

# Students in out-of-home care

For students in out-of-home care (OOHC), learning and achieving good educational outcomes can be extremely challenging. Experiences of abuse and neglect, trauma, disrupted attachments, removal from family and placement changes can impact negatively on their functioning. Research shows that children in OOHC often experience poor educational and life outcomes compared to other children.

Queensland data indicates that students living in OOHC show lower rates of achievement of the National Minimum Standards in NAPLAN tests than all Queensland students. Students in OOHC are also more likely to be not in the labour force, earning or learning six months after completing Year 12. Given such evidence, it is clear that students in OOHC require additional assessment, planning and support to reach their full academic, social and emotional potential and to participate in school activities.

## Expectations for schools

### Whole of school approach to supporting students in out-of-home care

1. Use a whole of school approach which encourages planning and implementation of evidence based practices that will improve the educational outcomes for students in OOHC.
2. Raise awareness of the special needs and vulnerabilities of students who have been abused and/or neglected and who are living in OOHC and actively support their learning and wellbeing, as identified in the [Learning and Wellbeing Framework](#) – Factsheets on the prevalence and effects of abuse and neglect are available from the [Australian Institute of Family Studies](#).
3. Inform staff about the potential impacts of abuse and neglect, trauma, disrupted attachments, removal from family and placement changes on a student's ability to learn and function within the school and classroom settings and share insights and information about effective practices, initiatives and programs (Refer to resources available on the [Student Protection](#) webpage in OnePortal).
4. Identify a key staff member within the school who can act as a buddy/mentor for each student in OOHC. This person could make regular contact with the student and provide additional support in raising and addressing their educational needs.

## Individual student achievement

1. In partnership with the student, Child Safety officer, carer and key stakeholders, develop an [Education Support Plan](#) (ESP) for each student in OOHC who meets the eligibility criteria specified in the MOU and regularly review and update the ESP to ensure that it continues to meet the student's evolving academic, social and emotional needs.
2. Support students in OOHC to achieve their full potential by maintaining high expectations and setting goals that lead to improved achievement. Ensure every student is engaged in the process of developing and reviewing their ESP and understands the advantages of setting educational goals and identifying resources that might be needed for achieving them. Share information about these expectations and goals with carers, Child Safety staff and other professionals.
3. Work in partnership with Child Safety staff to minimise disruptions to school attendance for students in OOHC, including disruptions due to school transfers caused by placement instability and school disciplinary absences.
4. In partnership with Child Safety staff, respond to behavioural issues that may impact negatively on the educational outcomes for students in OOHC including accessing the Ed-LinQ mental health initiative, [Evolve Interagency Services](#) or regional behaviour support personnel. Where possible, track issues and intervene early to provide maximum support and use school disciplinary absences as a last resort.
5. Engage carers and Child Safety staff in the development of [Secondary Education and Training \(SET\) Plans](#) for students in OOHC and for students considering post-secondary education (PSE) – consider including activities such as visits to university campuses, information about alternative pathways to PSE, mentoring programs and support with application and enrolment processes.

## Collaborative partnerships

1. Regularly engage with carers, Child Safety staff and other professionals in supporting the learning, participation and achievement of students in OOHC.
2. Support carers to be actively engaged in their child or young person's learning, at home and at school – this may include practical literacy and numeracy activities they can undertake in the home, regular communication about homework, or guidance about additional reading materials they could provide to the child or young person (Refer to the [Parent and Community Engagement Framework](#)).
3. Contribute, as required, to Child Safety or other planning processes to ensure relevant educational issues are reflected in plans for intervention with a student in OOHC.

## Monitoring progress

1. Regularly monitor and review the educational outcomes for students in OOHC and consider best practice strategies and initiatives that will continue to close the gap between students in OOHC and other students in the school.
2. Review relevant information, including: OneSchool data; use of regional resources, including funds provided through the Education Support Funding Program; and State and National data, to ensure that strategies, programs and initiatives are having a positive impact on the achievement of educational outcomes for students in OOHC.