

Department of **Communities**

safe, valued and empowered communities

Youth Support Coordinator Initiative

Memorandum of Understanding For Working in State Schools, TAFE Institutes and Non-Government Schools and Operational Guidelines

Between

*Department of Communities
Department of Education and the Arts
Department of Employment and Training*

This Memorandum of Understanding and the Operational Guidelines have been developed by a working group consisting of representatives of:

- The Department of Education and the Arts
- The Department of Communities
- The Department of Employment and Training
- Queensland Catholic Education Commission
- The Youth Support Coordinator Network
- Youth Support Coordinator Hub Facilitators

Between: Department of Communities, Queensland

Department of Education and the Arts

Department of Employment and Training

This Memorandum is not intended to create a legally binding relationship.

1 Background

- 1.1 The Youth Support Coordinator Initiative is an integral part of the *Education and Training Reforms for the Future* (ETRF) agenda, focused on supporting young people at risk of disengaging from learning to successfully transition into and through the Senior Phase of Learning. The Department of Communities is the lead agency for implementation of the Initiative.
- 1.2 The successful implementation and further development of the Youth Support Coordinator Initiative relies on strong working relationships between program stakeholders including the Department of Communities, the Department of Education and the Arts, the Department of Employment and Training, non-government schools and funded organisations.

2 Purpose of the Memorandum

- 2.1 The purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding is to outline the arrangements which parties agree will best support the successful delivery of Youth Support Coordinator services within the Queensland education and training sector.
- 2.2 The Operational Guidelines form part of this Memorandum.
- 2.3 Via this Memorandum parties agree to:
 - promoting, developing and maintaining a working environment that supports the integration of Youth Support Coordinators into the learning community for the benefit of young people;
 - promoting, developing and maintaining a service environment which provides a caring, productive and safe environment for young people; and
 - sharing information which will ensure a collaborative approach is supported by mutual understanding.

3 Operational Aspects of Memorandum

- 3.1 This Memorandum shall commence on the date it is signed by all parties and will remain in effect until any party withdraws by providing 30 days written notice to the other parties.
- 3.2 The parties agree that this Memorandum will be reviewed annually by the Department of Communities in collaboration with the Youth Support Coordinator Initiative Reference Group. Any party can make representation to the Youth Support Coordinator Initiative Reference Group to vary this Memorandum at other times.
- 3.3 Alterations to this Memorandum must be agreed to in writing by all parties.

4 Operational Objectives

- 4.1 The operational objectives of the Youth Support Coordinator Initiative are to:
 - 4.1.1 assist young people and their families to resolve issues contributing to not transitioning into and through the Senior Phase of Learning;
 - 4.1.2 develop linkages between schools, TAFE Institutes (TAFEs), community organisations and the broader community to enhance access by young people and their families to support and assistance;
 - 4.1.3 contribute to the development of supportive school/TAFE environments which are responsive to the needs of young people at risk of not transitioning into and through the Senior Phase of Learning;
 - 4.1.4 assist young people to develop social and personal skills for independent and successful community living; and
 - 4.1.5 encourage and support community services to respond to the needs of students and their families.

5 Governance

- 5.1 While the Department of Communities is responsible for the management of the Youth Support Coordinator Initiative, the funding for the Initiative is provided through a partnership arrangement between the Department of Education and the Arts and the Department of Communities. A separate funding Memorandum of Understanding between these two partners governs the funding arrangements.
- 5.2 To ensure the appropriate development and management of the initiative, the Department of Communities shall establish and support a Reference Group to provide advice to the Department of Communities on program development and implementation issues across the state.

- 5.3 The Terms of Reference for the Reference Group form part of the Operational Guidelines.

6 Role of Youth Support Coordinators

- 6.1 The role of Youth Support Coordinators is to support young people still connected to education/training but at risk of disengaging from learning to move into and through the Senior Phase of Learning.
- 6.2 The focus of Youth Support Coordinators is on prevention and early intervention activities.
- 6.3 Youth Support Coordinators work in partnership with education and training providers and other community support agencies to ensure that the holistic welfare and social support needs of individual young people and their families are addressed.
- 6.4 The key service delivery setting is secondary schools and TAFEs.

7 General Principles for Service Delivery

- 7.1 The following principles guide Youth Support Coordinator service delivery:
- 7.1.1 The safety and wellbeing of the young person is paramount.
- 7.1.2 Young people exist within the context of their families and support networks, their communities and the school/ TAFE Institute, rather than as isolated individuals.
- 7.1.3 Young people's contact with Youth Support Coordinators and participation in Youth Support Coordinator service activities is voluntary.
- 7.1.4 Young people have the right to participate in decisions which involve and affect them. This acknowledges that:
- The ability of young people to assess and act on their own interests is to be respected and incorporated in decision making.

- The capacity of the young person for self-determination is not dependent on reaching a particular age but is dependent on his/her ability to understand the nature and consequences of their decision making.

7.1.5 Young people have the right to confidentiality and privacy.

7.1.6 The views, experiences and perspectives of others involved in a young persons life are valued. Where different opinions may arise as to an appropriate course of action for a young person, resolution will focus on ensuring optimal outcomes for the young person.

8 Performance Monitoring and Evaluation

8.1 The Department of Communities is responsible for monitoring and evaluating the Youth Support Coordinator Initiative. All program partners are expected to participate in formal evaluation processes.

8.2 Department of Communities' regional staff are responsible for monitoring and reviewing Service Agreements with funded organisations. Service Agreements specify the expected outcomes and outputs, performance objectives and the scope of activities that may be undertaken by Youth Support Coordinators.

8.3 Entry of data into the data collection system for the Youth Support Coordinator Initiative is a requirement of the Service Agreement. Data shall be used to assist in monitoring program performance.

8.4 The Department of Communities will regularly make relevant, non-identifying data gathered through monitoring and evaluation processes available to all parties to this Memorandum.

9 Role of Youth Support Coordinator Hub Facilitators

9.1 The Hub Facilitators are an important component of the operation of the Youth Support Coordinator Initiative.

9.2 Hub Facilitators work in partnership with Youth Support Coordinators, funded organisations, the Department of Communities, the Department of Education and the Arts, the Department of Employment and Training and non-government schools and other stakeholders to achieve continuous improvement in service delivery.

9.3 The Youth Support Coordinator Network is supported by the Hub Facilitators and plays a valuable peer support role for Youth Support Coordinators. Involvement in the Network is identified within funded organisations' service agreements as a valuable program activity.

10 Resource Allocation

- 10.1 Funded agencies are responsible for the payment of the Youth Support Coordinator salaries and on-costs, and for meeting development and training expenses as well as general operating costs.
- 10.2 TAFEs/schools are responsible for providing the Youth Support Coordinator with adequate operational facilities.

Operational Guidelines

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1 Background

- 1.1 The primary aim of the Youth Support Coordinator Initiative (YSCI) is to support young people at risk of disengaging from learning to successfully transition into and through the Senior Phase of Learning.
- 1.2 The YSCI operates as a partnership between the Department of Communities, the Department of Education and the Arts, the Department of Employment and Training, non-government schools and funded community-based organisations. However, the Department of Communities is the lead agency responsible for the implementation of the Initiative.
- 1.3 The operational objectives of the Youth Support Coordinator Initiative (YSCI) are to:
 - 1.3.1 assist young people and their families to resolve issues contributing to not transitioning into and completing the Senior Phase of Learning;
 - 1.3.2 develop linkages between schools, TAFE Institutes (TAFEs), community organisations and the broader community to enhance access by young people and their families to support and assistance;
 - 1.3.3 contribute to the development of supportive school/TAFE Institute environments which are responsive to the needs of young people at risk of not transitioning into and completing the Senior Phase of Learning;
 - 1.3.4 assist young people to develop social and personal skills for independent and successful community living; and
 - 1.3.5 encourage and support community services to respond to the needs of students and their families

2 Purpose

- 2.1 The purpose of this document is to provide funded organisations, Youth Support Coordinators and other Youth Support Coordinator Initiative partners with clear direction regarding operational matters likely to affect the successful implementation of the Initiative across the state.
- 2.2 This document forms part of the Memorandum of Understanding for working in state schools, TAFE Institutes and non-government schools.

3 Scope

- 3.1 This document applies to funded community-based organisations, Youth Support Coordinators, relevant Department of Communities' staff, Department of Education and the Arts staff, Department of Employment and Training staff and non-government school staff.

4 Related Documents

- 4.1 Memorandum of Understanding – Funding.
- 4.2 Background Information Paper for the Youth Support Coordinator Initiative 2004/2005.
- 4.3 Supplementary Information Paper for the Youth Support Coordinator Initiative 2004/2005.
- 4.4 Youth Support Coordinators Hub Facilitators Information Paper, 2003/2004.

5 Governance

- 5.1 Funding for the Youth Support Coordinator Initiative is provided through the Department of Education and the Arts. The Department of Communities is the lead agency responsible for the management and implementation of the Youth Support Coordinator Initiative.
- 5.2 A *Memorandum of Understanding* governs the funding relationship between the Department of Education and the Arts and the Department of Communities. The Memorandum defines:
 - the reason for the grant;
 - grant payment procedures;
 - planning, performance monitoring, evaluation and reporting requirements;
 - the role of the Department of Communities as lead agency for the implementation of the Youth Support Coordinator Initiative; and
 - contact officer details.
- 5.3 To ensure the appropriate development and management of the initiative, the Department of Communities convenes and supports a Reference Group to provide advice to the Department of Communities on program development and implementation issues across the state. Membership of the Reference Group includes stakeholder representatives from:
 - Department of Communities (Chair);
 - Department of Employment and Training;
 - Department of Education and the Arts;
 - Non-government schools;
 - Queensland Youth Housing Coalition (Hub Facilitator);
 - Youth Support Coordinator Network; and
 - Academia.
- 5.4 The terms of reference for the group are determined by the Department of Communities in collaboration with Reference Group members.
- 5.5 The Reference Group will meet no less than four times per year and reports to the Director, Office for Youth, Department of Communities.

6 The Role of the Youth Support Coordinator

6.1 Role

- 6.1.1 The role of Youth Support Coordinators is to support young people still connected to education/training, but at risk of disengaging from learning, to move into and through the Senior Phase of Learning.
- 6.1.2 Youth Support Coordinators work in partnership with schools, TAFEs and other community support agencies to ensure that the holistic welfare and social support needs of individual young people and their families are addressed.

6.2 Target Group

- 6.2.1 The primary target group for Youth Support Coordinator services is young people at risk of not transitioning into and through the Senior Phase of Learning or not making a successful transition to employment. This includes young people in the year 8 to year 10 student population.
- 6.2.2 In the context of prevention and early intervention, Youth Support Coordinators work with young people who are still connected to education or training, no matter how tenuously.
- 6.2.3 Youth Support Coordinators may also work with young people's families as part of their prevention and early intervention work.
- 6.2.4 The secondary target group is school/TAFE staff in order to build the capacity of schools/TAFEs to better identify and respond to the needs of the primary target group.

6.3 Service Setting

- 6.3.1 Youth Support Coordinators are employed by community-based organisations funded by the Department of Communities under the Youth Support Coordinator Initiative. They are accountable to, managed and supervised by their funded/employer agency.
- 6.3.2 There are 113 full time equivalent Youth Support Coordinator positions funded across the State.
- 6.3.3 While Youth Support Coordinators are employed by community-based organisations the majority of their service delivery work with young people occurs within educational settings – schools/TAFEs.
- 6.3.4 It is not expected that Youth Support Coordinators will be able to deliver a service to every school/TAFE in their designated district.

6.4 Deliverables

- 6.4.1 Youth Support Coordinators provide a mix of services depending on the requirements of each local community as reflected in local District Youth Achievement Plans and outlined in their workplans.
- 6.4.2 The Service Agreement (contract) between the funded organisation and the Department of Communities is negotiated by the funded agency and the regional Community Service Officer, Department of Communities.
- 6.4.3 The Service Agreement is the contract which broadly determines what work (outputs and activities) the Youth Support Coordinator will do over the term of the Service Agreement.
- 6.4.4 The Department of Communities has determined that Youth Support Coordinators will provide the following in order to contribute to the achievement of the operational objectives (see 1.3) of the Initiative:

Funded Output	Funded Activity
<p>Young people at risk of disengaging from learning are engaged in education, training or employment</p>	<p>Case work - needs assessment and management of case plans</p> <p>Activities centred on assessment of service needs, development and monitoring of service/case plans, ongoing case management and professional support in accessing and using other relevant services (A01.2.02) 1.</p> <p>Case work may include the following: <u>Information, advice and referral</u></p> <p>Activities that provide information, advice and referral to support personal or social functioning and/or to facilitate access to, and use of, community services and resources (A01.1.06)</p> <p><u>Individual advocacy</u></p> <p>Activities aimed at enabling access to services or entitlements (A01.2.01).</p> <p><u>Counselling and support</u></p> <p>Activities that assist service users to assess their circumstances and strengths and to make choices/decisions and plans (A01.2.08/07).</p> <p><u>Social and personal development</u></p> <p>Activities that promote personal and social development and a sense of belonging. Can be individual or group activities (A01.3.01).</p> <p><u>Mutual support and group work</u></p> <p>Activities that facilitate and coordinate groups to exchange information, experiences and skills, to meet common needs and/or provide practical support (A01.2.03).</p> <p><u>Brokerage</u></p> <p>Purchase of products and services which assist young people at risk to transition into and through the Senior Phase of Learning (A01.9.99).</p>
<p>The Education and Training Reforms for the Future community improves its responses to the needs of young people at risk of disengaging from learning to</p>	<p>Community development</p> <p>Activities which aim to build the capacity of the existing service system, build linkages, coordinate activities, minimise duplication, and share specialist knowledge (A07.1.02).</p>

¹ The National Classifications of Community Services (2002) [NCCS] published by the Australian Institute for Health and Welfare was used to classify/define the expected outputs and activities for the YSCI. Numbers relate to the NCCS classification number given to a particular activity.

<p>successfully transition into and through the Senior Phase of Learning</p>	
<p>Improved community awareness and responsiveness to the needs of young people at risk of not successfully transitioning into and through the Senior Phase of Learning</p>	<p>Community education Activities that promote greater awareness and understanding of the issues affecting young people at risk of disengaging from learning (A07.2.01)</p>

6.4.5 Youth Support Coordinators may undertake administrative activities, attend team meetings, training, professional development and network activities during student contact hours. However, every effort will be made by Youth Support Coordinators to minimise the impact that this may have on their service delivery to schools/TAFEs.

6.5 Service Delivery Models

To ensure that Youth Support Coordinators work in ways that are responsive to local needs, it is understood that the models of service delivery may differ between districts/clusters. Accepted service delivery models include: site specific; geographic; and hybrid.

6.5.1 Site specific model

The site-specific model is where a Youth Support Coordinator is located within a school/TAFE. This model has proven to be the most effective means to implement Youth Support Coordinator services and build purposeful relationships between community organisations and schools/TAFEs.

Individual Youth Support Coordinators have the capacity to work with a maximum of three site specific localities subject to: student population per school/TAFE; geographic spread of the school/TAFE locations; and regard for any site specific characteristics (e.g. access to other services).

6.5.2 Geographic

The geographic model is considered to be a progression from the site specific model and is not appropriate in districts/clusters unfamiliar with the Youth Support Coordinator role.

A Youth Support Coordinator may provide a service to a broader geographic area or a larger number of sites but only where the following criteria can be met:

1. the Youth Support Coordinator can gain leverage from well established relationships with the schools/TAFEs and broader community;
2. the service model enables the Youth Support Coordinator to meet all the requirements of their Service Agreement; and
3. the Youth Support Coordinator can leverage off a range of other services within the geographic area which have a demonstrated partnership with the schools/TAFEs.

6.5.3 Hybrid

In districts which have more than one Youth Support Coordinator, a combination of the above models may be appropriate in order to meet local needs.

The final allocation of Youth Support Coordinators to schools/TAFEs is a collaborative process involving the Youth Support Coordinator, their employer organisation, relevant school/TAFE staff, relevant Department of Communities' regional officers and other initiative partners as represented in District Youth Achievement Planning groups.

7 The Role of Hub Facilitators

- 7.1 In order to assist in maintaining the integrity of the Youth Support Coordinator Initiative as a statewide program, three Hub Facilitator positions exist to support continuous improvement in the delivery of high quality youth support services by Youth Support Coordinators.
- 7.2 The Hub Facilitators support continuous improvement by:
 - implementing professional development and training opportunities including forums and other relevant processes;
 - developing training resources for Youth Support Coordinators;
 - developing and maintaining on-line and other resourcing systems. This includes managing the content of the Youth Support Coordinator website;
 - facilitating Youth Support Coordinator peer support initiatives such as Hub (local Youth Support Coordinator network) meetings, telelinks and the website bulletin board;
 - providing a leadership role regarding Youth Support Coordinator contributions to District Youth Achievement Plans across the state. This includes collating and monitoring information provided by Youth Support Coordinators regarding their progress within their District Youth Achievement Plans; and
 - participating in statewide service development and evaluation processes with the Department of Communities, the Department of Education and the Arts, the Department of Employment and Training and other stakeholders including the provision of reports as required.
- 7.3 In providing funding for the Hub Facilitator positions, it is expected that Youth Support Coordinators will receive the resourcing, support and skills development necessary to assist in the delivery of high quality services.
- 7.4 To achieve continuous improvement in service delivery, Hub Facilitators work in partnership with Youth Support Coordinators, funded organisations, the Departments of Communities, Education and the Arts, and Employment and Training, and non-government stakeholders.
- 7.5 Hub Facilitators do not provide a line management or professional supervision role to Youth Support Coordinators.

8 Planning and Monitoring

8.1 Operational Planning

- 8.1.1 Where the Service Agreements broadly specify the scope of the work that can be undertaken by Youth Support Coordinators, funded organisations are responsible for developing more specific operational/work plans for Youth Support Coordinators.
- 8.1.2 It is a requirement of the Service Agreement that this level of operational planning be informed by:
- the operational objectives of the Youth Support Coordinator Initiative;
 - the local priorities identified in the local District Youth Achievement Plan;
 - identified local need (e.g. local needs analysis research);
 - the number of schools/TAFEs and students to be serviced;
 - geographical considerations (e.g. remote location);
 - the number of other Youth Support Coordinators in the geographical cluster; and
 - the nature and range of other local support services available to young people and their families.
- 8.1.3 While it is a requirement that local stakeholders be involved in the operational planning process, the funded organisation must make the final decision about the Youth Support Coordinator's model of operation and workload. This decision must be made in consultation with the relevant Department of Communities' Community Support Officer and the schools/TAFE Institutes that will host the Youth Support Coordinator.

8.2 Performance Monitoring

- 8.2.1 It is the role of the relevant Department of Communities regional Community Support Officer to formally monitor a funded organisation's performance against Service Agreements.
- 8.2.2 Youth Support Coordinators are not accountable to District Youth Achievement Plan Management Committees in terms of line management, but Youth Support Coordinators will play a role in the District Youth Achievement Plan planning process as a stakeholder.

9 Training and Professional Support

- 9.1 Youth Support Coordinators' access to professional development opportunities is viewed as capacity building for the program as a whole, and assists in ensuring continuous improvement in service delivery across the state.
- 9.2 Funded community-based organisations are responsible for providing induction for Youth Support Coordinators to their organisation's policies and procedures and to the Youth Support Coordinator Initiative generally.
- 9.3 It is also the role of Youth Support Coordinator Hub Facilitators to make contact with new Youth Support Coordinators during their induction period to provide an

orientation to the Youth Support Coordinator network, the Hub Facilitators' role and function, and any upcoming network events.

- 9.4 The Hub Facilitators may also play a conduit role between the new Youth Support Coordinator and established Youth Support Coordinators to facilitate early peer support.
- 9.5 Department of Communities' regional Community Support Officers also play an ongoing role in providing advice to funded organisations in regard to their responsibilities.
- 9.6 Ongoing professional development and training is the responsibility of the employer organisation.
- 9.7 In order to facilitate shared understanding, schools/TAFEs should encourage Youth Support Coordinators to participate in relevant in-service training.
- 9.8 Youth Support Coordinators may attend team meetings, training, professional development and network activities during student contact hours. However, every effort will be made by Youth Support Coordinators to minimise the impact that this may have on their service delivery to schools/TAFEs.

10 Facilitating the Effective Operation of Services

- 10.1 Youth Support Coordinators are in the unique position of being employed by community-based organisations while undertaking the majority of their service delivery work within educational settings.
- 10.2 To enable Youth Support Coordinators to work effectively in educational settings, Youth Support Coordinator Initiative partners provide advice, resources and support to Youth Support Coordinators.

10.3 Resource Allocation

- 10.3.1 Host schools/TAFEs are responsible for providing the Youth Support Coordinator with adequate facilities within the school/TAFE. This includes access to a desk, telephone, lockable filing cabinet, photocopier, fax and computer and e-mail facilities. To enable confidentiality, Youth Support Coordinator clients should also have access to a private room which enables confidential consultations to be held.
- 10.3.2 Schools/TAFEs are also responsible for providing materials required for school learning activities and programs.
- 10.3.3 Unless otherwise agreed, resources/equipment purchased by the Youth Support Coordinator will remain the property of their employer organisation, with equipment/resources purchased by schools/TAFEs remaining the property of the schools/TAFEs.

10.4 Responsibilities of the Principal/Director

10.4.1 School Principals and TAFE Directors play a key leadership role in shaping a school/TAFE's culture and responding to the learning community's needs. They are also integral to the successful operation of the Youth Support Coordinators Initiative. Responsibilities of school principals and TAFE directors include:

10.4.1.1 Orientation to the school

The Principal/Director will ensure that the Youth Support Coordinator is oriented to the school/TAFE by:

- nominating a key school/TAFE contact person to assist in the orientation of the Youth Support Coordinator and ongoing mentoring support as required;
- using the normal school/TAFE orientation/induction process (where possible) and covering the following as a minimum:
 - communication with staff, students and school/TAFE community;
 - management processes;
 - reporting structures;
 - relevant school/TAFE policies and procedures;
 - operational processes;
 - student management; and
 - school/TAFE environment and amenities.

10.4.1.2 Promotion and Integration

- promoting the development of a working environment conducive to the integration of the Youth Support Coordinator into the learning community;
- supporting the Youth Support Coordinator as an integral member of the school/TAFE support team and facilitating opportunities for collaboration;
- providing the Youth Support Coordinator with appropriate accommodation and resources;
- ensuring the Youth Support Coordinator is part of the school/TAFE planning processes relevant to at risk young people; and
- supporting the Youth Support Coordinator to attend relevant school/TAFE learning and development activities.

10.5 Responsibilities of the Youth Support Coordinator

The Youth Support Coordinator must be cognisant of legislation and policy relevant to both the school and TAFE sectors.

The Youth Support Coordinator is responsible for:

- being familiar with the school/TAFE's organisational structure, personnel and operating environment;
- abiding by their employer organisation's policy and procedures;
- abiding by the school/TAFEs code of conduct and, where there is conflict between the code of conduct and their employer's policies and procedures,

referring the matter to the Department of Communities to implement a conflict resolution strategy;

- being familiar with and adhering to school/TAFEs policies and procedures where relevant (e.g. media protocols);
- collecting data as determined by the Department of Communities;
- engaging in formal and informal communication processes with key school personnel (such as year level coordinators, guidance officers, TAFE counsellors, resource teachers, other support staff, and other non school/TAFE personnel such as school-based Police Officers, school-based Youth Health Nurses, Community Education Counsellors and School Chaplains) to ensure that a coordinated approach to the provision of young person support is maintained;
- using established or initiating and developing communication processes to gain and disseminate information from and to the following groups:
 - principal/director and administration;
 - school/TAFE personnel;
 - students; and
 - the learning community.
- negotiating a referral and appointment process that meets the needs of young people in the school community and is mindful of legislative and policy requirements;
- informing school/TAFE personnel, young people and the school community of the referral and appointment process; and
- ensuring that the name and contact number of the Youth Support Coordinator's organisation held by the school is current.

10.6 Shared Responsibilities

The Principal/Director and the Youth Support Coordinator are responsible for:

- ensuring that regular communication occurs between them, as relevant, for the effective delivery of Youth Support Coordinator services;
- establishing and maintaining local communication mechanisms;
- communicating to members of the learning community information about the objectives, role, and operation of the Youth Support Coordinator Initiative;
- ensuring that each is aware of the relevant legislation, standards, regulations, policies and guidelines of their respective agency/organisation;
- advising each other of variations in routine which may affect the operations of the Youth Support Coordinator service;
- working proactively and collaboratively to overcome any issues that may arise in regard to the delivery of Youth Support Coordinator services; and
- ensuring that the personal contact details of the Youth Support Coordinator or school/TAFE staff are not provided to young people or others.

11 Collaborative problem solving

From time to time problems in relation to the delivery of the Youth Support Coordinator services may arise. At such times it is expected that good communication, together with a shared understanding of the Youth Support Coordinator Initiative and school/TAFE policies and processes will enable issues to be articulated and addressed before they become problematic.

11.1 Local Level Reference Groups

In order to discuss and resolve operational issues, local level consultative groups should be established, with membership consisting of a Youth Support Coordinator, their line manager, the Principal/Director or their delegate and other initiative partners identified as appropriate. The local level consultative groups should meet at least once each semester to discuss the progress and coordination of Youth Support Coordinator services and as required resolving identified issues.

11.2 Client Complaints

11.2.1 Each funded organisation must establish and implement complaints procedures which outline how issues relating to the performance/practice of a Youth Support Coordinator may be raised and resolved in a timely and effective manner.

11.2.2 Client complaints relating to the performance/practice of a Youth Support Coordinator should be raised and resolved in accordance with the employer organisations policies and procedures. However, students/family members may also choose to discuss any issues with the Principal/Director.

11.3 Staff Complaints

11.3.1 For school/TAFE staff raising general issues relating to the performance or practice of a Youth Support Coordinator:

- in the first instance, a Principal/Director should raise and resolve performance/practice concerns with the Youth Support Coordinator;
- where an issue remains unresolved, the Principal/Director should contact the Youth Support Coordinator's line manager to discuss the issue. The issue will then be progressed as per the organisation's policies and procedures;
- where an issue remains unresolved and impacts on the performance of the program at the local level, the Principal/Director may contact the relevant Community Support Officer, Department of Communities, responsible for monitoring the Service Agreement. The issue may then be pursued through the Department of Communities' performance management processes.

11.3.2 A complaint concerning suspicion of criminal conduct by a Youth Support Coordinator will be referred directly to the Queensland Police Service. In such instances Youth Support Coordinators will not be informed that such a complaint has been referred.

11.3.3 A complaint of suspected serious misconduct by a Youth Support Coordinator would be referred directly to the Youth Support Coordinator's line manager and would not be raised directly with the Youth Support Coordinator in the first instance.

11.4 Youth Support Coordinator Complaints

11.4.1 In general, for Youth Support Coordinators raising issues relating to the performance of school staff:

- in the first instance, the Youth Support Coordinator should raise their concerns directly with the staff member;

- where an issue remains unresolved, the Youth Support Coordinator should contact the Principal/Director and/or their line manager, who will approach the Principal/Director to discuss the matter;
- where an issue remains unresolved and impacts on the performance of the program, the Youth Support Coordinator may also contact the relevant Community Support Officer, Department of Communities, responsible for monitoring the Service Agreement. The issue may then be pursued through the Department of Communities' performance management processes; and
- in the state schooling or TAFE sectors, where an issue remains unresolved the Youth Support Coordinator/their line manager may pursue the issue at the district office level of the Department of Education and the Arts. If unresolved, the issue may then be pursued through the Department of Education and the Arts' or the Department of Employment and Training's performance management processes.
- In a Catholic/Independent school, where an issue remains unresolved the Youth Support Coordinator/ their line manager may pursue the issue with the nominated representative of the governing body of the school. If unresolved, the issue may then be pursued through the performance management processes established by the governing body of the school.

11.4.2 However, where a complaint concerns a suspicion of serious misconduct, a criminal offence or official misconduct on the part of a public service employee the matter must not be raised with the person in the first instance. The matter must be reported to the Queensland Police Service or, in the case of a public service employee, to the Principal; or, if the report concerns the Principal in the state schooling sector, to the Department of Education and the Arts Workforce Standards and Performance Unit and must not be discussed with the person who is the subject of the complaint.

11.4.3 In a Catholic/Independent school the matter must be reported to the Principal who will report it to the relevant state authority (which in the case of a criminal offence will be the Queensland Police Service).

or

If the report concerns the Principal, the matter must be reported to the nominated representative of the governing of the school and must not be discussed with the person who is the subject of the complaint.

11.5 Role of the Initiative Reference Group

11.5.1 Where issues clearly relate to program management, such as the need for the development or clarification of a policy position, the matter may be referred to the Initiative Reference Group for discussion.

11.5.2 Where a matter is referred to the Reference Group:

- the matter should be raised with the Youth Support Coordinator Initiative program management team, Department of Communities;
- the program management team will determine if the matter will be discussed at the next scheduled meeting of the Reference Group or whether the matter is able to be resolved outside of the formal meeting process; and
- advice provided by the Reference Group will be considered and actioned by the program management team as appropriate.

12 Referral to the Youth Support Coordinator

12.1 Referral Procedures

12.1.1 To ensure young people and their families have straightforward access to Youth Support Coordinator services, schools/TAFEs and Youth Support Coordinators should establish clear referral procedures.

12.1.2 Referral procedures should address the following:

- the voluntary nature of the program;
- who can refer;
- how to make a referral;
- the school/TAFE's duty of care to ensure a safe and productive learning environment; and
- for schools - how Principals are to be informed in regard to student absences or variations in school attendance and routine (relevant to referral). Within schools, students are required to follow the protocols of the school regarding absence from, or late arrival, to class; for example, in state schools, a late slip (see Education Queensland Policy SM-02: Variation to School Routine).

12.2 Access

12.2.1 Access to the Youth Support Coordinator should be in accordance with established procedures negotiated between the school/TAFEs and the Youth Support Coordinator.

12.2.2 Youth Support Coordinators may take referrals from:

- young people (self referral), with or without parental consent;
- school/TAFE staff, with or without the young person's consent;
- parents/carers, with or without the young person's consent; and
- community-based agencies.

12.2.3 Access to youth support coordinator services may need to occur during lesson time, or within the broader school day such as before or after school or in school breaks.

12.2.4 Youth Support Coordinator services may also be accessed outside of school hours as negotiated with the Youth Support Coordinator and as per the funded organisation's operating hours.

12.2.5 Access to the Youth Support Coordinator is voluntary and young people and/or parents are under no obligation to accept an offer of service/support from a Youth Support Coordinator or attend appointments.

12.3 Self Referral

12.3.1 As with any community-based service, young people may self-refer to a Youth Support Coordinator with or without parental/carer consent.

12.3.2 In accepting self-referrals, there may be instances where a parent/guardian states that they do not want a young person to access the Youth Support Coordinator. In such instances, the Youth Support Coordinator will make a

decision to either proceed with or discontinue the referral on a case by case basis.

12.3.3 Such a determination will be made by the Youth Support Coordinator in accordance with their funded organisation's policies and procedures.

12.4 Third Party Referral

12.4.1 School/TAFE staff or others (eg parents) who identify a need for the young person to access the Youth Support Coordinator should discuss this with the young person concerned and support them in making an appointment.

12.4.2 The young person's independent decision to accept the referral will be confirmed by the Youth Support Coordinator at their initial meeting.

12.4.3 Where a young person does not consent to the referral, the Youth Support Coordinator will discontinue the meeting but assure the young person that she/he may access the Youth Support Coordinator at a later date if they so choose.

12.5 Feedback

12.5.1 Feedback provided to the person initiating the referral will be provided where the consent of the young person is given.

12.5.2 The reason for access and the outcome of any Youth Support Coordinator contact will not be disclosed by the Youth Support Coordinator; for example, this information will not be provided on attendance/late slips completed by the Youth Support Coordinator.

13 Coordinating Responses

13.1 Visitors

13.1.1 The Youth Support Coordinator may identify the need for an external service/agency or parent to visit the school.

13.1.2 In the event of a Youth Support Coordinator inviting an external person into the school, the Youth Support Coordinator will follow school/TAFE procedures regarding visitors to the school/TAFE.

13.1.3 The Youth Support Coordinator will only give additional details which identify the young person or the reason for the visit to the school with the consent of the young person.

13.2 Referral to an External Service

13.2.1 Where the Youth Support Coordinator and the young person may identify the need for referral to another service or agency or relevant school support staff:

- the Youth Support Coordinator will provide information regarding the range of options available for further assistance;

- where appropriate, the Youth Support Coordinator should encourage the young person to discuss the issue with their parents/carer and seek their support to access other services or agencies;
- where appropriate, and where the young person provides their consent, the youth support coordinator may discuss the referral with the young person's parents/carer;
- it is the young person's choice to proceed with a referral;
- where appropriate, the Youth Support Coordinator will encourage young people to access services outside of school hours wherever possible and explore options to do so;
- where a young person seeks to access services during school hours, it is the young person's responsibility to follow required school procedures regarding absence from school;
- where appropriate, a Youth Support Coordinator may accompany a young person to facilitate the referral.

14 Transportation of Young People

14.1 During School Hours

- 14.1.1 In the event that a young person requires or requests assistance with transport to an external appointment, the Youth Support Coordinator will discuss the options available to the young person.
- 14.1.2 A Youth Support Coordinator may only provide transport where the Principal/Director or delegate has consented.
- 14.1.3 Where consent is provided, then due consideration will be given to:
- the safety and integrity of young person;
 - the safety and integrity of the Youth Support Coordinator; and
 - the Youth Support Coordinator organisations' transport policy and procedures.

14.2 Outside of School Hours

In the event that a young person requires transport outside of school hours the policy and procedures of the Youth Support Coordinator organisation will be followed.

15 Records Management

- 15.1 It is not the intent that client records generated through Youth Support Coordinator service delivery be treated as public records subject to the *Public Records Act 2002*.
- 15.2 This recognises the non-statutory role of Youth Support Coordinators and the fact that young people access services in a voluntary capacity.
- 15.3 Therefore, both hardcopy and electronic records (with the exception of data) associated with Youth Support Coordinator service delivery, remain the property of the organisation employing the Youth Support Coordinator and not the property of the school/TAFE.

- 15.4 To ensure the protection of confidential and private information, records will be kept in accordance with the Youth Support Coordinator organisation policies and procedures. Such procedures must outline how the records will be:
- managed;
 - how they will be stored in a secure location;
 - who may access the records (access should be restricted to the Youth Support Coordinator and/or, as appropriate, by the Youth Support Coordinator organisation);
 - how clients are to be assured of access to their records.

Procedures should also detail what processes will occur if records are subpoenaed as part of a legal process.

16 Confidentiality

16.1 Case Management

Youth Support Coordinators will be familiar with:

- their employer organisation's policy on confidentiality;
- the school or TAFE's policies relating to student protection, confidentiality, privacy and workplace health and safety.

School Principals/TAFE Directors will be provided with:

- a copy of the employer organisation's policy on confidentiality.

16.2 Maintaining Confidentiality

- 16.2.1 The Youth Support Coordinator will maintain confidentiality of information provided by persons accessing the Youth Support Coordinator service.
- 16.2.2 Clients must be fully informed of their right to confidentiality and the circumstances under which this right may be overridden.
- 16.2.3 At the beginning of any consultation, the Youth Support Coordinator will identify with the client their right to confidentiality of information, but that under some circumstances disclosure may be required. No promises of total confidentiality can be given.
- 16.2.4 Information may be disclosed to third parties with the express consent (written or verbal) of the client.
- 16.2.5 Information will not be disclosed without the client's express consent except in circumstances where there is a significant, immediate and real risk of harm to the client or others ie suicide, domestic violence, expressed intention to harm self or others.
- 16.2.6 In such circumstances the potential risk of real harm overrides the maintenance of confidentiality and appropriate responses to facilitate safety should be made. In these instances, Youth Support Coordinators will disclose the minimum level of information necessary to facilitate safety.

- 16.2.7 Any disclosure of confidential information and the student's consent or refusal to the disclosure, must be clearly documented by the Youth Support Coordinator in the client's record.
- 16.2.8 Where there is a need for disclosure of information to a relevant third party (i.e. a Principal), the Youth Support Coordinator will seek the consent of the young person prior to the release of this information. However, the release of information will not be contingent on gaining consent.
- 16.2.9 In circumstances where there is a significant, immediate and real risk of harm to the client or others, the Youth Support Coordinator will discuss the benefits and implications of disclosure with the young person.

16.3 Disclosure of Information

- 16.3.1 For consent to be valid:
- the young person must be legally competent, that is, be able to understand the nature and consequences of the proposed use/disclosure of the information;
 - it must be freely given, that is, without coercion or threat;
 - it must be informed; that is, sufficient information is provided to allow a reasoned decision;
 - it must specifically relate to the use/disclosure; and
 - it must be current.

16.4 Reporting Harm/Suspected Harm

- 16.4.1 To facilitate a shared understanding between the school/TAFE, the Youth Support Coordinator and the employer organisation, the Youth Support Coordinator must provide a copy of their employer organisation's relevant policies to the school Principal/TAFE Director. Such policies may include:
- workplace health and safety policy;
 - duty of care policy;
 - confidentiality policy;
 - records and information management policy;
 - child protection policy;
 - critical incident policy; and
 - transporting clients policy.

16.5 Risk of Imminent Harm to the Young Person or Others

- In situations where there is evidence of risk of imminent and serious harm to the young person or others, the Youth Support Coordinator will:
- establish that the risk is legitimate and immediate;
 - take action to ensure the safety of the young person and others; and
 - disclose confidential information to relevant third parties (i.e. a Principal) only to the extent required to ensure the safety of the young person and/or others.

16.6 Child Protection Matters

- 16.6.1 As part of their service delivery work, Youth Support Coordinators may consider it appropriate to make a child protection notification.
- 16.6.2 This option should be discussed with their line manager to ensure all relevant options are considered.
- 16.6.3 Where a Youth Support Coordinator assesses that a child protection notification may be required, the Youth Support Coordinator will abide by the procedures of their employer organisation but must consider how the duty of care obligations of the Principal (for the student) will be met.
- 16.6.4 To ensure that Principals / Directors are able to fulfil their duty of care obligations, Youth Support Coordinators will ensure that the Principal / Director or their respective delegate is informed prior to a notification being made to ensure that relevant information about a student is fully considered. In the event that the Principal / Director or their respective delegate cannot be contacted and the young person requires urgent protection measures to be taken notification can be made to protect the interests of the young person and the Principal/Director or their respective delegate informed as soon as possible thereafter. However, where a complaint concerns the suspicion of serious misconduct or a criminal offence on the part of a staff member in a state or non-state school, the matter must be reported to the Principal/Director in accordance with section 11.4 of these Operational Guidelines.
- 16.6.5 Youth Support Coordinators will also be responsible for documenting all issues considered in association with a suspicion of harm or risk of harm including:
- when and to whom the case has been reported;
 - decisions made; and
 - actions taken.
- 16.6.6 Where a student is informed or is otherwise aware that a report has or will be made, support should be provided to the student to mitigate against any distress that the reporting may cause.
- 16.6.7 The Youth Support Coordinator's line manager is responsible for ensuring the Youth Support Coordinator receives professional support, debriefing and supervision, and that the details of all child protection cases are suitably documented.
- 16.6.8 After notification, if a Principal/Director requests further information from the Youth Support Coordinator regarding a child protection notification, the Youth Support Coordinator will direct the Principal/Director to the relevant Department of Child Safety office or the Queensland Police Service as relevant.

16.7 Critical Incidents

- 16.7.1 Where a critical incident occurs on school/TAFE grounds, the Youth Support Coordinator will adhere to the critical incident procedures of the school/TAFE. For state schools the relevant departmental policy is *HS-08*

Injury, Illness and Dangerous Event Recording and Reporting. For non-state schools, the relevant risk management and student protection policies and procedures are those as approved by the Non State Schools Accreditation Board.

- 16.7.2 Where a critical incident occurs elsewhere and within work time, the Youth Support Coordinator will adhere to the critical incident procedures of their employer organisation.
- 16.7.3 As soon as possible after the critical incident, the Youth Support Coordinator must notify the Principal/Director and their line manager about the incident where incidents involve students.
- 16.7.4 The Principal/Director or line manager will:
- ensure the incident, related details and actions are well documented;
 - determine whether a briefing about the incident and/or any disclosure needs to progress to a further relevant authority; and
 - ensure that any necessary post-incident support to the Youth Support Coordinator is provided.

17 Performance Reporting

- 17.1 Youth Support Coordinators are required to provide data about their work and the young people they work with to the Department of Communities.
- 17.2 This data is used to guide and monitor program performance and for evaluation purposes.
- 17.3 Youth Support Coordinators are supplied with laptop computers to facilitate electronic entry of data as required by the Service Agreement.
- 17.4 To assist District Youth Achievement Plan Management Committees to meet their reporting obligations, Youth Support Coordinators, their organisations, and the Department of Communities will provide regular reports based on the data entered by Youth Support Coordinators into the Data Management Collection system.
- 17.5 The reports will be provided as per the Department of Communities data management protocol for the Youth Support Coordinator Initiative.
- 17.6 Reports will also be provided to the Youth Support Coordinator Initiative Reference Group.

18 Quarantined Program Funds

- 18.1 The management of quarantined program funds is the responsibility of the funded organisation. The authority to purchase goods and services rests with the funded agency.
- 18.2 Services to be purchased must be of direct benefit to young people, therefore quarantined program funds may not be used:
- for the purchase of services for the indirect benefit of young people
 - for the purchase of agency infrastructure

- where funding is accessible from an alternative source
- for professional development activities for Youth Support Coordinators (eg conference attendance).

18.3 Goods and services purchased must be consistent with and contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the Youth Support Coordinator Initiative and local District Youth Achievement Plans.

The parties have executed this Memorandum as follows-

Signed for and on behalf of the **STATE OF QUEENSLAND acting through the DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITIES**

This day of 2005

by Ms Linda Apelt
Director-General, Department of Communities

In the presence of

(Signature and full name of witness)

Signed for and on behalf of the **STATE OF QUEENSLAND acting through the QUEENSLAND DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND THE ARTS incorporating government schools.**

This day of 2005

by Mr Ken Smith
Director-General, Department of Education and the Arts

In the presence of

(Signature and full name of witness)

Signed for and on behalf of the **STATE OF QUEENSLAND acting through the DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING**

This day of 2005

by Mr Scott Flavell
Director-General, Department of Employment and Training

In the presence of

(Signature and full name of witness)