

# Youth Support Coordinator Initiative Operational Guidelines



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## Overview

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The purpose of these guidelines is to:

- outline the purpose of the Youth Support Coordinator Initiative (YSCI); and
- provide relevant information about the YSCI to Queensland state schools, Youth Support Coordinators (YSCs), Regional Youth Support Coordinators (RYSCs), Accredited Employing Authorities (AEAs) and regional staff.

YSCs and their managers should refer to the [Youth Support Coordinator Practice Guidelines](#) for specific information about YSC duties and responsibilities.

Unless stated otherwise, information in these guidelines applies to *all* YSCs – that is, YSCs employed directly by a state school *and* YSCs employed by an AEA.

## Context

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The Department of Education (DoE) is committed to supporting all young people to engage in education or training to enhance their opportunities for further education and sustainable employment.

The YSCI targets young people in Years 10 to 12 who are at risk of disengaging or have already disengaged from education. For these young people, the YSCI aims to:

- increase participation;
- support the attainment of Year 12 or an equivalent qualification;
- improve successful transitions;
- promote social inclusion; and
- reduce educational disadvantage.

In the absence of additional support, and at the region's discretion, individual schools may decide that the YSC role also provides transition support to young people who have had their enrolment cancelled.

## Schools' YSCI allocation

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### Allocation methodology

There is no application process for schools to receive a YSCI allocation. A school's eligibility is determined through an allocation methodology, based on the following criteria:

- the size of the school (50 or more students in Years 9 to 11);

- the level of need (assessed using the Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage [ICSEA], which incorporates factors such as socio-economic background, rural and remote locations and Indigeneity); and
- a weighting for schools with more than two students in Years 9 to 11 who are in care.

To determine schools' allocation for the 2021-23 funding cycle, the following caps were placed on schools' previous YSCI allocation gains and losses:

- an increase to schools' 2020 allocation of 0.1 FTE (excluding new schools receiving an allocation); and
- a reduction to schools' 2020 allocation of 25% (unless a school became ineligible for an allocation based on having an ICSEA of 1000 or above).

This methodology ensures that students who are most in need receive services to support their engagement with education.

Schools deemed eligible by the methodology receive their FTE allocation (based on the AO3 YSC pay scale) through School Budget Solution (SBS). The allocation is provided to purchase front-line services or programs in line with the goals of the YSCI. See [YSCI Core funding](#).

YSCI allocations are reviewed every three years, meaning that:

- when a school is deemed eligible, their allocation remains fixed for three years;
- allocations are subject to change every three years, based on the methodology; and
- schools should take into account the three-year allocation cycle when determining the length of a YSC's contract.

## Options for using allocation

Schools receiving a YSCI allocation have the flexibility to make local decisions about the disbursement of the allocation, within the confines of appropriate options for use (presented in the table below). When selecting how to use their allocation, schools are advised to consult with the RYSC, regional office staff, senior school staff, other student support staff and relevant members of the school community.

<b>School directly employs a YSC</b>	<p>Schools may choose to directly employ a YSC. This option allows schools to maximise the front-line services provided through their FTE allocation. Schools can use the available <a href="#">Role Description</a> to undertake a local recruitment process. Schools are responsible for the line management of the YSC.</p> <p>Schools have the flexibility to use their allocation to respond to the needs of students, including providing more support for a defined period. This approach may be useful if</p>
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	<p>there are specific times in the year when students are more likely to disengage from education. For example, a 0.5 FTE allocation for a full year may be used only for six months, therefore allowing the recruitment of a full-time (1.0 FTE) for that shorter period.</p>
<p><b>School tops up existing youth support role time</b></p>	<p>Schools may elect to use their FTE allocation to purchase services or top up existing services from student welfare workers, social workers or psychologists to work with students <b>in line with the intent of the YSCI.</b></p> <p>For example, School A receives a 0.5 FTE YSCI allocation and already employs a part-time youth worker in the school. School A increases the position to full-time employment to perform the duties of their current role and that of the YSC role.</p> <p><b>YSCI funds may not be used to purchase/top-up the services of a VET coordinator, school chaplain, guidance officer, teacher or teacher aide.</b></p>
<p><b>Convert allocation to SBS staffing units to purchase a YSC from an AEA</b></p>	<p>In order to establish a fee-for-service arrangement with an AEA to deliver a youth support role, schools would school purchase the service rather than utilise their FTE allocation. This will result in a (profile) credit in the SBS, which if not consumed is reimbursed back to schools following the end of year SBS reconciliation process.</p> <p>Due to management fees charged by an AEA, purchase of services from an AEA may result in a lower level of front-line service than would the direct employment option. However, the AEA does direct this fee toward line management responsibilities for the YSC.</p>
<p><b>Convert allocation to SBS staffing units to purchase programs</b></p>	<p>Schools may choose to purchase programs/courses/training that directly benefit students in line with the intent of the YSCI. For example, to gain course certification, or to access social and emotional wellbeing or life skills programs.</p> <p>This will result in a (profile) credit in the SBS, which if not consumed is reimbursed back to schools following the end of year SBS reconciliation process.</p>
<p><b>Clustering with other local schools to pool funds for use on one of the</b></p>	<p>Local negotiations may enable schools to pool their allocation with other schools.</p> <p>Schools entering into cluster arrangements with other schools will need to negotiate an agreement in relation to recruitment, site-base and line management leadership of the YSC. Alternatively, if engaging a YSC through an AEA, schools will need to negotiate management of the YSC and the requirements of each school with the AEA.</p>

<b>options above.</b>	<p>Schools may utilise the SBS Credit Transfer function to transfer the hub/host school, and pool their resources in a cluster model with other schools to purchase programs/courses/training.</p> <p>The RYSC is to be notified of any arrangement and can provide advice during the negotiations if required.</p>
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Following a decision about how to use their YSCI allocation, schools will:

- profile the position as Youth Support Coordinator Initiative from the outset, indicating the allocated FTE;
- give themselves a credit against the YSCI, on the Credits and Usage page so that it is not merged with credits for other programs;
- if using the credit to ‘top-up’ another approved youth support role, enter a usage record line for this position on the Credits and Usage page. In the reason field indicate usage of YSC credits;
- if employing a YSC through an AEA, or purchasing programs, write this information on a credit record line. Then in the reason field indicate the specific purpose of the credit; and
- use their own funds (record the purchase on the SBS school purchase page) throughout the year. The school will be reimbursed through the SBS reconciliation at the end of the calendar year. NOTE: If the credits claimed for this position are not used for the identified purpose, and the school does not have a credit balance, or has a negative credit balance at the end of the year, they will not receive a payout (the school will be swept for any negative balance).

## Reporting

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### Schools’ use of YSCI allocation

Prior to the beginning of each semester, schools in the YSCI are required to report to their RYSC how they propose to use their FTE allocation. The RYSC is required to gather this information, collate responses from their region into a spreadsheet and return the data to central office for processing.

Schools have the flexibility to change how they use their allocation during the year and choose another option from the table above. In these circumstances, the principal (or delegate) and the RYSC should discuss the proposed change and ensure that adequate funds remain for the YSCI in SBS. The RYSC is required to provide updated information about use of the allocation to central office.

### YSC activities

There is an expectation that YSCs produce a data report once per term that outlines their work with students participating in the YSCI. This report may form part of supervision conversations with the RYSC and, if requested, be shared with the Assistant Regional Director, Regional Director and central office.

## Discretionary funds

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### YSCI allocation

Schools with a YSCI allocation receive discretionary funds each year of \$8000 per 1.0 FTE. The amount an individual school receives is proportional to their allocation (for example, a school with a 0.2 FTE allocation will receive \$1600 per year). The school receives these discretionary funds regardless of the way they have decided to use their FTE allocation. These funds are for the purchase of goods and services that align with the objectives of the YSCI and are for the benefit of students in the target group. YSCI discretionary funds cannot be used towards other programs or purchases unrelated to the YSCI.

Examples of appropriate use of the funds include, but are not limited to:

- assisting students with transport costs, uniforms, shoes, food, or other costs to support their attendance at school;
- assisting students to access Information and Communication Technology (ICT) necessary to continue their learning;
- professional development for YSCs specific to their role;
- travel costs for YSCs between cluster schools;
- conducting or organising programs for students; and
- purchasing ICT equipment.

Administrative issues to consider regarding use of the funding include:

- discretionary funds are distributed to schools in Semester 1 (March) and Semester 2 (July) via the School Appropriation Payments Application (SAPA) payment system;
- YSCI funds should be included in the school budget and be specifically linked to the YSCI;
- YSCs should discuss with their RYSC if the proposed use of funds is suitable;
- YSCs must keep all receipts for reconciliation by their finance team; and
- YSCs are required to record expended funds and report them to the RYSC in the quarterly YSC data report (or as requested by the regional staff, the Regional Director or central office).

## RYSC position

There is a 1.0 FTE [RYSC position](#) (AO7) in each region. Each RYSC receives discretionary funds each year. For the 2020-21 financial year, Metropolitan region has received \$13,890 and each of the other six regions have received \$13,885. These funds are accessed through regional internal orders, are for the purchase of goods and services that align with the objectives of the YSCI, and are for the benefit of students in the target group.

RYSC discretionary funds cannot be used towards other programs or purchases unrelated to the YSCI.

Examples of appropriate use of RYSC discretionary funding include, but are not limited to:

- assisting students with transport costs, uniforms, shoes, food, or other costs to support their attendance at school;
- assisting students to access ICT necessary to continue their learning;
- professional development for RYSCs specific to their role;
- conducting or organising professional development for YSCs;
- travel costs to meet with YSCs;
- conducting or organising programs for students; and
- purchasing ICT equipment.

Administrative issues to consider regarding use of the funding include:

- RYSCs must seek written approval from their line manager prior to the regional finance team approving the release of funds;
- RYSCs must keep all receipts for reconciliation by their finance team; and
- in rare cases, RYSCs may be required to discuss planned use of funds with their Assistant Regional Director to obtain approval.

Further information about discretionary funds is located on the [Core funding](#) page.

## Student protection

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All RYSCs and YSCs must comply with relevant requirements and responsibilities in the department's [Student Protection](#) procedure, [Student Protection Guidelines](#) and [Allegations Against Employees in the Area of Student Protection](#) procedure. This includes obligations to respond to suspected harm or risk of harm, support vulnerable students, complete student protection training and share information under the *Child Protection Act 1999*.

Note: Also refer to 'Management of the YSCI' section below for information about complying with the department's [Working with children authority](#) procedure.

## Reporting

YSCs employed by the school can use the *OneSchool Student Protection Reporting Module (SPR)* to report possible harm to a student.

To create a new SPR the YSC should apply the following steps:

- hover over the *Student* tab (top left-hand corner) and the *Student Protection Reporting* item will be at the bottom of the list.
- select this item and a window to search for a student name will appear.
- when the student name appears, the user will see a table with the option to click 'add new'.
- click the 'Add New' button and the 'Create Student Protection Report' popup screen will display.
- enter the Student Name or EQ ID and select the student from the displayed list.
- select 'Create Report' to begin the new SPR.

YSCs employed through an AEA cannot access OneSchool. As such, schools must provide these YSCs with a secure place on school grounds to keep confidential case notes. These case notes remain the property of the school.

If YSCs employed through an AEA need to create an SPR, they must inform the principal, deputy principal or Guidance Officer of the concerns and get their assistance.

Copies of any documents should also be provided to the principal.

## Mandatory training

The principal must ensure that all YSCs undertake [Student protection training](#) and the [Mandatory all-staff training program](#).

For YSCs employed through an AEA this means that they must read and sign the [Student protection fact sheet](#) and [Key messages course](#) and have it verified by the supervisor, manager or principal at the school every 12 months. This is in lieu of the online mandatory training that staff employed by the department must complete each year.

For AEAs already employing a YSC in a school, the RYSC will ensure the YSC receives the documents.

## Code of conduct

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All RYSCs and YSCs are bound by the [Code of Conduct for the Queensland Public Service](#) (the Code) at all times.

Conduct of an RYSC or school-employed YSC that raises suspicion of a possible breach must be reported to the officer's line manager and the department's Integrity and Employee Relations Unit, as per [departmental requirements](#) in relation to breaches of the Code.

If a YSC is employed by an AEA, the responsibility to investigate alleged breaches relating to the Code rests with the AEA. Action taken will depend on the nature and severity of the alleged breach.

## Confidentiality

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Section 426 of the [Education \(General Provisions\) Act 2006](#) states that employees of a state school must not record, use or disclose a student's personal information unless one of the exemptions outlined in the section applies. Under this provision, employees include school staff members and persons engaged by the department or principal under a contract for services.

To ensure YSCs employed by an AEA comply with confidentiality requirements, the Standing Offer Arrangement (SOA) between AEA's and the department requires these YSCs to sign the [Deed of Confidentiality, Privacy and Conflicts of Interest](#). After being downloaded by school staff and given to the AEA, the YSC must provide a signed copy of this document to the principal prior to starting at the school.

All RYSCs and YSCs have a responsibility to share information with their line manager at the school and with the principal if a student's safety is at risk.

## Consent for services

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Students' participation in the YSCI is voluntary, whether they self-refer or are referred to a YSC by staff.

Following an initial meeting, students must provide written consent before they can continue to access the YSC. To provide students with relevant information and obtain their informed consent, the YSC is required to provide students with the [Information for Students document and Consent form](#). The form provides details of the how the student's information will be collected and the limits of confidentiality when accessing the service. To obtain informed consent, the YSC must deem the student competent to do so. Schools must provide YSCs with a secure storage location in which to keep signed consent forms.

## Record management

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YSCs who are direct employees of the department can access and use OneSchool for the recording of confidential information, by using one of the following options, the:

- *Contact* tab and restrict access to the necessary role/s (e.g. Principal, Deputy Principal, Guidance Officer etc.)

- *Support* tab, *Referrals and Reports* and again restrict access to the necessary role/s.
- *Support* tab, *Student Plan, Support Provisions* if restricted access is not required.

The department's [Records disposal freezes](#) information states that in June 2018, the Queensland State Archivist imposed a records disposal freeze, affecting all child/student records that may relate to child safety and wellbeing, including child sexual abuse. This freeze was removed in March 2020. The department is now seeking approval for the removal of the departmental freeze. No authorised disposal for these types of records is permitted until this departmental freeze is rescinded by the State Archivist.

Further information can be found at [Records retention and disposal](#) and in the [Information Security](#) procedure.

## Employment and management of YSCs

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### Recruitment and selection

The YSC role does not have any mandatory qualifications. It is highly desirable that applicants have obtained, at a minimum, an Australian Qualifications Framework [Community Services Training Package Certificate IV in Youth Work](#) or equivalent.

Schools employing a YSC:

- are bound by the [Public Service Commission Recruitment and Selection](#) directive;
- should refer to the department's resources in relation to [selecting a candidate](#);
- can request the presence of the RYSC on the interview panel;
- should inform the RYSC of the start date of the new YSC so that the RYSC can provide support; and
- must comply with the requirements in the [Working with children authority](#) procedure, which includes that:
  - Other than teachers, and registered health practitioners working within their professional capacity, all persons seeking to work for the department in regulated employment with children must:
    - apply for, fund and obtain a blue card (or exemption card) **prior** to engaging in work with the department (refer to [Blue Card Services](#) regarding the relevant application process); and
    - provide evidence of their blue card (or exemption card), as prescribed by the department, when applying for the role.

For principals and regional staff seeking more information about their responsibilities in line with changes to Blue card requirements, please read page 3 of the [Working with children authority](#) procedure.

If a YSC is employed through an open merit process, the person can be extended in the position beyond 12 months without conducting a new recruitment process. Regional HR personnel with delegation to approve recruitment processes are responsible for signing off on the open merit process for the position.

As with other public servants working in schools, YSCs are permitted to negotiate with their line managers to work above 7.25 hours per day to enable them to accrue additional hours to cover time off during school holiday periods.

Alternatively, it may suit the school to have the YSC continue to work between terms (i.e. during school holidays) to ensure students remain engaged and return to school. Schools may provide the YSC with access to part of the school, or negotiate with an organisation to base the YSC at another site during school holidays (with an expectation that the school would meet any costs for such arrangements).

## Professional supervision

Professional supervision for YSCs must be provided due to the sensitive nature of their work. Supervision provides YSCs an opportunity to reflect on work practices, debrief, receive coaching and mentoring, and explore professional development needs with an independent person who has greater experience, skills or knowledge.

The YSC may receive supervision from the RYSC or by another person determined by the school and the region.

## Complaint management and resolution

Issues, problems or conflicts related to YSCs employed directly by a school should, wherever possible, be addressed at the school level. For YSCs employed by an AEA, issues should be addressed between the school and the AEA.

Any complaints should be kept confidential and dealt with in a professional manner, as per the following procedures:

- [Individual employee grievances procedure](#)
- [Customer complaints management](#)
- [Reporting fraud and corruption](#)
- [Conflict of interest](#)

Complaints involving staff that relate to student protection concerns should be managed using the process outlined in [Allegations against employees in the area of student protection](#), which includes informing the department's Integrity and Employee Relations Unit.

Where a complaint about services provided by an AEA has not been successfully resolved at a local level, the complaint should be managed in accordance with the terms of the SOA.

## Facilities and equipment

Where possible, schools should provide YSCs with access to the following at their school:

- a lockable filing cabinet;
- a desk, telephone, photocopier and computer, with ready access to email facilities and relevant school-based information technology systems\*; and
- a private room for confidential student discussions when required.

\* YSCs employed through an AEA are not permitted access to OneSchool.

## Receipt of gifts

Any gifts received by a staff member during their employment at a school must be declared to the principal (and, if relevant, the AEA) as outlined in the [Receipt of Gifts and Benefits by Employees of the Department](#) procedure.

## Employing services through an AEA

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### Purchasing services

An AEA is a Non-Government Organisation that has been approved by the department as an organisation to provide services to the department. AEAs must complete an Invitation to Offer procurement process for endorsement as a department-approved provider of the YSCI. Schools can purchase services through the [List of approved AEAs](#). Schools using funds to purchase a service through an AEA must complete a purchase order and a [Schedule A: Contract Schedule](#) prior to the commencement of services. These documents act as a service agreement between the school and AEA and outline provision of services by the YSC and AEA.

If a school is unable to source the required services through a listed AEA (e.g. due to geographical remoteness), schools can approach an alternate local organisation to become part of the SOA. The school can contact [Procurement.GGS@qed.qld.gov.au](mailto:Procurement.GGS@qed.qld.gov.au) for information on the application process.

Schools that choose to purchase a YSC or program, either individually or in a cluster with other schools must follow the relevant processes detailed in the [Purchasing and Procurement](#) procedure and the department's [Supply arrangements](#) information.

### AEA role

In schools where a YSC is employed through an AEA, the AEA is responsible for:

- recruiting, selecting and employing an appropriate YSC through a meritorious selection process;
- ensuring the YSC has a current valid Blue Card before commencing child-related work (for further information about blue card requirements and processes refer to the Queensland Government [Blue Card Services website](#));
- providing organisational-based induction and training to the YSC;
- ensuring the YSC complies with these Guidelines, [YSC Practice Guidelines](#) and related documents;
- ensuring the relevant RYSC has been contacted through the [Regional office](#) so that they can liaise with and provide support to the YSC;
- providing quarterly reports to the department about the services of the YSC, as outlined in the SOA;
- providing ongoing professional development, supervision and support to the YSC; and
- ensuring their staff understand the appropriate boundaries of professional conduct and personal interaction with students as outlined in the legislative and policy frameworks named in these Guidelines.

## Payment

When paying an AEA for YSCI services, the payment period must not exceed three months. Purchase orders for the maximum period of 12 months should be broken into four line items of three months each. Schools may negotiate with the AEA alternative arrangements regarding payments (e.g. monthly) and document the payment schedule in the purchase order.

The purchase order must include the SOA tender number QEDSOA – 91112 and outline the following:

- date when services are expected to commence at the school;
- date when services are expected to cease at the school;
- details of the services required (e.g. youth support coordinator service);
- number of hours per week/term the services are to be provided at the school;
- part-payment schedule;
- name of the AEA and key contact details;
- contact person for services at school; and
- any other requirements (e.g. reporting requirements to principal or other nominated school staff).

Schools may negotiate with the AEA the length of the arrangement. The initial purchase order and any payments to the AEA must be finalised prior to the commencement of services at the school. The purchase order may be altered or cancelled by the school. Written notice must be provided to the AEA notifying them of the intention to alter or cancel the service. It is recommended that any notice to change the service be reasonable and no less than one school term.

It is mandatory that the fee charged by an AEA remains below \$60 per hour, as per the [YSCI Price list](#), with a preference that the administrative fee charged by the AEA is below 15% of the total payment.

## Resources

All resources purchased by the school remain the property of the school. Resources purchased by the AEA remain the property of the AEA.

## Staff changes

A school and/or an AEA may reasonably seek to replace a YSC at any time. Resignation, prolonged absence or poor performance (subject to a resolution process) are all viable reasons for seeking a replacement YSC. A school may also need to change AEA to meet the needs of their students.

## Annual survey

Schools purchasing a YSC through an AEA participate in the annual customer satisfaction survey as a requirement of the SOA. On a scale of one to five, the survey measures the extent to which schools:

- are satisfied with the communication and support provided by the AEA; and
- perceive the services provided by the AEA to be effective.

Since multiple schools may be purchasing a service through an individual AEA, data is collated to determine the average score on each item for each AEA. AEA's must receive an average rating of three or above for each question in the survey.

If an AEA fails to meet this requirement for a single year, the AEA must provide the department with a list of rectification actions and a timeline for these to be implemented. If an AEA fails to meet the requirement for two consecutive years, the AEA may be in material breach of the SOA, possibly resulting in cancellation of the Arrangement.