HIGHVIEW COLLEGE
STUDENT OUT OF HOME CARE POLICY
Person Responsible – Director of Pastoral Care

(Reviewed in odd years)

Rationale

Highview College is committed to the provision of targeted support for the young people who are in out-of-home care. Young people in this situation are likely to need additional assistance to gain access to educational opportunities, experience positive school engagement and improve academic performance if they are to realise their full potential.

Aims

Highview College aims to provide increased levels of support and responsiveness to the educational needs of young people in out-of-home care in order to improve their educational progress and achievement. Young people in out-of-home care must have the best possible care, where all aspects of their development are addressed and their best interests are at the centre of every action and decision. A strong out-of-home care system in which young people are at the centre must include a range of supports to meet their diverse needs including recognition of the important role of education. Students may need assistance to find suitable accommodation.

Implementation

The Deputy Principal – Pastoral Care has the overall responsibility for implementing strategies and processes for ensuring a safe and supportive environment for students in out-of-home care. These strategies may include, but are not limited to:

- Assisting the student to find suitable accommodation, with the help of the School Counsellor and through external providers in the local Youth Service Providers network
- Allocating a teacher or staff member as a learning mentor
- Referring the student and/or their carer to education related health and wellbeing services when needed
- Providing an educational needs assessment for a student who has resided in out-of-home care for a period of three months or longer to identify their individual learning needs
- Creating an Individual Learning Plan
- Treating information used to plan and support educational needs sensitively and confidently and to comply with the Information Privacy Act 2000 and the Health Records Act 2001. (Information sharing guidelines are available at: **http://www.cyf.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0006/41568/ig_education.pdf**)

Additional information

APPENDIX 1 Facts about out-of-home care
APPENDIX 2: Key Requirements of the Partnering Agreement

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APPENDIX 3: Responsibilities

APPENDIX 1 - FACTS ABOUT OUT-OF-HOME CARE

Children and young people in out-of-home care have been subject to protective intervention by Child Protection and are subject to a range of Children's Court Orders. They live in a range of alternative care arrangements away from their parents, including living with relatives or friends (kinship care), living with non-relative families (home-based care, sometimes known as foster care) and living in residential care units with rostered care staff (residential care). Some children or young people may live in out-of-home care for only a few days or weeks while others may be in care for many years.

Children and young people in out-of-home care are a diverse group who share the common experience of being exposed to significant abuse and trauma which has resulted in them being removed from the care of their parents. The State takes on the responsibility usually undertaken by a parent for these children and young people. Children and young people in out-of-home care have a right to be protected, cared for and educated in a way that maximises their life opportunities.

APPENDIX 2 -
KEY REQUIREMENTS OF THE PARTNERING AGREEMENT
FOLLOWED BY INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

- Case managers should advise the school that the young person resides in out-of-home care
- Schools should record the young person's out-of-home care living arrangements in their student information record keeping mechanism
- Schools should establish a Student Support Group for each young person in out-of-home care and case managers must participate in this group
- Schools should lead the development of an Individual Learning Plan for each young
- person in out-of-home care, including input from the case manager
- Schools and case managers should facilitate referrals for assessments and services to support the learning and wellbeing of the young person.

APPENDIX 3 - RESPONSIBILITIES

The Director of Pastoral Care

Has the overall responsibility for implementing strategies and processes for ensuring a safe and supportive environment for students in out-of-home care.

The College is responsible for

- enrolling a child or young person without delay – any delay of more than one day must be endorsed by the DEECD Regional Director
- ensuring that accurate information regarding out-of-home care status is recorded in the school's student information record-keeping mechanism
- advising the out-of-home carer of their eligibility for the Education Maintenance Allowance
- liaising with the young person's previous school or early childhood education service to ensure the transfer of relevant information including the Individual Learning Plan or Transition Learning and Development Statement
- establishing a Student Support Group in the first week of the young person's enrolment
- supporting the young person to stay at the school or maintain a connection with their
- school if a change must occur
- providing appropriate information to the new school regarding the young person's learning and support needs to ensure a smooth transition when the student leaves the school
- track and monitor the attendance and achievement of the student.

DEECD Regional Office is responsible for:

- providing information and advice to schools and case managers about the range of services and programs available to support each young person in out-of-home care
- participating in Student Support Group meetings where required to resolve complex issues
- having processes in place to ensure priority access for each child and young person in out-of-home care to education and wellbeing support services and programs.