important role of Regional and Network/Sub-regional Student Support Services Coordinators, who need to review whether objectives and expectations have been met and to determine opportunities for program enhancement.

The phases of the student support services planning and reporting cycle are:

- planning services: planning services and support mechanisms within the context of identified Departmental, regional and network priorities
- providing services: ensuring that the delivery of services takes account of annual student support services workplans that are responsive to network planning needs

- collecting information: using data collection and hard copy file management systems to collect relevant data about the services provided. This includes obtaining formal and informal feedback from schools, networks and regions regarding services and programs and informs the analysis of service effectiveness.
- monitoring, reporting and analysing: monitoring service effectiveness and providing regular reports regarding service demand and delivery and analysing information for future planning.

Figure 7.1: Phases of the student support services planning cycle



7.2 Program performance reporting

A comprehensive student support services performance reporting system, currently being developed, will enable information on service demand, service provision and service impact to be reported and analysed as part of the planning program planning cycle. This will include program performance indicators, a data collection and reporting system and regular analysis of service delivery and performance data.

7.2.1 Performance indicators

The purpose of Student Support Services Program performance indicators is to identify how the Student Support Services Program impacts on student learning, engagement and wellbeing outcomes. Clearly defined performance indicators will be developed during 2009, guided by the Student Support Services Program overall purpose, objectives and priorities as outlined in section 3.1.

The student support services performance indicators will:

- describe the way services are configured (service descriptors)
- include service demand, service response, service composition and service length indicators
- include indicators relating to levels of satisfaction with the service (already in place)
- include indicators relating to service outcomes, taking into account that student support services may be one of a range of programs or strategies involved with a student, school or network to improve outcomes.

Recording and reporting against program performance indicators will require a range of data sources and data collection mechanisms to be established. These will include:

- development of an online data collection and reporting system to record referrals, describe the services provided and generate data analysis reports
- the continued use of a hard-copy filing system for storage and communication of detailed professional reports generated by student support services staff
- use of opinion surveys and other means of formal and informal feedback to qualitatively identify the effectiveness of and satisfaction with student support services.

7.2.2 Data collection and reporting

To implement an effective accountability and performance reporting system, it is important that there are suitable mechanisms in place for regular gathering of data about service demand and provision. To support accountability and performance reporting, a data collection system will be developed during 2010 to:

- collect and report data relating to referral, intake and service provision
- capture information about the range of services provided, such as assessment and intervention with students and group programs, as well as broader school or system support such as provision of professional learning for school staff and critical incident recovery support
- support collection of data relating to service demand, type, responsiveness and the length of service provision
- provide a consistent statewide referral mechanism and support a network/sub-regionally based intake process
- support network and sub-regional management processes to monitor and report referral and service information
- generate data analysis reports to inform continued program planning and improvement
- act as a mechanism for administering access and security of electronic records.

Interim data collection and reporting arrangements

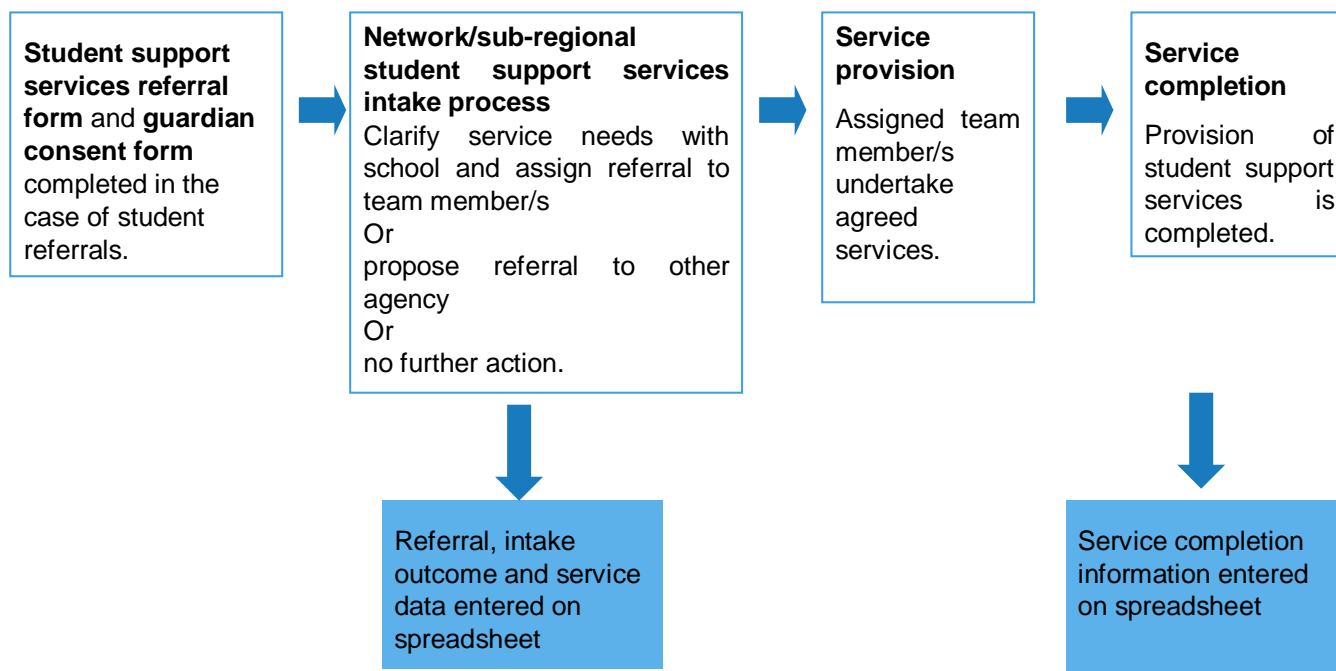
Currently network student support services team and regions are using different program data collection methods and arrangements. Until the long-term data collection and reporting system is established, it is important that student support services staff and teams use a common approach.

In order to meet program reporting commitments in 2010, an interim data collection spreadsheet has been established to enable the collection of student support services referral and activity data. Existing data collection and reporting arrangements in place at local levels have not enabled statewide consistency or comparison.

The interim spreadsheet has been developed to support network/sub-regional student support services teams in collecting referral and service delivery information for regular reporting. This information assists regions and networks in planning service provision.

The interim data collection spreadsheet provides basic information on service demand and provision collected at two points in the referral and service process, as outlined below.

Figure 7.2: Stages of student support services school referral, service allocation and referral completion



7.3 Accountability for student support services files

Student support services files are known as Department Confidential Student (DCS) files. This makes a clear distinction between student files that a school might ordinarily keep about each student enrolled at the school and those that are established as a result of intervention by a designated student support services staff member.

DCS files can contain information that is of a highly confidential nature, including family details, records of interventions and reports from student support services staff working with the student and/or family.

Management of DCS files

The Network/Sub-regional Student Support Services Coordinator is responsible for ensuring that the confidentiality of student support services DCS files is maintained and for determining access by qualified student support services staff. Each DCS file may comprise a number of folders, which may contain information supplied by student support services staff as a result of their work with the student.

Definitions

Active file: A file for a student who is currently being assisted by a qualified student support services staff member.

Inactive file: A file for a student who is not currently being assisted by a qualified student support services staff member, but is still attending school and may require further service.

It should be noted that there is no distinction between an active and an inactive file with regard to how a DCS file is managed and handled.

Qualified student support services staff member: A member of the network/sub-regional student support services team who holds recognised qualifications relevant to the position. This may include:

- psychologist/guidance officer
- social worker
- speech pathologist
- visiting teacher
- other team member with qualifications relevant to the student support services position
- contracted or outsourced professional delivering student support services functions.

Department Confidential Student (DCS) file: The student support services file that is held by the network/sub-regional team and contains student referral information, records of services provided and relevant student health and wellbeing information provided as part of service delivery.

Confidentiality and unauthorised access

It is important that all reasonable precautions are undertaken to maintain the confidentiality of the information in DCS files.

A student support services staff member entrusted with the safekeeping of a DCS file has a duty to respect the confidence of the student to whom the file relates.

Inappropriate disclosure of confidential information has the potential to cause harm to individual students and their families and may constitute a breach of privacy legislation given the sensitive nature of the confidential information contained in the DCS file.

File storage, security and confidentiality

To ensure confidentiality, only qualified student support services staff are authorised to access DCS files.

DCS files located in a network/sub-regional office must be secured against unauthorised access, vandalism, arson and theft. The student support services staff member, in conjunction with the Network/Sub-regional Student Support Services Coordinator and the Manager or Principal of the base location, should make suitable security arrangements.

A lockable metal filing cabinet is the minimum standard of storage required and it must be locked at all times. Fireproof cabinets are recommended. DCS filing cabinets should be considered a resource of the network/sub-regional team and as such should be located in common space, not in personal workspace.

Establishment and registration of new DCS files

Network/sub-regional student support services teams are required to establish and maintain a manual or computerised index data system for each file established for each student referred. The Network/Sub-regional Student Support Services Coordinator is responsible for ensuring that this system is developed and maintained by staff within the team. The file index system should include details about:

- the location of the file and whether it has been transferred or removed in the short term
- who has responsibility for the file while it is on transfer
- the due date for the return of the file

Student support services staff must ensure that each DCS file has the minimum identifying data displayed prominently on the file, the file reference number uniquely identifying the student file and a 'D' (disposal) year in the top right-hand corner. This will facilitate access for disposal.

Existing DCS files held in schools

The Network/Sub-regional Student Support Services Coordinator will need to work with individual school principals in their network/sub-region regarding arrangements for transferring DCS files. Active files will need to be transferred to the network/sub-regional student support services team location. Older school files should be transferred into archived storage consistent with the Department's DCS file archiving policy. It is recommended that file transfer arrangements are resolved sequentially with network schools (one school at a time) to minimise disruption to network sub-regional team operations.

Access to DCS files

The Network/Sub-regional Student Support Services Coordinator must ensure that access to DCS files and any folders contained within such files is restricted to qualified student support services staff. Particular professional streams may have additional confidentiality restrictions; for example, psychologists are registered by an external statutory body and have professional obligations to meet. Documents relating to support services provided within the psychology professional stream located in a DCS file must be clearly marked as confidential, protected with a temporary seal (e.g. a separate envelope) and accessed only by qualified psychologists.

Maintenance of files

The Network/Sub-regional Student Support Services Coordinator has ultimate responsibility for the registration, ongoing maintenance and final destruction or archiving of student support services DCS files.

Qualified student support services staff members will provide summary case notes and confidential reports for inclusion in the DCS file. All documents must be fastened securely to ensure that loose papers in files are not mislaid or lost.

Tracking of DCS files

A file tracking system enables the movement of DCS files to be recorded while ensuring file security and confidentiality. If a file needs to be removed from the filing cabinet, a card should be inserted in its place, identifying the qualified student support services staff member who has removed the file and the date of its removal.

Transfer of files

A file tracking system is also essential for the purposes of:

- Freedom of Information requests
- Ombudsman inquiries
- legal issues
- student transfers and referrals.

When a DCS file has been transferred to a central division of the Department for any of the reasons outlined above, it is the Network/Sub-regional Student Support Services Coordinator's responsibility to ensure the safe and secure transfer of the file, and to be aware of the location of the file in the event that it is unexpectedly required elsewhere.

There may be some instances when a DCS file is required by the Freedom of Information Manager. There is only one authorised officer for DEECD under the Freedom of Information Act 1982. Freedom of Information requests addressed to the Network/Sub-regional Student Support Services Coordinator or the student support services staff

member must be referred immediately to the Manager, Freedom of Information, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

The FOI, Privacy, Ombudsman Unit and/or the Legal Services Branch will liaise with the network/sub-regional office and arrange for the retrieval and temporary transfer of DCS files to the appropriate central unit of the Department.

All files are required to be transferred by either certified or registered mail, courier or hand-to-hand delivery. The transfer of a file must be registered if a file is delivered by hand. This procedure also applies when files are returned to the network/sub-regional office from the central office.

It is the responsibility of the FOI, Privacy, Ombudsman Unit and Legal Services Branch units to follow up those files due for return as a result of external enquires. If an extension of time is required, the responsible managers in these areas will advise the school of any delays in the return of a file. The central division/unit must register and take responsibility for the movement of the file while under their control.

Transfer of information in DCS files is likely to occur on a limited basis due to student transfers.

The DCS file may need to be transferred to another network/sub-regional student support services office if a student transfers to a school covered by a different network/sub-regional team. Information will be provided only when the following conditions are met:

- The principal of the student's new school or their authorised representative in the school has generated a student referral to the network/sub-regional office requesting a specific service.
- The network/sub-regional office covering the new school has agreed to provide student support services to the transferred student.
- Appropriate guardian consent for the service has been obtained. (The requirement to obtain Guardian consent may not apply in cases where there is a foreseeable risk of harm to the student, other students or staff. [See Schools Reference Guide Section 4](#))
- Information to be transferred to the new network/sub-regional student support services team is relevant to the services to be provided.
- A permanent file marker indicating details of the file number, file destination and date of transfer is retained within the DCS file system of the relinquishing Network/sub regional office.

Each movement/transfer of a DCS file is to be recorded on the file register that is maintained by each network/sub-regional student support services team.

Archival and disposal procedures

All DCS files will remain in the network/sub-regional student support services office until they can be destroyed or archived.

Out-of-date DCS files must be disposed of either by pulping or shredding. DCS files must not be disposed of inappropriately, for example in open, unsecured containers such as rubbish bins or dump masters.

The Network/Sub-Regional Student Support Services Coordinator should contact the Archivist, Executive Coordination Unit, DEECD, to seek specific advice and information on the management of the destruction or archival requirements of DCS files. See the Schools Reference Guide, Section 6.29 Archives and Records Management for detailed information about the length of time files must be kept before disposal. This can be found at <http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/schadmin/Management/6-29.pdf>