

# LOOKOUT Education Support Centres

## OVERVIEW

The LOOKOUT Education Support Centres operate as a multidisciplinary team, working with schools, Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) services, Child Protection Practitioners, case workers and carers to lift educational outcomes for children and young people in care. LOOKOUT Centre staff build the capacity of schools and ECEC services to enable high expectations for all children and young people in out-of-home care and to monitor and evaluate their educational progress. Each DET region has a LOOKOUT Centre, providing state-wide support for students in statutory out-of-home care.

### Theory of Change – LOOKOUT

If we strengthen collaboration between DET and DHHS to address the education and training needs of children and young people in out-of-home care and lift professional practice across care and education

then we will more effectively target education and training to the learning needs of children and young people in out-of-home care and monitor their progress towards clearly identified targets

so that we improve school attendance and educational outcomes for students in out-of-home care and more effectively support principals, teachers and care professionals to raise expectations of what our students can achieve.

## EVIDENCE BASE

Ofsted. (2012). *The impact of virtual schools on the educational progress of looked after children.*

The virtual school approach in the UK, on which LOOKOUT is partly modelled, is to work with children and young people in care as if they were in a single school, liaising with the schools and ECEC services they attend, tracking the progress they make and supporting them to set high aspirations and achieve them.

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## KEY LINKS

For further information on LOOKOUT on the Department of Education and Training's website, see: [LOOKOUT Education Support Centres](#)

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### What is LOOKOUT achieving?

LOOKOUT Centres operate in each region, covering the whole state. The focus of LOOKOUT Centres is training Designated Teachers, who act as advocates for students in out-of-home care in their schools, and increasing the capacity of all school staff to support the wellbeing and education of students in out-of-home care. Designated Teacher training is provided to Victorian government schools as well as Catholic and independent schools. Over 1,500 Designated Teachers have been trained to date. It is expected that all Victorian government schools and many independent and Catholic schools will have access to a Designated Teacher.

### How will information be exchanged across government departments?

The LOOKOUT Centre student roll brings together Department of Human Services (DHHS) data on out-of-home care status and Department enrolment data to provide greater visibility and ensure no student in out-of-home care is left behind. The student roll underpins and focuses the LOOKOUT Centre's efforts and is in full compliance with relevant Victorian legislation (*Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014* and *Health Records Act 2001*).

### Do the LOOKOUT Centres assume statutory obligations for children and young people in care?

LOOKOUT Centres do not replace any existing function or responsibility of Child Protection Practitioners (CPP). Rather, LOOKOUT Centres offer an education response and are focused on monitoring the progress and transitions of students in out-of-home care, ensuring all agencies are working in the best interests of the student to improve educational outcomes.

Along with schools and partners, LOOKOUT Centres implement and monitor the *Out-of-Home-Care Education Commitment* (“the Partnering Agreement”) between the Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Education and Training, Catholic Education Commission of Victoria, Independent Schools Victoria, the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency and the Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare. A refreshed Partnering Agreement was launched in August 2018 to reflect changes to policy and legislation since 2011. As part of this monitoring, LOOKOUT Centres collect data from schools twice per year in line with school census dates (February and August).

As outlined in the Partnering Agreement, responsibility for children and young people in out-of-home care is shared across government departments, agencies and contracted providers. In the context of a whole of community approach, CPP have a specific statutory role in protecting children and young people from harm and promoting their rights and healthy development.

## PROGRESS TO DATE

Launch LOOKOUT Centre in SWVR commenced operations	Apr 2016
Principal and centre staff recruitment	Sep 2016 – Jan 2017
Designated Teacher training in Victorian government schools in SWVR	Term 4, 2016
LOOKOUT Centre Handbook finalised	Jan 2017
Process evaluation of the implementation of the SWVR LOOKOUT Centre finalised	Feb 2017
Designated Teacher training state-wide (Government schools, Catholic Schools and Independent Schools)	Apr – Dec 2017
Early Childhood Learning Advisor pilot in SWVR commenced	May 2017
LOOKOUT Governance meetings (Steering Committee and Expert Insights Group)	Nov 2017
Designated Teacher training continues, including Catholic and independent schools	Jan – Dec 2018
Partnering Agreement refresh and launch	Jan – Aug 2018
Expansion and recruitment for Early Childhood pilot	Jun – Dec 2018
LOOKOUT Conference	Aug 2018
Roundtable on improving transitions into higher education and training for young people in out-of-home care	Sep 2018
Early Childhood two year pilot commences	Dec 2018 – Jan 2019

## UPCOMING ACTIVITIES AND MILESTONES

Designated Teacher training for Catholic schools	Terms 1 and 3, 2019
Designated Teacher training continues	Jan – Dec 2019
LOOKOUT Conference	Sep 2019