

# Let us learn

Systemic inquiry into the educational experiences of children and young people in out-of-home care



# Findings and recommendations

## Findings

### **Finding 1: Rising numbers of children and young people in out-of-home care**

The number of children and young people in Victoria's out-of-home care system increased between 2018 and 2022, including:

- an increase of 13 per cent in the number of children and young people living in care
- an increase of 21 per cent in the number of Aboriginal children and young people living in care (29 per cent of the total number of children and young people in care are Aboriginal)
- a nine per cent increase in the number of children and young people in residential care, which includes increases of 83 per cent in the number of children aged nine to 11 and 33 per cent in the number of children aged six to eight.

### **Finding 2: Disability status under-recorded**

The disability status of children and young people in out-of-home care continues to be under-recorded by DFFH.

### **Finding 3: Kindergarten enrolment rates**

The kindergarten enrolment rates for children in out-of-home care improved between 2018 to 2022, including for Aboriginal children in care, but remain lower than the overall kindergarten enrolment rates.

### **Finding 4: Disengagement from school for students in out-of-home care**

Children and young people in out-of-home care experience substantially higher rates of disengagement from school compared to the general student population. In 2022, the attendance rate for students in care in secondary school was eight per cent lower and their chronic absence rate was 17 per cent higher. Further, substantially fewer students in care progressed to year 12 compared to other students. In 2022, the apparent retention rate of students in care progressing to year 12 was only 25 per cent, compared to 82 per cent of students in the general population.

## Findings and recommendations

### **Finding 5: NAPLAN results**

Students in out-of-home care are 25 per cent less likely to participate in NAPLAN, and those who do participate receive substantially lower NAPLAN results across all year levels and in each NAPLAN domain.

### **Finding 6: Completion of VCE and VCAL**

Students in out-of-home care are less likely to complete VCE or VCAL than students in the general population.

### **Finding 7: Impact of workforce pressures in the child protection system**

Children and young people in out-of-home care and stakeholders told us that high workload and worker turnover in the child protection system make it hard for practitioners to build trust or an understanding of the educational needs of individual children and young people or prioritise education in care team meetings. We also heard that attendance at schools by Child Protection practitioners can cause distress and increase stigma for children and young people.

### **Finding 8: Impact of placement instability on children and young people**

Placement instability is a significant and growing problem, negatively impacting children and young people in the out-of-home care system. Placement instability not only impacts the social and emotional wellbeing of children and young people in care, but also represents a significant barrier to their educational engagement and outcomes.

### **Finding 9: Financial support for carers**

The Commission heard from stakeholders, including carers themselves, that carers are not given sufficient financial support to enable them to meet the needs of the children and young people in their care. The Commission also heard that Aboriginal carers experience particular pressures, which require additional and targeted supports.

### **Finding 10: Care allowance**

The Victorian Government has not increased care allowance payments since 2016 and the Victorian care allowance rates are among the lowest in the country.

### **Finding 11: Service system navigation**

The Commission heard from stakeholders that many carers experience difficulties navigating complex service systems, as do Child Protection practitioners and workers in CSOs. This can limit the level and type of support they and the children and young people in their care receive, both in the home and in education settings.

### **Finding 12: Supporting education in the home**

The Commission heard from many children and young people in out-of-home care and some carers that education was not encouraged or supported in the home environment.

### **Finding 13: Supporting education in residential care homes**

Most children and young people in residential care in Victoria are not cared for in a setting that supports them to engage in education. The Victorian Government's 2023 commitment to expand new models of care and to fund all residential care at a therapeutic level is welcome; these reforms are urgent and must include a focus on education support.

### **Finding 14: Impact of trauma on learning**

Trauma experienced by children and young people impacts their ability to learn and remain engaged in education. However, the Commission heard that the impact of trauma on student learning was often poorly understood by educators, directly affecting students' engagement in education.

### **Finding 15: Negative attitudes in schools**

Negative attitudes in schools towards children and young people in out-of-home care are common and contribute to their disengagement from education.

### **Finding 16: Racism persists in the education system**

The Commission heard from many Aboriginal children and young people in out-of-home care, and other stakeholders, that experiences of racism persist in Victoria's education system. This significantly impacts the educational engagement, health and wellbeing of Aboriginal students living in the care system.

### **Finding 17: Culturally unsafe practices in education**

The Commission heard from many stakeholders that Aboriginal children and young people in out-of-home care face additional barriers to educational engagement due to culturally unsafe practices, including racism, in education settings.

### **Finding 18: The role of Koorie Engagement Support Officers**

The Commission heard from stakeholders that the Koorie Engagement Support Officers play a critical role in Victorian Government schools. However, there is ongoing confusion about the parameters of the role, which impacts their level of influence and advocacy to strengthen supports for Aboriginal students, including those living in out-of-home care.

### **Finding 19: Students in out-of-home care on modified timetables**

We heard extensively from stakeholders that many children and young people in out-of-home care are placed on modified timetables, without adequate assessment of their suitability and without adequate plans to transition students back to full-time school hours. However, due to the lack of DE policy, monitoring or oversight of the use of modified timetables, this practice is unregulated and its impact invisible.

### **Finding 20: Exclusionary practices in schools**

Children and young people in out-of-home care are disproportionately excluded from education through the formal use of suspensions and expulsions.

### **Finding 21: Use of informal suspensions and soft expulsions**

The Commission heard from children and young people in out-of-home care and other stakeholders that children and young people in care are often subject to informal suspensions and soft expulsions, which contributes to their disengagement from education. However, due to the informal and unauthorised nature of these practices, they are unregulated and difficult to measure.

### **Finding 22: Use of restraint and seclusion in schools**

Children and young people in out-of-home care are seven times more likely to be subject to restraint and seclusion incidents in schools than other students.

### **Finding 23: Absence rates for students in care during COVID-19 and the associated lockdowns**

Absence rates for students in out-of-home care in Victorian Government schools increased throughout COVID-19 and the associated lockdowns and have risen again since the return to face-to-face learning. The absence rate for students in care was, on average, four per cent higher than for other students throughout the period from 2019 to 2022.

### **Finding 24: Experiences of education during periods of remote learning**

The Commission heard from children and young people in out-of-home care and other stakeholders that some students in care enjoyed online school and were more engaged during the remote learning periods. However, most children and young people in care, and their carers, had negative experiences with remote learning and for some this led to complete disengagement from education.

### **Finding 25: The role of the LOOKOUT Centres**

Stakeholders consistently identified LOOKOUT Centre principals and staff as strong advocates for children and young people in out-of-home care. The Commission heard that LOOKOUT Centres have been instrumental in facilitating implementation of the *Early Childhood Agreement for Children in Out-of-Home Care* and the *Out-of-Home Care Education Commitment* in education settings through awareness raising, capacity building in schools, and improved collaboration between the out-of-home care and education systems. However, as identified in the 2020 evaluation of the LOOKOUT model, current resourcing does not match the scale of LOOKOUT's responsibilities, which has affected their reach and impact.

### **Finding 26: Participation of students in care in Student Support Group meetings**

The participation of children and young people in out-of-home care in Student Support Group (SSG) meetings is not monitored by DE. The Commission heard from many stakeholders that participation of children and young people in SSGs is inconsistent and not an embedded practice in many schools, and there are often limited opportunities for children and young people to express their views and inform decisions made about them.

### **Finding 27: Schools' compliance with the *Out-of-Home Care Education Commitment***

The Commission heard about examples of individual schools with strong commitment to meaningfully engage students in out-of-home care. However, overall compliance by government schools with the *Out-of-Home Care Education Commitment* is inconsistent across Victoria, resulting in significant variability in the support provided to children and young people in care.

### **Finding 28: Educational Needs Analysis**

The Educational Needs Analysis (ENA) is a critical component of the *Out-of-Home Care Education Commitment*, yet from 2019 to 2022 less than a third of eligible children and young people in care received one. DE's current approach to completing ENAs and implementing ENA recommendations in schools is inadequate and requires urgent attention.

### **Finding 29: Designated Teachers**

The capacity of Designated Teachers to effectively fulfil their responsibilities under the *Out-of-Home Care Education Commitment* is undermined by the limited time that school staff can allocate to the role.

### **Finding 30: Information sharing during enrolment processes**

The Commission heard that inconsistent information sharing during enrolment processes by Child Protection practitioners to education settings sometimes limits the types of support provided to children and young people in out-of-home care in those environments, and adversely impacts their experiences of education.

### **Finding 31: Collaboration between LOOKOUT Centres and Health and Education Assessment Coordinators**

Strong collaboration between LOOKOUT Centres and Health and Education Assessment Coordinators has resulted in effective enrolment protocols and consistent information sharing practices between schools and Child Protection in some areas of Victoria.

### **Finding 32: Student record keeping systems**

Current student record keeping systems and practices in Victorian Government schools mean that critical information about the educational needs of children and young people in out-of-home care is not always available or shared between services or schools.

### **Finding 33: Governance of the *Out-of-Home Care Education Commitment***

The *Out-of-Home Care Education Commitment* was established to support inter-agency collaboration to strengthen educational engagement for children and young people in out-of-home care. However, inadequate clarity on roles and objectives, and insufficient seniority and accountability in the current governance structure has restricted progress.

### **Finding 34: Measuring and reporting educational engagement and outcomes**

Despite the requirements of the *Out-of-Home Care Education Commitment*, educational engagement and outcomes for children and young people in out-of-home care are not measured or reported publicly.

### **Finding 35: Flexible Learning Options**

While schools work towards improving their capacity to meet the needs of all children and young people, including those struggling to remain engaged due to care-related disruptions to learning, FLOs can provide a tailored, supportive and engaging alternative. The Commission heard that FLOs can improve engagement in education and wellbeing outcomes for these children and young people.

### **Finding 36: Inadequate resourcing of Flexible Learning Options**

The Commission saw FLO settings which were poorly resourced in terms of infrastructure and heard that the impact of this on both teachers and students was that they felt marginalised and undervalued. The Commission also heard that a lack of teaching structure in some FLOs meant that the educational benefits of these places were sometimes impacted.

### **Finding 37: Insufficient Flexible Learning Options for younger students**

The Commission heard that one metro-based FLO for primary school aged children is not sufficient to meet the need.

### **Finding 38: Effectiveness of the Navigator Program**

DE data indicates that the Navigator Program is not achieving its intended outcomes for children and young people in out-of-home care. Improved monitoring and data collection together with targeted and timely interventions, including earlier identification of risk of disengagement by schools and the provision of early supports, is a necessary and welcome improvement.

### **Finding 39: Benefits of one-to-one education supports**

One-to-one education supports can lead to improved educational outcomes for children and young people in out-of-home care who have disengaged from education, including re-engagement with mainstream school in some cases.

### **Finding 40: One-to-one educational supports**

The Commission heard that the current funding model and funding levels for educational supports for children and young people in out-of-home care are not sufficient to ensure children and young people are identified and referred for supports at the right time or available to every child and young person who needs them.

## Recommendations

### Recommendation 1: Strengthening data collection

That DE strengthen data collection for pre-school age children in out-of-home care through:

- routinely collecting kindergarten attendance data to determine the participation rates of children in care
- developing measures to track and evaluate the connection between improved attendance at kindergarten and school readiness including successful transition to primary school
- advocating nationally for children in care to become an identified equity group in the Australian Early Development Census to determine additional supports required to improve their school readiness.

### Recommendation 2: Use the Department of Education's *Schools' guide to attendance to improve school attendance*

That DE monitor the extent to which government schools follow the *Schools' guide to attendance*, particularly the escalation processes and student support component of the guide, to inform whether implementation of the guide should be made mandatory.

### Recommendation 3: Measure and report on school engagement

That DE routinely collect a set of specific student wellbeing measures, to be used alongside students' academic results and attendance data, to identify and report on engagement levels for children and young people in out-of-home care. This should be reported under the *Out-of-Home Education Commitment*.

### Recommendation 4: Consider and address barriers to recruitment and retention of Child Protection practitioners

That when reviewing the Child Protection Operating Model, DFFH consider barriers to the recruitment and retention of Child Protection practitioners, including sustainable and equitable workloads, and practitioner engagement and job satisfaction.

### Recommendation 5: Enhance tools and strengthen guidance to assist Child Protection practitioners to support educational engagement for children and young people in out-of-home care

That DFFH enhance Child Protection's prioritisation of education for children and young people in out-of-home care by:

- reviewing the current tools and resources available to Child Protection practitioners to ensure they adequately support educational engagement of children and young people in care through placement decisions, case planning and case management
- strengthening guidance on Child Protection visits to education settings, including limiting these visits and visitations with parents during school and kindergarten hours to exceptional circumstances, and requiring Child Protection practitioners to seek and give weight to children's views about visits at school
- providing ongoing professional development opportunities for Child Protection practitioners to strengthen their application of the *Early Childhood Agreement for Children in Out-of-Home Care* and the *Out-of-Home Care Education Commitment* and relationships with education settings
- ensuring dedicated opportunities for reflective practice on education-related issues between Child Protection practitioners and LOOKOUT Centre staff.

### **Recommendation 6: Improve the implementation and quality of cultural plans**

That DFFH improve funding for and the quality of cultural plans, including greater funding for kinship finding services and directly funding ACCOs to implement activities within cultural plans.

### **Recommendation 7: Increase carer payments**

That the Victorian Government increase the care allowance payments for kinship and foster carers.

### **Recommendation 8: Ensure equitable financial support for kinship and foster carers**

That DFFH strengthen the care allowance assessment and payment process to ensure assessments are conducted thoroughly and in a timely way, and that equitable financial support is provided to kinship and foster carers.

### **Recommendation 9: Remove voluntary contributions and other education expenses for carers**

That DE ensure that carers of students in out-of-home care are not requested to pay voluntary financial contributions and education-related expenses, including camps and excursions.

### **Recommendation 10: Provide carers with information and assistance to access flexible education-related funding**

- That DFFH ensure all carers and the children and young people in their care, particularly those in kinship care and in residential care settings, are provided with information about flexible funding available to cover education and extra-curricular activities
- further streamline the process for seeking this funding.

### **Recommendation 11: Provide all students in out-of-home care with a free Victorian Student Travel Pass**

That the Victorian Government provide all student-aged children and young people in out-of-home care with a Victorian Student Travel Pass free of charge.

### **Recommendation 12: Strengthen residential care providers' support for educational engagement**

That DFFH strengthen residential care workers' support for educational engagement of children and young people living in residential care settings by:

working with residential care providers to incorporate education-related information into their induction training for new residential care workers

- working with the Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare to support an education-related course to be made available to residential care workers as part of the *Residential Care Learning and Development Strategy*.

### **Recommendation 13: Advocate for trauma-informed teaching practices to be incorporated into teacher training**

That the Victorian Government advocate for the inclusion of effective trauma-informed and responsive teaching practices in initial teacher education programs as part of national reforms to improve teacher training. Trauma-informed practices should also be incorporated into early childhood educator training.

### **Recommendation 14: Adopt a ‘whole school’ approach to trauma**

That DE work to ensure that:

- government schools adopt a ‘whole school’ approach to trauma and embed trauma-informed practices throughout their school environments as part of the implementation of FISO 2.0 in schools
- trauma-informed training is offered as an option under School Readiness Funding for early years educators and other staff, and that early childhood education settings are encouraged to embed these practices into their operations.

### **Recommendation 15: Fund programs to encourage students in out-of-home care to pursue post-secondary education**

That the Victorian Government fund programs across government schools to encourage students in out-of-home care to pursue post-secondary education and training and to improve access to such opportunities. Funded programs should include the elements

provided in *Raising Expectations*, the *Game Changers Transitions Peer Mentoring Program* and the *Level Up Peer Mentoring Program*.

### **Recommendation 16: Training for school leadership teams to increase understanding of out-of-home care**

That DE require school leadership teams to participate in training on the out-of-home care system and the experiences of children and young people in care. This requirement should be triggered upon enrolment of a child or young person in out-of-home care in a government school.

### **Recommendation 17: Strengthen school and carer relationships and support carers as advocates for children and young people in out-of-home care**

That DE and DFFH strengthen the focus on carers in the *Early Childhood Agreement for Children in Out-of-Home Care* and the *Out-of-Home Care Education Commitment* to:

- support carers to navigate school and early childhood education systems and enhance their capacity to advocate for children and young people in their care
- build better connections between education settings and carers.

### **Recommendation 18: Strengthen school staff understanding of Child Protection, The Orange Door and community services**

That DE build the capacity and expertise of relevant school staff to support vulnerable students through a strengthened understanding of Child Protection, The Orange Door, and community services.

### **Recommendation 19: Support Aboriginal children and young people to report racism, and respond appropriately when they do**

That DE develop a clear and distinct policy that explicitly addresses racism in Victorian Government education settings. Youth friendly resources specifically for Aboriginal children and young people should also be developed to explain the policy and raise awareness of how to raise concerns about racism. The creation and design of these resources should be done in consultation with Aboriginal children and young people.

### **Recommendation 20: Audit the effectiveness of the Report Racism Hotline**

That DE conduct and publish an audit of the Report Racism Hotline to examine the types of complaints it receives and from whom, in addition to the effectiveness of processes for addressing complaints of racism.

### **Recommendation 21: Implement recommendations from the Community Understanding and Safety Training evaluation**

That DE implement the recommendations made in the EY Sweeney evaluation report of Community Understanding and Safety Training as a priority.

### **Recommendation 22: Develop youth relevant cultural safety resources**

That DE develop youth relevant cultural understanding and safety content to further support progress towards culturally safe schools.

### **Recommendation 23: Require schools to report on actions taken to address racism**

That DE require government schools to report on measures they are implementing to improve cultural safety and address racism as part of their FISO 2.0 Annual Implementation Plans and Annual Report to the School Community.

### **Recommendation 24: Strengthen educational supports to Aboriginal students in out-of-home care**

That DE strengthen the educational support it provides in schools to Aboriginal students in out-of-home care.

### **Recommendation 25: Develop clear guidance and monitoring in relation to the use of modified timetables**

That, as part of the development of DE's modified timetable policy, it provide clear instructions to government schools regarding:

- the appropriate use of modified timetables that are in the best interests of the child and upholds children and young people's right to education
- development of plans to return students to full-time schooling, including a specified date and review process
- accurate attendance recording to ensure students on modified timetables are not reflected in the data as attending full-time.

The policy should also require, in circumstances where modified timetables are implemented for students in out-of-home care, that:

- consideration of the modified timetable is included in Student Support Group meetings and discussed with carers
- the use of a modified timetable triggers consideration of targeted supports to facilitate a return to full-time school
- approval is obtained from a senior departmental officer in consultation with the relevant LOOKOUT Centre.

That DE also monitor schools' implementation of the modified timetable policy.

### **Recommendation 26: Review suspensions policy**

That DE update its suspensions policy to:

- implement an appropriate process to ensure that suspensions in primary schools only occur in exceptional circumstances and as a last resort
- ensure the suspension triggers an urgent assessment of appropriate supports required to address student behaviour
- require suspensions of children and young people in out-of-home care to be reported immediately to a senior departmental officer and the relevant LOOKOUT Centre to prompt consultation about alternative interventions and supports to address student behaviour
- monitor and review schools' implementation of post-suspension Student Support Group meetings to determine whether they occur and how effectively these support the re-engagement of students.

### **Recommendation 27: Improve understanding of and responses to the use of informal suspensions by schools**

That DE review schools' reasons for sending students home early to understand the regularity of schools using informal suspensions, the implications for students and their caregivers, and to inform what other supports are required in schools to reduce this practice.

### **Recommendation 28: Include consideration of the impact on children of pandemic orders**

That the Minister for Health implement a process to ensure consideration of the impact on children's rights, safety and wellbeing before making (or varying, extending, or revoking) pandemic orders and to include these considerations when publishing their Statement of Reasons for the making of pandemic orders.

### **Recommendation 29: Ensure the ability to measure and report on student disengagement in state emergencies**

That DE develop guidelines to ensure it can measure and report on the number of students who disengage during or immediately after periods of major disruption to education services.

### **Recommendation 30: Ensure strengths-based student involvement in Student Support Group meetings**

That DE strengthen in-school supports for children and young people in out-of-home care by reviewing the Student Support Group process to ensure that student voice is a key component of goal setting and review, and that it is strengths-based. This review should be conducted in collaboration with children and young people in care and the LOOKOUT Centres.

### **Recommendation 31: Require that cultural plans inform Individual Education Plans**

That DE, DFFH and partners of the Wungurilwil Gagapduir working group strengthen the requirements in the *Out-of-Home Care Education Commitment* for relevant information from Aboriginal students' cultural plans to be shared by care teams and case managers with education settings to inform their Individual Education Plan and cultural connections in schools and early childhood education centres.

### **Recommendation 32: Review Educational Needs Analysis model**

That as part of the review of the Educational Needs Analysis (ENA) model, DE and DFFH review the ENA assessment process and resourcing for primary, secondary and specialist school students to ensure:

- children and young people undergo an assessment soon after and no later than 90 days from when they enter out-of-home care to determine their educational needs and whether they require additional one-on-one support
- schools receive financial support to implement ENA recommendations for any enrolled children and young people in care
- additional funding is provided for appropriate behaviour assessments as required.

### **Recommendation 33: Review and strengthen the Designated Teacher role**

That DE, in collaboration with the LOOKOUT Centres, conduct a review of the Designated Teacher role to strengthen capacity to effectively fulfil the role's functions under the *Out-of-Home Care Education Commitment* (Partnering Agreement). The review should consider:

- which positions in schools should be assigned the Designated Teacher role and what time allowance should be provided to undertake the role's functions
- improving awareness of the role and its purpose among children and young people in out-of-home care to enhance their understanding of the Partnering Agreement and the supports available to them in schools
- any necessary improvements to the Designated Teacher training
- options to build a network of Designated Teachers and communities of practice.

### **Recommendation 34: Review school enrolment process for children and young people in out-of-home care**

That DE and DFFH, through LOOKOUT Centres, review current enrolment processes and develop a best practice tool for use across Victoria to ensure that children and young people in out-of-home care receive the appropriate supports when starting at a new school.

### **Recommendation 35: Consider integrating digital information systems about children and young people in out-of-home care**

That DE and DFFH assess the feasibility of integrating Student Insight and the Client Relationship Information System to ensure government schools receive real time information about the care arrangements for children and young people in out-of-home care.

### **Recommendation 36: Expedite the roll-out of Student Insight**

That DE resource and expedite the roll-out of Student Insight, and ensure that the system stores all information relevant to student learning and appropriate oversight of record keeping and information sharing.

### **Recommendation 37: Track educational engagement through the *Out-of-Home Care Education Commitment***

That when reviewing reporting requirements under the *Out-of-Home Care Education Commitment*, DE consider measures to track educational engagement and improved education and wellbeing outcomes for children and young people in out-of-home care.

### **Recommendation 38: Review and strengthen the Agreements**

That DE and DFFH conduct a comprehensive review of the *Early Childhood Agreement for Children in Out-of-Home Care* and the *Out-of-Home Care Education Commitment* (Partnering Agreement) to clarify their purpose and strengthen collaboration between key partners, including by:

- streamlining and elevating the current governance structure (ideally to be jointly chaired by the Secretaries to DE and DFFH)
- reviewing and clarifying the roles and accountabilities of signatories to the Agreements
- where necessary, expanding reporting requirements to reflect signatories' obligations under the Agreements and to measure performance, for example, information sharing responsibilities of case managers
- ensuring reporting requirements of the Partnering Agreement are met and moving to public reporting on compliance and student outcome data
- considering the scope, including whether the Partnering Agreement should include a focus on children and young people in out-of-home care who are disengaged from education, those in care transitioning from Secure Care and Youth Justice settings, and those who have recently been re-united with their parents.

### **Recommendation 39: Assess additional resource requirements for LOOKOUT Centres as a result of the review**

That, as part of the review of the *Early Childhood Agreement for Children in Out-of-Home Care* and the *Out-of-Home Care Education Commitment*, DE identify resource requirements for the LOOKOUT Centres to enable an effective combination of school capacity building and accountability.

### **Recommendation 40: Allocate necessary resources to LOOKOUT Centres based on the review**

That the Victorian Government provide additional funding to the LOOKOUT Centres based on the review of resource requirements referred to in Recommendation 39.

### **Recommendation 41: Track and monitor student movement between mainstream schools and Flexible Learning Options**

That the movement of students in out-of-home care between mainstream settings and FLOs be tracked with the intention of benchmarking and improving, over time, how students are meeting their agreed Individual Education Plans, including progressing to desired pathways of education.

### **Recommendation 42: Use the review of alternative education settings to improve practice**

That in its review of alternative education settings, DE:

- ensure that good practice is captured, shared, and replicated
  - uplift the quality of support and education provided
- where needed, including through the provision of adequate resourcing
  - track student outcomes, including movement between FLOs and mainstream schools
- review the policy settings to ensure decisions on the provision of alternative education (including FLOs, re-engagement programs and attendance at non-school senior secondary and foundation secondary providers) are in the best interests of a child or young person in out-of-home care.

### **Recommendation 43: Monitor transitions from Secure Care and Youth Justice into other education settings**

That DE and DFFH monitor the transitions of children and young people from Secure Care and Youth Justice settings to education settings as part of the *Out-of-Home Care Education Commitment* to ensure they comply with departmental guidelines and ensure that appropriate supports for re-engagement with education are provided.

### **Recommendation 44: Share best practice approaches to flexible learning**

That DE create opportunities for schools and FLOs, including those in alternative settings provided by independent and Catholic schools, to share best practice approaches to flexible learning.

### **Recommendation 45: Review resourcing requirements for one-to-one education supports**

That the Victorian Government review resourcing for and access to one-to-one education supports provided to children and young people in out-of-home care to enable:

- manageable caseloads for one-to-one teaching support
- needs-based access for all children and young people in care across the state.

### **Recommendation 46: Ensure the model of one-to-one teaching support is effective**

That one-to-one teaching support for children and young people in out-of-home care that is funded by the Victorian Government:

- be provided by qualified teachers
- include a focus on literacy and numeracy
- include advocacy for a child or young person in relevant meetings, including in Student Support Group and care team meetings
- involve liaison with other workers and carers to encourage educational engagement
- be provided flexibly across placement changes by the same teacher.

### **Recommendation 47: Ensure appropriate collaboration between DE and DFFH to ensure that referrals to appropriate supports are made in a timely way**

That DE and DFFH collaborate so that all relevant information about children and young people in out-of-home care, including chronic absences, Individual Education Plan progress, Student Support Group meetings and Educational Needs Analysis recommendations are used to ensure that referrals to one-to-one education supports are made in a timely and appropriate way, rather than after a child or young person has already disengaged.



COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN  
AND YOUNG PEOPLE

### **Commission for Children and Young People logo**

The logo represents our vision for all children to be strong in health, education, culture and identity, and face the world with confidence.

The people are connected, equal in size and importance, and there is a fluidity that binds them together.

The mission of the Commission is for all young Victorians to achieve these goals.

The symbol is a Koori design created by Marcus Lee for the Commission.

The Commission respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the country throughout Victoria and pays respect to the ongoing living cultures of First Peoples.



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