

This document summarises the key actions for schools & settings to support young people in community youth justice

These actions form part of a statewide model of support for young people in youth justice (details in the [Policy Advisory Library](#)).

Young people in youth justice are some of Victoria’s MOST vulnerable, many of whom have highly complex barriers to engagement in education.

There is a significant over representation of young people with past histories of trauma, including intergenerational trauma. For example 18 per cent of young people in youth justice identify as Aboriginal, despite making up 1.6 percent of the general Victorian population of young people (further details on reverse side).

Evidence shows that engagement in education is the most important protective factor for young people in youth justice, & that engagement is driven through strong, caring & empathetic relationships with educators.

The listed actions have been designed to ensure that every young person in youth justice is afforded their right to an education (this right is enshrined in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* & reinforced through the *Education Training & Reform Act, 2006*).

By empowering & supporting young people in community youth justice, and taking simple actions to promote self belief and make connections, educators can have a significant impact on their lives.

Checklist of actions

Upon being advised that a student is engaged in community youth justice:

✓	Engage with the student & their parents/carers	A member of the school leadership team should engage with the student & their parents/carers , demonstrating empathy & care, employing active listening & highlighting that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • you have been made aware that the student is in youth justice (if they haven’t yet shared this information with you), & that this information was provided to you to enable additional supports to be put in place for them/their child (care should be taken not to press for details about any alleged/offences) • you will ensure that this information is treated sensitively & respect the student’s right to privacy • additional support will be provided to the student to support their positive engagement in education & that the first step will involve appointing a learning mentor, who will advocate for the young person’s needs & act as a support & role model. Follow link for tips on cross cultural communication.
✓	Appoint a learning mentor	Appoint a learning mentor , by seeking the young person’s feedback on staff they may already have built rapport with, & weighing this up against considerations about a staff members capabilities & willingness to take on the role. The learning mentor can provide ongoing positive communication with the young person, drawing out their aspirations & supporting them to build their positive sense of self & ensure they feel heard & a valued part of the school community.
✓	Convene a Student Support Group (SSG)	Convene a Student Support Group (SSG) . The SSG may comprising the student & their parents/carers, a member of the teaching staff and/or school leadership team, the learning mentor, student wellbeing staff member & other identified supports. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Note that for SSGs to be successful all attendees must demonstrate a positive regard for the young person & engage in strengths-based conversations. Care should also be taken to ensure young people & their parents/carers are empowered to participation & that the forum is respectful & culturally safe forum.</i> • <i>Note also that Youth Justice Cases Managers may contact the school to seek input into Case Planning and/or to seek a staff member to attend a Care Team meeting (usually chaired by the case manager). This collaborative planning can help to mobilise additional supports & may support a young persons youth justice outcomes.</i> • Refer to link for a map of wellbeing interventions & supports).
✓	Develop, & implement an Individual Education Plan (IEP)	Through the SSG, develop an IEP , identifying a young person’s needs & strengths & mobilising the supports needed to enable them to positively engage in their education. Consider available supports (reverse side) & engage with your area team if more support is needed to address complex barriers to engagement. Implement & review the IEP , re-convening a Student Support Group at agreed intervals.
✓	Provide regular check-ins	Provide regular check-ins with the young person, maintain strong relationships & ensure that any changing needs or signs of disengagement are addressed (e.g. pending the needs of a young person, an effective strategy may be to provide an informal daily check-in with learning mentor or another identified staff member).
✓	Alert the area team	Where a young person is showing signs of disengagement (e.g. noted in their demeanour, learning outcomes or attendance rates), work with the young person (& SSG where appropriate) to identify barriers to engagement & available supports. Alert the area team if (despite local interventions), the young person appears to be disengaging. You can also contact your local Navigator Coordinator here OR make an online referral here .

Key questions

How will I know if a student is involved in community youth justice?

You may be informed that a young person is involved in community youth justice by the young person, their parent/carer, the youth justice case manager or via the area team. Note that area teams are provided with a monthly snapshot of all young people in youth justice for monitoring & follow-up, and may contact schools seeking an enrolment or for support.

What is community youth justice?

In Victoria, most young people who appear before the Children's courts on a criminal matter are diverted from custody on Intensive Bail/Youth Control Orders & Community-Based Orders (community youth justice).

Young people in community youth justice are subject to a range of conditions & are allocated a youth justice case manager, to identify their criminogenic needs & risks & coordinate supports to address these.

Young people may also be supported by the DET's Education Justice Initiative workers, who provide information, referral and advocacy services to re/connect young people engaged in youth justice back into education.

Key actions for providing in-reach & supporting young people in custody are [here](#).

What are the key supports that our school should provide?

In order to support young people in community youth justice to reach their potential schools will engage with the student & their parent/carer to:

- appoint a learning mentor
- establish & review an Individual Education Plan (IEP)
- convene a Student Support Group
- regularly check-in with the young person, monitoring their engagement & modifying supports accordingly.

About Victoria's Youth Justice System

In Victoria, most young people who appear before the Children's courts on a criminal matter are diverted from custody on Intensive Bail/Youth Control Orders & Community-Based Orders.

Children under 10 do not enter the youth justice system as they fall below the age of "criminal responsibility" & Victoria's dual-track system enables young people between 18 & 20 to be sentenced to a youth justice facility, where appropriate.

On any given day, there are approximately:

- 590 young people under 18 in community youth justice (each young person is assigned a Youth Justice Case Manager, who works to identify risks & coordinate support)
- 128 young people under 18 in custody (they are sentenced or remanded at either the Parkville Youth Justice Precinct or the Malmsbury Youth Justice Precinct).

With the significant diversionary programs, Victoria has a relatively low rates of young people in custody. For those who are held in custody, onsite education is provided 6 days a week, 52 week year via Parkville College. Parkville College is a government school that delivers primary & secondary education, including Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) & Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) & Vocational Education & Training (VET) through an auspice arrangement with Melbourne Polytechnic.

Young people appearing before 22 of the high-volume Children's Courts & in any of Victoria's Koorie Children's Courts can access Education Justice Initiative workers who provide information, referral & advocacy services.

About young people in Victoria's Youth Justice System

Young people in Victoria's youth justice are some of the State's most vulnerable & there is a significant over-representation of some communities & vulnerable groups.

Reflecting patterns of intergenerational trauma associated with dispossession, marginalisation, racism & the stolen generations, Aboriginal young people are significantly over represented in youth justice. Where 18 per cent of young people in youth justice identify as Aboriginal, despite making up 1.6 percent of the general Victorian population of young people.

Additionally, culturally & linguistically diverse young people make up 39 per cent of young people in youth justice, with notable populations of young people from African & Pasifika backgrounds.

Of young people in youth justice:

- 53% were a victim of abuse, trauma or neglect as a child
- 41% either have a current child protection case (or were previously subject to a child protection order)
- 49% present with mental health issues
- 42% have been witness to family violence
- 52% have a history of alcohol & drug use
- 21% live in unsafe or unstable housing
- 31% present with cognitive difficulties that impact on daily functioning (and 4% are NDIS participants).

Experiences of trauma create complex barriers to engagement in education. Trauma can significantly disrupt development, & impact on behaviours & relationships. Exposure to multiple traumas can lead to even higher rates of learning & behavioural problems.

Key contacts & supports

Area Teams

Contact your local area team for support addressing complex barriers to engagement. Contact details available [here](#).

Navigator

Contact your local Navigator Coordinator [here](#) OR make an online referral [here](#), to seek case management support if a young person is disengaging from education

LOOKOUT Education Support Centres

Contact your LOOKOUT centre to support you to build your school's capacity to support young people in youth justice.

South Western Victoria Region
Principal: Andrew Kohane
lookout.swv@education.vic.gov.au

South Eastern Victoria Region
Principal: Murray Geddes
lookout.sev@education.vic.gov.au

North Western Victoria Region
Principal: Marise Boff
lookout.nwv@education.vic.gov.au

North Eastern Victoria Region
Principal: David Rose
lookout.nev@education.vic.gov.au

Tiered interventions & supports

A map of available tiered interventions & supports is available [here](#). This map includes individual interventions for young people with complex barriers to engagement.

