Children in Out of Home Care – A PARTNERING AGREEMENT: Policy

Rationale

A Partnering Agreement between the Department of Human Services (DHS), Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) was re-endorsed in 2011.

The Partnering Agreement acknowledges that providing the best start in life for children and young people in out-of-home care is a shared responsibility. 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.

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.

Purpose

The Partnering Agreement aims to ensure that:

- Processes are in place to actively support the educational achievement of every child and young person in out-of-home care
- A strongly coordinated approach exists to support the needs of children and young people in out-of-home care
- All parties understand each other’s roles and responsibilities and work cooperatively
- Strategies are implemented to improve outcomes related to student enrolment, attendance,
- Achievement, case planning, retention and school completion.

Guidelines

The Partnering Agreement sets out a number of key requirements including:

- Case managers (DHS) should advise the school that a child or young person resides in out-of-home care
- The school should record the child or young person’s out-of-home care living arrangements in their student information record keeping mechanism (CASES21)
- The school should establish a Student Support Group for each child or young person in out-of-home care within the first week of the child’s attendance
- Care and case managers must participate in this group
- The school should lead the development of an Individual Education Plan for each child or 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 child or young person
- Identifying a teacher or staff member within the school to act as a learning mentor for each child or young person in out-of-home care.