

SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKERS

IN TASMANIAN GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION
learners first



Did you know?

Did you know that all government schools have access to school social work services (either on site or on call).

Students within schools have diverse abilities and needs. School social work is driven by a deep belief that every person has the right to positive and successful learning experiences.

School social workers facilitate students' access to support and resources. They work at the interface between the student, school organisation and curriculum, peers, family, neighbourhood and wider society to promote participation and achievement.



Support available

School social workers have professional skills and knowledge in:

- Emergency financial assistance
- Personal safety and wellbeing
- Attendance and retention
- Relationships
- Mental Health: depression, anxiety, self-harm, suicidal thoughts
- Grief and loss
- Parenting support
- Homelessness
- Pregnancy
- Sexual Health
- Sexuality
- Drugs and alcohol
- Critical Incidents
- Bullying
- Conflict resolution and restorative justice

Professional tasks may include

- Early intervention programmes including counselling, case management and group work
- Prioritising service delivery based on need
- Responding to critical incidents or crises
- Home/school liaison with student, parents and school staff
- Mediation between home, school and/or other agencies
- Referral to, and liaison with, other community agencies



- Provision of information and resources to students, parents, teachers and other agencies
- Provision of professional development
- Contribution to policy development
- Limited financial assistance with school uniforms in exceptional circumstances
- Support and advice regarding flexible education provisions

Access and referral

Access to the school social worker:

- Generally, students are referred by teaching or senior staff.
- Guardians can make referrals directly
- School social workers are key referrers to external agencies
- Students can also self-refer without parent consent however, it is considered best practice to inform, and work with, guardians.

For referral to the school social worker service, a referral form is necessary. This can be obtained from the school.

Confidentiality

The social work service is free and confidential.

Confidential information can only be shared or released by consent or by law, under the *Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1997*.

Social workers cannot keep matters of personal safety confidential and are mandated reporters of child abuse.

Professional standards

Please see the Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW) website for more information on the social work profession including guiding values and ethics. www.aasw.asn.au

School social work has a history of more than 50 years in Australia. School social work has over the years responded to social change, new government policy with changed resource environment, and professional theory and practice development, but always kept at its core the support of students to achieve their potential in all aspects of academic and personal learning at school. (Australian Association of Social Workers, 2011)

Where can I get more information?

- Talk to your child's teacher or principal.
- Visit the Department of Education website: www.education.tas.gov.au

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