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PRACTICE STANDARDS

for

School Social Workers

August 2008

Based on the Australian Association of Social Workers
Practice Standards for Social Workers: Achieving Outcomes (2003)

Developed by: Chris Barrett, Chris Downing, John Frederick, Linda Johannsen & Donna Riseley
for the AASW (Victorian Branch) School Social Workers Special Interest Group

PRACTICE STANDARDS

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Introduction

The Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW) School Social Work Special Interest Group (SSWSIG) has developed the standards in this document to describe school social work as a specific field of social work practice and acknowledge the unique contribution that school social work makes to successful educational outcomes for students in Australian school systems. Practice standards describe the interaction between professional knowledge and skills, professional education and organisational environment that nurtures the on-going development of best quality school social work practice.

All social work practice is subject to the *Practice Standards for Social Workers: Achieving Outcomes* (AASW 2003). The *Practice Standards for School Social Workers* (2008) is firmly based on these standards.

The AASW *Code of Ethics* (1999) and associated By-Laws (2004) provides the foundation for social work practice standards. The values, principles and ethical behaviour detailed in the *Code of Ethics* underpin all social work practice and, therefore, all of the practice standards in this document. *Practice Standards for Social Workers: Achieving Outcomes* (AASW 2003), and the AASW *Code of Ethics* should therefore be used in conjunction with *Practice Standards for School Social Workers* (2008).

The guidelines complement three other key AASW documents and quality mechanisms within the profession.

These are:

- *Policy and Procedures for Establishing Eligibility for Membership of the AASW* (2000);
- *Continuing Professional Education Policy* (2000); and
- *National Practice Standards of the Australian Association of Social Workers: Supervision* (1993).

Aim of Practice Standards

The aim of the standards is to provide:

- a guide to school social work practice as a special mode of social work practice;
- an understanding of methods of intervention in school settings;
- a measure of accountability for school social workers;
- a basis for the standardisation of school social work practice across Australia;
- a basis for quality guarantee, expectations and accountability for clients, employing schools and school systems and other professionals;
- a benchmark for the assessment of school social work practice;
- a guide for planning on-going improvement in school social work service delivery;
- a guide for planning ongoing professional development.

Main areas of social work practice

School social work is a specific field of social work practice, and encompasses the main areas of social work practice within educational settings:

1. Direct Practice
2. Service Management
3. Organisational Development and System Change
4. Policy
5. Research
6. Education and Professional Development.

Format of the standards

The school social work standards have been framed in terms of outcomes.

In each of the six main areas of school social work practice there is:

- an **Objective** stated as an outcome;
- a **Summary** of the essential professional and practice issues and concerns relating to that area of school social work practice;
- a list of the **Key Aspects and Concepts**;
- outcome **Standards** for each of the key aspects of practice as required by the *Practice Standards for Social Workers: Achieving Outcomes* (AASW 2003); and
- **Indicators** of minimum expected school social work performance outcomes.

This emphasis on outcomes reflects:

- the importance of school social workers looking at and evaluating the impact of their practice; and
- the importance of being able to demonstrate that social work involvement is effective in maximising students' learning potential.

Application of the standards

The standards apply to all school social work practice and are designed to cover a wide range of work situations.

Individual school social workers can choose what is most relevant and applicable to their particular work situation and defined role. School social work is a specific field of practice with particular outcomes related to the primary and secondary student as learner on the road to achieving social justice and personal fulfillment through education.

However, the social work knowledge and skills base required does not change. A social worker may not be working in an identified school social work position, but for example as a school counsellor, project worker or attendance officer. The school social work standards will apply if the role fits within the definition of school social work used in this document. Otherwise, the social worker will abide by the *Practice Standards for Social Workers: Achieving Outcomes* (AASW 2003). The six main areas of practice are not discrete and a school social worker may need to call upon knowledge and skills in more than one of these areas in order to deal with a student's situation appropriately.

For example, in working with an individual student, a social worker may see that school curriculum or timetabling affecting that student is inappropriate or an impediment to learning. There is then an obligation on the school social worker to take steps in relation to that situation. In this instance, the standards with respect to Direct Practice, Policy and Organisational Development and System Change would provide a guide to the school social worker. The standards provide the expected practice level and expected outcomes. In the example given above, the social worker would not continue to work with the individual client without also taking some steps to address the organisational and policy issues. The standards indicate what those steps should be in outcome terms.

School social work practice

Social Work

Social work is the profession committed to the pursuit of social justice, to the enhancement of the quality of life, and to the development of the full potential of each individual, group and community in society. Social workers pursue these goals by working to address the barriers, inequities and injustices that exist in society, and by active involvement in situations of personal distress and crisis. They do this by working with individuals, groups and communities in the pursuit and achievement of equitable access to social, economic and political resources, and by working with individuals towards the realisation of their intellectual, physical and emotional potentials.

(About Social Work, AASW, www.aasw.asn.au, 2004)

School Social Work

Definition

The school social work role is unique in its focus on the student in the school environment in order to facilitate successful learning outcomes through the relief of distress and removal of barriers or inequities. Students within schools have diverse abilities and needs. All students are entitled to a quality educational environment which:

- promotes the total development of the child – intellectual, physical, social, creative, emotional; and
- creates learning outcomes which enable the young adult to take a satisfying role in their society and to have fair access to its resources.

School social workers have unique access to and ability to work with individuals, groups and communities at the interface between the student, school organisation and curriculum, peers, family, neighbourhood and wider society.

Not all social work service delivery in schools can be seen as school social work. A service can be called school social work only if the primary goal is achievement of student learning potential and involve particular methods of working. These include coordinating and influencing the efforts of the school, family and community to achieve this goal. School social workers therefore require knowledge and skills in the six main areas of practice:

- Direct Practice with students/families/ school personnel
- School Social Work Service Management
- School Development and System Change
- Education, School and other Policy
- Research into education, family, child/ youth issues
- Education & Professional Development.

Levels of School Social Work intervention

Below are some examples of school social work service delivery, although most school social work activities might be called into play at any level:

- Prevention
  - Parent information and education; development of student welfare policies, guidelines, programs, strategies and activities; provision of professional development for teachers; research into student issues; community service planning.
- Early Intervention
  - Group work with students with particular needs; development of innovative programs to meet needs; consultation with teachers or families; Implementation of student supports; counselling or casework; review of school issues or policy.
- Intervention
  - Counselling or casework; referral to other services; consultation with teachers; school policy change;

individual crisis intervention; community crisis management; critical incident management.

School social work has a history of more than 50 years in Australia, and shares its focus with school social work service delivery internationally. School Social Work has over the years responded to social change, new government policy with changed resource environments, and professional theory and practice developments, but has always kept at its core the support of students to achieve their potential in all aspects of academic and personal learning at school.

Theoretical base of school social work practice

School social workers are required to possess knowledge and understanding basic to the social work profession; specialised knowledge and understanding of the process of education; and knowledge of school and school system policy and regulations.

The theory base for school social work is constantly developing through research and knowledge building in social work, school social work and related disciplines. Knowledge from other disciplines is an integral component of social work education and continuing professional development for school social workers. Particular areas of focus are:

- an understanding of society and how it has developed and is organised. This includes an understanding of the major insights provided by sociology, anthropology, social theory, history, economics and political science and an awareness of how these contribute to the understanding of the politico economic distribution of resources. An understanding of the history of Indigenous Australians is an essential component of this knowledge of society;
- knowledge of social welfare arrangements, their history and organisation and of the law in Australia. As the goal of social work is the enhancement of the quality of life and the development of the full potential of each individual, family, group and community in society, attention is given to the major groups who experience disadvantage and to those social structures and ideologies which give rise to, and maintain, disadvantage and oppression, particularly those concerning race, ethnicity, culture, gender, age, disability, class and sexual orientation;
- knowledge of education history, practice and policy. This includes current employer policies and regulations; Federal and State Government legislation which impinges on educational options for students; current

curriculum and approaches to teaching and learning; the processes of professional teamwork in school settings; various organisation structures and functions and lines of authority within schools and the employing body;

- knowledge of human behaviour and social environment, including social learning theories; biological factors affecting human growth and development and behaviour; theories of social interaction; the special needs of students with impairments or disabilities; individual and group psychology/therapy;
- knowledge of psychology regarding the individual, particularly as it relates to the child or young person, including human behaviour and personality development; life-cycle stages, changes and transitions; family and social networks; physical health and ill-health; mental health and illhealth; disability; vulnerability and resilience. An understanding of the social construction of these concepts is another element;
- knowledge of the value base and core methods of social work intervention: individual and family casework; groupwork; policy development; school and community organisation; research, and how these can be integrated into an eclectic approach to school social work.

Knowledge and skills base of school social work practice

The school social worker applies social work knowledge and skills to the specific area of social work practice within the school setting. Essential to school social work is the recognition that the individual student's successful outcomes in education are influenced by personal, family, social, political and economic factors. This interactive dual focus of analysis: individual and systemic, private and public, distinguishes the theory and practice of social work from other helping professions.

As a specific area of social work practice, school social work practice knowledge necessarily includes:

- multiple levels of analysis to encompass causal impacts on human life in terms of an ecological systems framework;
- all methods of generalist social work intervention to address both student difficulties and public issues including:
  - Casework

    Individual counselling with the child or young person, parent/carer, or school personnel; family counselling; advocacy; consultation; linking students and families to community resources; personal / family crisis intervention.
  - Group work

    Parent education; therapeutic groups work; personal or social skills education groups for students.
  - Community development

    Provision of professional development for teachers; social action; liaison with wider community; student welfare, school curriculum and social policy analysis and development.
  - Critical Incident Management

    Awareness of how people can be affected by traumatic incidents and emergencies;

planning for school emergency responses; provision of counselling and support; monitoring recovery and evaluation of plans.

- Research

  Searching through literature bases for knowledge to inform practice, evaluation of research studies, evaluation of social policy, planning and implementation of research projects, and critical evaluation of the school social worker's own practice.

- Administration

  Record-keeping; management; programme development and coordination; evaluation of individual practice and organisational service delivery; staff induction, training and supervision.

- school social work demands: the specific ability to communicate well with, and particularly to listen to children and young people in order to see their experiences within their world from their perspective; an understanding of child and youth sub-culture impacts; and the ability to advocate for the child or young person within school, family and other systems that are adult dominant;
- practice skills include: interpersonal and communication skills in child and adult settings; skills in reflective and critical thinking and analysis; data collection and management; negotiation and mediation. Consultation with principals, teachers and other professional workers from community agencies is an essential school social work skill;
- skills in making assessments and deciding on the most appropriate intervention with which to respond to particular student situations, judgements of this kind being intrinsic to social work;
- skills in recognising and thinking through ethical issues, again a fundamental component of social work practice, involving commitment to the AASW *Code of Ethics*; and
- the contexts of school social work practice at local, national and international levels. Understanding in this area requires knowledge of, and the ability to critically analyse, social, political, economic, historical, cultural and ecological systems, particularly as they impact on school systems and individual student learning outcomes. The processes, facilitators and constraints to school change need to be understood, also the trends or evolutions of school systems. School social workers also need to be able to critically analyse the structure of society, and schools as a socializing institution, with particular attention to dimensions of power and disadvantage, and the influence of class, gender, age, intellectual and physical ability, heterosexism, race, ethnicity and cultural differences. There must be a focus on empowering and nonoppressive practice.

Common issues in the context of school social work practice

Change

Transitions

In the course of their schooling, students experience multiple changes, for example, as they progress through: stages of childhood and adolescent development; entry into the first years of primary and secondary schooling; transfer into a new school; family separation, changing roles or relocation; reallocation of teachers. The school social worker acts to facilitate a school environment that supports students' ability to cope with changes that might influence their ability to settle into their learning environment.

Personal, social and emotional development

- Grief and loss
- Family change
- Personal skill development, e.g. problem-solving, anger management
- Mental health
- Juvenile Justice
- Bullying
- Anti-social behaviour
- Trauma and crisis intervention
- Social relationships
- Cultural and ethnic differences
- Refugee students

Family issues

- Family poverty
- Family violence
- Child abuse and neglect
- Housing
- Transience
- Limited community linkages
- Alcohol and other drugs
- Challenging behaviours at school and home

Schooling issues

- Disability
- Attendance
- Curriculum
- Home-school-community links

Definitions and understandings

Client

The meaning given to the term 'client' in the AASW *Practice Standards for Social Workers* (2003) and *Code of Ethics* (1999) is: "individuals, groups, communities, organisations and societies, especially those who are neglected, vulnerable, disadvantaged or have exceptional needs".

As the focus of school social work attention, the student is the client. Where service is requested by the school or the family, they are not the clients, but rather the systems which the school social worker may attempt to change in order to support the student.

Where children are below the age where they are considered old enough to make informed decisions in the matter, they become clients only with parental permission, and the school social worker is accountable to both the student and the family.

Young people who are considered able to make their own informed decisions may be clients with or without parental permission and contact.

Cultural influences

In any client situation and in any of the main areas of social work practice, the social worker will be aware of cultural considerations and influences and respond appropriately.

School

A government or non-government educational setting for students in Years 1 to 12, and in the year prior to Year 1 where that is provided by the particular school system.

School social work

School social work refers to social work services delivered in a school setting, the primary goal of which is the achievement of students' learning potential, and where the methods of working include coordinating and influencing the efforts of the school, family and community to achieve this goal.

Student support service

The general term 'student support service' is used throughout this document to refer to a school social work service, or to the professional activities of a multidisciplinary team, including school social workers, in the school sector, to enhance student health, well-being and learning outcomes.

Supervision

The provision of supervision for staff is customary practice in all welfare agencies and clinics. Due to the frequent exposure to distressing information in wellbeing practice, the provision of formal supervision is an Occupational Health and Safety issue for all professionals employed in a welfare capacity.

Supervision is a confidential and structured conversation between workers. It involves elements of debriefing, counseling, guidance, reflection, leadership and review of work practices.

Consequently, someone qualified and trained in supervision should provide it. Supervision for all social work students and new graduates in educational settings is to be provided by a school social worker.

Experienced social workers may use their own discretion in their choice of supervisor. The aim of supervision is to ensure a worker maintains a high level of professional practice. It provides an opportunity for early detection of potential poor practice, stress and career fatigue. In the welfare field, supervision is not a process of instruction or direction as the term may suggest to those not trained in welfare and mental health. Good professional practice requires life long learning, hence supervision is a central element in ongoing professional development.

Student services casework provides exposure to confronting and disturbing information, behaviour and emotions. Supervision provides a safety net and an opportunity for re-establishing workers' sense of balance and mental well-being. The nature of casework is highly confidential. A private and confidential structure should exist to contain casework issues and still allow in depth discussion to occur.

Student

A child or young person legally mandated to be enrolled in education, or any young person or adult enrolled or wishing to be enrolled in a school programme.

Statement of objectives for main areas of school social work practice

Objective 1: Direct Practice

The outcome of direct school social work practice is that:

- needs of school students are met;
- their potential is developed;
- their learning outcomes are maximised; and
- their control over their lives is fostered;

this being achieved through mutual engagement with the student, the family and school as appropriate, and the application of the school social worker's knowledge and skills.

Objective 2: Service Management

Student needs, organisational goals and community expectations of the student support service are met in the most appropriate manner, as far as possible, incorporating social work knowledge, skills and resources.

Objective 3: Organisational Development and System Change

The school social worker's knowledge of educational systems and processes and societal systems is applied in such a way that inequalities are identified and appropriate action is taken, with the result that social barriers, inequality and injustice are reduced.

Objective 4: Policy

The well-being of students, especially those who are neglected, vulnerable, disadvantaged or who have exceptional needs, is improved through the school social worker's:

- promotion and implementation of policies and practices which would achieve a fair, equitable and effective allocation of social resources; and

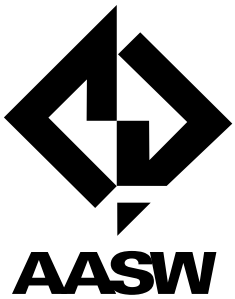
- identification of inappropriate or inequitable policy goals and outcomes.

Objective 5: Research

Student needs, organisational goals, and social policy, are addressed through the application of the school social worker's values, knowledge and skills in the research process.

Objective 6: Education and Professional Development

The school social worker recognises the importance of continually increasing their knowledge and skills and is committed to a process of continuing education.



PRACTICE STANDARDS

for

School Social Workers

1. Direct Practice

Objective

The outcome of direct school social work practice is that:

- needs of school students are met;
- their potential is developed;
- their learning outcomes are maximised; and
- their control over their lives is fostered;

this being achieved through mutual engagement with the student, the family and school as appropriate, and the application of the school social worker's knowledge and skills.

Summary

The direct practice standard concerns every aspect of direct school social work. It draws on all of the core areas of social work knowledge and skills but focuses on:

- methods of intervention;
- interpersonal and communication skills, reflective thinking, critical thinking and analysis, data collection and management, consultation, negotiation and mediation; and
- making assessments and deciding on the most appropriate social work intervention with which to respond to a particular student's situation.

It is essential that the student and/or family be as fully involved as possible in decisions about the school social work service provided, and in regular review of that service. Confidentiality requirements, report writing and record keeping must be managed appropriately. Key concerns in direct practice are the provision of information to the student and/or their family where appropriate, regarding client rights (such as the right to refuse, appeal or query a service); the cessation of a service to the student; the transfer or referral of a student and/or family to another service; and responsibilities to meet ethical requirements (for example in the case of disclosures of abuse, or risk of harm).

Key aspects and concepts

1. knowledge, skills and resources of the school social worker
2. explanation of school social work service
3. client involvement
4. appropriateness of school social work assessment, intervention and outcomes
5. service development
6. recording and record keeping
7. report writing
8. multi disciplinary work environments
9. supervision
10. referral /termination/interruption of service
11. advice of right to query service
12. evaluation of social work service

Outcome Indicators for School Social Work: Direct Practice

Knowledge, skills and resources of the school social worker

Standard 1.1

The social worker has the necessary knowledge, skills and resources to bring to the client situation.

AASW 2003, p.8

Indicators

- The school social worker makes a comprehensive assessment of the student's learning and other environments.
- The school social worker makes an assessment that they have the necessary knowledge, skills and resources to work with the student's situation.
- Where the school social worker does not have the necessary knowledge, skills or resources to offer an appropriate and satisfactory service to the student, the student, family or school is advised and referred to another worker or agency.
- The school social worker undertakes relevant training and professional development activities, including professional supervision and consultation, to develop knowledge and skills as necessary.

Explanation of school social work service

Standard 1.2

The client is made aware of the nature and extent of the social work service being offered and this information is recorded.

AASW 2003, p.8

Indicators

- The school social worker explains the service to the student and/or family as appropriate and describes any limitations with what is being offered.
- The student is aware of the service available to them as far as possible.
- The contact record contains specific details of the service offered and clearly specifies any limitations with respect to the service or understanding by the student and/or family.

Client involvement

Standard 1.3

The client is involved, as far as possible, in developing a service plan with the social worker and in its implementation, the strengths and capacities of the client being acknowledged and respected.

AASW 2003, p.8

Indicators

- Opportunities are provided for the student and/or family to be involved in information sharing and decision making throughout the service delivery process.
- The student is assisted to determine what service/s they wish to accept within the limits of their capability.
- Where students are referred as school social work clients by the school or family, and against their own wishes, they are given the opportunity to choose whether to participate, and informed that their decision will be respected. In the event that a student refuses an offer of school social work service, the school social worker may consult with the family and/or school staff in relation to improving the student's situation.
- In those aspects of service planning where the age of a child is deemed to preclude them from making decisions about the plan, the school social worker assists the student as far as possible, to understand the plan of action.

- A service delivery plan is prepared with the student wherever possible.
- The plan outlines service/s being offered, objectives and planned outcomes, how these are to be achieved and the reasons for their inclusion in the plan.
- The plan includes provision for regular review of progress, noting the outcomes of each review and inclusion of any decisions to amend, remove or add new aims or outcomes and ways in which these are to be achieved.

Appropriateness of school social work assessment, intervention and outcomes

Standard 1.4

The social work assessment and the intervention taken is appropriate to the client situation, in keeping with ethical and legislative requirements and directed towards appropriate outcomes reached in agreement with the client wherever possible.

AASW 2003, p.9

Indicators

- Relevant information is gathered regarding the student's situation.
- The student's situation is assessed including identification of relevant:
  - physical factors such as developmental history, health and well-being;
  - social factors including immediate and extended family, other significant relationships including friendships, relationships with peers and adults at school, social contacts and supports, cultural factors, experience of discrimination, oppression and community involvement;
  - psychological factors, including developmental and life span factors, family history, significant life events, grief and loss, exposure to violence, abuse or neglect;
  - educational factors, including academic progress, schooling history, specific learning needs, disability, particular strengths, preferred learning styles, personal educational goals;
  - environmental factors, including school, sport, recreation, employment, finances, accommodation and other services with which the student is in contact;
  - legal, education, health, employment and social security systems which impact on or with which the student is involved; and
  - personal and other resources that might be drawn on in the situation.
- The nature and level of risk for the student, the school social worker and others is assessed, and appropriate intervention is taken in relation to the level of risk.
- The student's understanding of the situation and their strengths to deal with it are assessed.
- The school social worker acknowledges and respects the strengths and capacities of the student in the mutual development of the assessment and plan.
- Appropriate social work and school social work knowledge and theory is identified as a basis for offering a school social work service.
- Likely or possible outcomes of the service/s offered are identified, discussed with the student and agreed to as far as possible.
- Legislative and organisational requirements and considerations are identified and explained to the student.
- As appropriate, relevant others are involved in, or advised of, the proposed plan.

Service development

Standard 1.5

The school social worker is aware of the relationship between the client and their social environment and takes appropriate action.

AASW 2003, p.9

Indicators

- The school social worker takes appropriate steps to address school, family and other system change to the extent that is practical and possible.
- The school social worker identifies policy issues and contributes to policy development and change to the extent that is practical and possible.
- The school social worker contributes knowledge and skills to the planning and development of appropriate student support and welfare services to the extent that is practical and possible.

Recording and record keeping

Standard 1.6

Records are kept and maintained in accordance with ethical principles and the relevant legislation regarding record keeping, privacy and freedom of information provisions relevant to the jurisdiction in which the social work service is being offered.

AASW 2003, p.10

Indicators

- A relevant record keeping system is in place.
- Records are kept in accordance with the provisions of the AASW Code of Ethics.
- Records are kept in accordance with relevant legislation and school system or individual school policy. In the absence of legislation, records should be kept and stored securely for seven years.
- The student and/or family are aware of who might see or use the records.
- Requests for access by the student and/or family to their records are dealt with promptly and appropriately according to appropriate policy and legislation. The family has access to a student's records consistent with privacy and other legislation, which may allow the student who is deemed able to make their own informed decisions about their situation and service plan, or who is above a certain age, to restrict their family's access to the records.
- The student has access to their record and given the opportunity to have their comments recorded. Where this is not possible or feasible, the reason is explained, including the extent to which the limitation applies.
- Where part of a record is not shown to the student, the reason is explained, including the extent to which the limitation applies.

Report writing

Standard 1.7

Reports accurately and objectively reflect client circumstances, in keeping with ethical principles and legislative provisions.

AASW 2003, p.10

Indicators

- Reports contain only information essential to the matters relevant to the purpose of the report.
- Reports have not omitted relevant and pertinent information.
- Information is presented in an objective manner, with assessments, recommendations and decisions supported by relevant information.
- Legislative implications and/or requirements are clearly identified and stated, together with any associated client information and/or action to be taken.
- The student and/or family is shown the report and given the opportunity to comment. Where this is not possible or feasible, or where part of a report is not shown to the student and/or family, the reason is explained, including the extent to which the limitation applies. Limitations may be due to legislative or school system or individual school policy.

Multi disciplinary work environments

Standard 1.8

Within the multi-disciplinary team, the social worker maintains social work principles, values and practice whilst acknowledging the practice base of other disciplines.

AASW 2003, p.10

Indicators

- The school social worker can articulate the domain of social work practice, and the specific field of school social work practice, within a host environment where education is the core goal, and teaching is the key profession.
- The school social worker manages a complex professional relationship with school personnel who might simultaneously represent the referral source, the school social worker's employing system and target system for change and development.
- The school social worker contributes discipline specific social work values, principles and practice; acknowledges those that are shared; and respects those of others in team activities.
- The school social worker negotiates respectfully with colleagues from other disciplines, for example: teaching, psychology, speech pathology.

Supervision

Standard 1.9

The social worker recognises the need for supervision and, when necessary, obtains advice.

AASW 2003, p.11

Indicators

- Supervision, consultation and advice are sought from an appropriate person when necessary in relation to specific client situations.
- There is regular participation in supervisory processes within or outside the employing agency or organisation or, in the case of a private or lone practitioner, from an appropriate source.
- Supervision is utilised as part of professional development to enhance knowledge and skills in direct practice.
- Social workers providing supervision to school social workers in relation to direct practice are appropriately experienced and qualified and are given supervision training.

Referral /termination/interruption of school social work service

Standard 1.10

When necessary, the social worker recognises the need for, and arranges a referral to, a relevant service provider and/or for termination of the social work service; and, where service is interrupted for some reason, puts in place appropriate interim service or other arrangements.

AASW 2003, p.11

Indicators

- The school social worker encourages the student and/or family to play a central role in the referral process.
- The school social worker provides information for the student and/or family to allow maximum choice in the decision making regarding referral.
- The school social worker recognises when the service no longer serves the interests or needs of the student.
- When the service appears not to serve the interests of the student, this is raised with the student and/or family and the professional relationship or service is re-negotiated or terminated.
- Where necessary, other relevant options to meet student needs are identified and/or provided and the student and/or family is

assisted in considering and/or transferring to one or more of these.

- Where a social work service is interrupted for some reason, this is discussed with the student and/or family and an appropriate interim service or other arrangements put in place.
- Where necessary the school social worker brings to the attention of the manager or school principal the need for appropriate service to be put in place.

Advice of right to query school social work service

Standard 1.11

The social worker advises the client of their right to query the service provided and the avenues and procedures to follow if the client wishes to do so.

AASW 2003, p.11

Indicators

- The student and/or family are advised of the right to query the level or appropriateness of the school social work service provided and the procedures for doing this are explained.
- If any concerns are raised by the student and/or family during provision of the school social work service, they are reminded of this right and how they might proceed.
- When appropriate, information regarding the school social work service and client rights in relation to the service are provided to the student and/or family in a written form at their initial contact with school social worker.

Evaluation of school social work service

Standard 1.12

The social worker seeks feedback from the client in the evaluation of service provision and uses this to improve future practice.

AASW 2003, p.12

Indicators

- Progress and service provision is regularly reviewed with the student and/or family.
- Feedback is sought and obtained from the student and/or family by interview or questionnaire at the conclusion of the provision of service.
- Regular reviews of progress, as well as a final review, are included in the service plan developed in consultation with the student and/or family
- Feedback from the student and/or family is reviewed and professional practice or service provision changed when appropriate.

2. Service Management

Objective

Student needs, organisational goals and community expectations of the student support service are met in the most appropriate manner, as far as possible, incorporating social work knowledge, skills and resources.

Summary

All school social workers, regardless of their organisational position or the context of their practice, have a responsibility to:

- manage their own service provision and school social work practice in a way which is consistent with these standards; and
- influence the operation of the student support service so that it supports models of service delivery that are consistent with these standards.

This dual responsibility requires at all times management of one's own professional practice, and may involve management of staff and other agency resources. In this sense, all school social workers are 'social work managers', and have personal and organisational responsibility to work towards the best quality school social work service delivery within a student support service.

Key aspects and concepts

- social work values as the focus of school social work service
- service framework consistent with the AASW *Code of Ethics*
- non-discriminatory policies, practices and resource allocation
- adequacy of staff resources and working conditions
- teamwork and communication
- efficient and accountable school social work service
- staff supervision
- training and professional education and development
- debriefing in difficult situations
- accountable use of resources
- commitment to quality and continuous improvement
- agency policies and procedures

Outcome Indicators for School Social Work: Service Management

Social work values as the focus of school social work service

Standard 2.1

The social work manager encourages the agency to develop policies consistent with the five basic values of social work practice: human dignity and worth, social justice, service to humanity, integrity, and competence.

AASW 2003, p.13

Indicators

- The five social work values are clearly articulated in all service mission statements and business plans.
- Polices and procedures are developed and implemented that reflect social work values and principles.
- The student support service head and senior managers have knowledge of the values and principles of social work.

Agency framework consistent with the AASW Code of Ethics

Standard 2.2

The social work manager acquaints agency management with the AASW Code of Ethics *and its implications for social work practice. The agency head is encouraged to recognise the principles and objectives of the Code and to eliminate workplace factors that prohibit or constrict adherence to its terms.*

AASW 2003, p.14

Indicators

- The student support service head is aware of the *Code of Ethics*, its principles, objectives and implications for each service unit.
- Processes are in place to eliminate or reduce workplace factors prohibiting or constricting adherence to the *Code of Ethics*.

Non-discriminatory policies, practices and resource allocation

Standard 2.3

The social work manager encourages non-discriminatory policies and practices and advocates for resources to meet client rights and needs.

AASW 2003, p.14

Indicators

- Service policies are reviewed regularly and discriminatory policies and practices identified.
- Non-discriminatory policies and practices are developed and implemented.
- Client-focused practices are encouraged that ensure:
  - students and/or families participate in decision-making processes; and
  - students and/or families have access to information.
- Processes are in place that aim to address student and/or families needs and/or preferences.

Adequacy of staff resources and working conditions

Standard 2.4

The social work manager advocates to obtain and maintain adequate staff levels and acceptable working conditions.

AASW 2003, p.14

Indicators

- Student support service management ensures that processes are in place to regularly review staffing level requirements.
- Consistent efforts are made to establish and maintain required staffing levels.
- The student support service head and senior managers have excellent understanding of the breadth of school social work methods, and support programme policy that provides suitable guidelines for the balance of individual casework, groupwork, community development, administration and research:
  - Where a school social worker is engaged in individual casework only, the caseload should not exceed an average of 5 clients per day; or the school social worker should not spend more than five hours per day contact time with students and/or their families.
  - Casework involves meetings with students and/or their families, phone contact with parents and other workers involved with the family, liaison with and referral to other agencies, consultation with principals and teachers, coordinating meetings at the school or elsewhere, advocating on behalf of the student, information gathering and creating linkages with community resources, case notes and report-writing.
  - Adequate time should be allowed for the planning of group work, research and community development activities.
  - Adequate time should be available for record-keeping, administrative responsibilities, networking with local agency workers in the development of community service provision, meeting with other school social workers within the student support service and across the school systems, attending AASW meetings and school social work conferences
- Processes are implemented to ensure that acceptable working conditions are in place, including: occupational health and safety requirements; interview rooms with appropriate privacy, own workstation, appropriate office furniture including own personal desk, computer, email and internet, phone and administrative support; access to a student support service vehicle and reimbursement for all work related travel.
- Planning ensures the availability of working conditions appropriate for engaging students in the process of school social work, especially private and suitable interview rooms.

Teamwork and communication

Standard 2.5

The social work manager promotes effective teamwork and communication.

AASW 2003, p.14

Indicators

- Effective and accountable communication systems are identified that are relevant to the service's internal and external business.
- Effective communication systems are implemented and regularly reviewed.
- The value of teamwork is promoted among the school social workers and across the student support service.
- Strategies for effective teamwork are identified and implemented.

Efficient and accountable social work service

Standard 2.6

The social work manager takes responsibility for delivering an efficient and accountable service.

AASW 2003, p.15

Indicators – personal and organisational

- Efficient and effective service systems are identified.

- The school social worker advocates ensuring that efficient and effective service systems are implemented.
- Processes for accountability to the organisation and the profession, including evaluation, program development and professional review of practice, are identified and implemented.
- There is appropriate and efficient use of work time.

Staff supervision

Standard 2.7

The social work manager arranges or advocates for appropriate supervision of staff.

AASW 2003, p.15

Indicators

- A formal induction programme is in place to facilitate the orientation of new school social workers to the student support service.
- Processes are in place to ensure that all professional supervision needs are identified in consultation with school social work staff.
- A supervision plan is developed for each school social worker and implemented with input from the worker and the supervisor.
- Processes are in place for meeting professional supervision needs.
- School social work staff receive appropriate and regular supervision.

Training and professional education and development

Standard 2.8

The social work manager ensures that all staff receive ongoing training and professional education and advocates for adequate resources to meet staff development needs.

AASW 2003, p.15

Indicators

- Processes are established to ensure that school social work staff professional education and training needs are identified on an annual basis.
- Resources are identified that meet education and training needs.
- School social work staff education and training needs are addressed.
- School social work staff are encouraged to pursue post-graduate training opportunities where possible.

Debriefing in difficult situations

Standard 2.9

The social work manager provides or arranges debriefing and crisis and/or ongoing support for staff when they experience difficult or traumatic circumstances during the course of their work.

AASW 2003, p.15

Indicators

- School social work staff support needs are identified.
- School social work staff debriefing needs are identified.
- Debriefing is provided in a timely manner according to the circumstances.
- School social work staff support needs are routinely addressed within the organisation.

Accountable use of resources

Standard 2.10

The social work manager uses finances and other agency resources for the purposes for which they are granted and accounts accurately for their expenditure.

AASW 2003, p.16

Indicators

- School social work service delivery budget systems are clearly articulated and specific items of expenditure identified.
- School social work service delivery budget and other resource requirements and processes are clearly identified, accounted for and open to scrutiny.
- School social work service delivery budget and other resource expenditure is clearly identified.
- Processes are established to ensure changing school social work service delivery budget and other resource requirements are identified and addressed in a timely manner.

Commitment to quality and continuous improvement

Standard 2.11

The social work manager ensures a commitment to continuous quality assurance and improvement and practice research.

AASW 2003, p.16

Indicators

- Strategies required for quality assurance and continuous improvement in school social work service delivery are identified.
- Issues requiring quality improvement in school social work service delivery are identified.
- Quality assurance and improvement activities in school social work service delivery are documented.
- Strategies needed to undertake practice research in school social work are identified.
- Resources required for practice research in school social work are identified and allocated.
- Practice research in school social work is undertaken as an integral part of ongoing practice.
- Outcomes of practice research and quality improvement in school social work are implemented.

Agency policies and procedures

Standard 2.12

The social work manager ensures that policies and procedures are documented and are accessible.

AASW 2003, p.16

Indicators

- Policies and procedures in school social work service delivery are documented.
- Policies and procedures in school social work service delivery are available to all staff, clients and other relevant parties.
- Policies and procedures in school social work service delivery are reviewed and updated as needed.
- Policies and procedures in school social work service delivery conform to relevant legislation.

3. Organisational Development and System Change

Objective

The school social worker's knowledge of educational systems and processes and societal systems is applied in such a way that inequalities are identified and appropriate action is taken, with the result that social barriers, inequality and injustice are reduced.

Summary

This standard encompasses organisational systems and processes in:

- government and non-government educational organisations
- other organisations with which the school social worker and clients come into contact; and
- wider societal systems such as health, legal, welfare, recreation and religious systems.

It is expected that the school social worker will have knowledge and understanding of organisational systems and processes, be able to identify those in the educational context and to analyse their effect, both positive and negative, with respect to clients.

The school social worker may identify the need for change and must then be able to take appropriate and reasonable steps towards this, demonstrating knowledge of change management processes and appropriate organisational development approaches. The ability to involve and empower clients appropriately and ethically in organisational change and development is an important consideration.

Where organisations and systems other than those in which a school social worker works are involved, the school social worker will identify appropriate people and mechanisms through which to channel concerns or initiate change.

It is recognised that the organisations and systems with which a school social worker works are complex and dynamic, requiring the school social worker to draw on a range of knowledge and skills with some depth of capacity if they are to practise effectively. It is not expected that the school social worker will do this alone but that they do have the ability to work with others to initiate change and achieve improved outcomes for the client.

The standard does not encompass policy aspects of organisational systems and processes as these are included in the policy standard.

Key aspects and concepts

- knowledge and understanding of educational systems and processes, including decision making processes, and of wider societal systems
- analysis of the responsiveness of educational systems and processes in meeting student and/or family needs and the effect of these on students and/or families
- facilitation of the interface between students and/or families and educational systems and processes
- knowledge and understanding of organisational change and development
- identification of the need and options for change and/or development
- initiation of appropriate action for change and/or development
- appropriate involvement of students and/or families in the organisational change and/or development
- review of relevant organisational systems and processes within the organisation in which the school social worker works or with which the school social worker and their clients come into contact
- use of internal organisational review, complaint and appeal processes and

administrative decision review processes, as well as Freedom of Information (FOI), confidentiality and privacy provisions where they apply

- identification of the need for change in wider societal systems and raising of this appropriately for consideration and possible action by the AASW or other relevant bodies.

Outcome Indicators for School Social Work: Organisational Development and System Change

Knowledge and understanding of organisational systems and processes, including decision making processes, and of wider societal systems.

Standard 3.1

The social worker demonstrates knowledge and understanding of organisational systems and processes and of wider societal systems.

AASW 2003, p.18

Indicators

- The school social worker is able to outline key systems and processes in the educational organisation in which they work, which affect, or have the potential to affect, the well-being of students and/or families; and in wider societal systems, especially those related to the educational organisation or functions of the educational organisation, and how these impact on clients in terms of access to services, social justice and distribution of resources to meet needs.
- The school social worker is able to give examples of several broad societal systems and outline their role and general systems and processes, within the context of social work values, principles and practice.

Responsiveness of organisational systems and processes

Standard 3.2

The social worker has made an analysis of organisational systems and processes and the extent to which these are responsive to the needs of the client.

AASW 2003, p.18

Indicators

- Key educational organisational systems and procedures including eligibility criteria; application processes; referral procedures; guidelines; decision making, review and appeal processes; interview and other administrative proformas; other relevant formal and informal practices and procedures, including attitudes and values which underpin these, and related organisational structures are identified.
- The school social worker has made an analysis of these and is able to explain how they impact on students and/or families, identifying those which are responsive to student and/or family needs and how as well those which are not and why this is so.

Interface between the client and organisational systems and processes

Standard 3.3

The social worker works with the client and the organisation(s) so that the client receives the most appropriate and effective service from the organisation.

AASW 2003, p.18

Indicators

- The school social worker works with students, families and staff in the school and other relevant organisations so that appropriate, easily accessible information regarding the organisations and their functions and procedures is available to clients.
- The school social worker informs relevant school staff about the functions and procedures of other organisations in order to allow the direct referral of students and/or families when appropriate.
- Appropriate channels for communication between students and/or families and other organisations are identified and facilitated.
- The school social worker facilitates consideration for any difficulties so that improvements can be made by the organisation(s) and/or explanation of limitations of the service can be given to the student and/or family.
- The social worker promotes and contributes to the development and use of routine, ongoing client feedback processes of the organisation(s).

Knowledge of organisational change and development

Standard 3.4

The social worker demonstrates knowledge and understanding of organisational change and development processes.

AASW 2003, p.19

Indicators

- Key elements of school and other organisational change are identified.
- A number of school and other organisational development processes are identified.
- The school social worker is able to give examples of school and other organisational change and development processes of which they are aware or in which they have been involved.

Identification of the need and options for change and/or development

Standard 3.5

The social worker is able to identify when change is needed and ways in which appropriate change might be achieved as well as actively contribute to the change process.

AASW 2003, p.19

Indicators

- The school social worker demonstrates the capacity to identify, consult and negotiate change where issues of access to services,

equitable, fair and just processes and social justice arise.

- Information from the school social worker's analysis of organisational responsiveness to student and/or family needs is reviewed and areas for change are identified.
- Other sources of relevant information are identified.
- Management analysis of student and/or family feedback information is encouraged and the school social worker actively seeks to have this information reviewed and acted upon.
- Where necessary and appropriate, the need for further information gathering or research is identified, negotiated with management and arrangements for this to be undertaken are made.
- Options for school and other organisational change and development, including training and development, changes in guidelines and procedures and ways to achieve cultural change, are put forward and the school social worker actively contributes to, and participates in, the change processes.

Client involvement in organisational change and development

Standard 3.6

The social worker identifies when and how to involve clients in matters relating to organisational change and development.

AASW 2003, p.19

Indicators

- Appropriate ways of involving students and/or families in school and other organisational review, change and development processes are identified.
- The school social worker demonstrates the capacity to develop or contribute to these and to their implementation.
- Students and/or families are involved appropriately.
- Ethical considerations are identified and managed appropriately.
- Students and/or families are provided with feedback on the outcomes.

Review of organisational systems and processes

Standard 3.8

The social worker is able to initiate and/or contribute to the review of organizational systems and processes in the organisation in which they work or with which the social worker and their clients come into contact.

AASW 2003, p.20

Indicators

- The school social worker promotes regular review of school and other organisational systems and procedures.
- The school social worker contributes to the development of the review process, promoting student and/or family involvement, participates in the review process and contributes to the analysis of findings and development of plans for change.

Internal and external review and appeal processes

Standard 3.9

The social worker is aware of, and assists clients to make appropriate use of, internal organisational review, complaint and appeal processes, as well as external administrative and other appeal processes when relevant.

AASW 2003, p.20

Indicators

- Appropriate decision making, review, complaint and review processes are promoted within the school.
- The school social worker ensures that clients are provided with information regarding school and other organisational decision making, review and appeal and complaint processes, as well as FOI, confidentiality and, where they apply, privacy provisions;
- The school social worker is aware of external administrative law and other appeal and review processes, provides the client with relevant information regarding these and assists the client to access them.

Wider societal systems

Standard 3.10

The social worker identifies the need for change in wider societal systems and raises this appropriately for consideration and possible action.

AASW 2003, p.20

Indicators

- The need for change is raised with other social workers in those systems and for consideration by the AASW and other relevant bodies.

4. Policy

Objective

The well-being of students, especially those who are neglected, vulnerable, disadvantaged or who have exceptional needs, is improved through the school social worker's:

- promotion and implementation of policies and practices which would achieve a fair, equitable and effective allocation of social resources; and
- identification of inappropriate or inequitable policy goals and outcomes.

Summary

This standard applies in all school social work practice contexts.

The school social worker should identify the policy which underpins the educational context in which they work and, if this is not consistent with social work values and principles and client needs and does not address evident social justice principles and issues, or does so inappropriately or inadequately, take steps to bring this about as far as possible. The effects of the implementation of policy should also be reviewed regularly and steps taken to achieve appropriate changes when necessary.

The standard incorporates the following:

- policy underpinning social work services in schools;
- broader internal organisational policy in schools;
- policy which underpins government and non government school programs and services; and
- policy in the public domain relating to social needs, social justice and human rights issues.

The standard refers to policy relevant to the school social worker's practice context. It also expects that the school social worker will have a wider capacity to identify and take appropriate action in relation to aspects of policy in other contexts and in the broader community which are not consistent with social work values and principles, client needs and social justice principles.

Key aspects and concepts

- consistency with social work values and ethical base
- identification of existing policy
- identification of inappropriate policy
- articulation of policy reflecting student and/or family needs and social justice principles and issues
- policy draws from social work practice knowledge and experience
- initiation of action to change and/or develop policy
- acceptance and implementation of appropriate policy
- review of policy and outcomes of its application
- public awareness of student and/or family needs and social justice and human rights issues
- ethical considerations
- student and/or family involvement as appropriate

Outcome Indicators for School Social Work: Policy

Identification of existing policy

Standard 4.1

As part of their practice, the social worker identifies the policy context in which they work and determines whether it is consistent with social work values and principles.

AASW 2003, p.22

Indicators

- The school social worker is able to identify the main policy issues and provisions relevant to the school context.
- The school social worker is able to identify when the main policy provisions relevant to the school context impact on students and/or families in a way which is inconsistent with social work values and principles and the reason(s) for this.

Identification of inappropriate policy

Standard 4.2

The social worker identifies aspects of policy, relating to their practice context, which are inappropriate, inconsistent or inadequate and is able to explain why this is so.

AASW 2003, p.22

Indicator

- Policy which is inappropriate, inconsistent or inadequate is identified and appropriate reasons for this given.

Articulation of appropriate policy

Standard 4.3

In their practice context, the social worker is able to articulate policy appropriate to that context which reflects social work values and principles, client needs and social justice principles and issues.

AASW 2003, p.22

Indicators

- Appropriate policy issues are identified.
- The school social worker is able to explain the rationale behind the policy and its appropriateness.
- Where policy issues are under consideration/need to be addressed, the school social worker is able to identify appropriate options.
- The school social worker is able to explain the options and the rationale, benefits and possible outcomes of these.

Use of practice knowledge and experience

Standard 4.4

The social worker draws from practice knowledge and experience in identifying appropriate policy for their practice context.

AASW 2003, p.22

Indicators

- The school social worker has identified policy issues arising from their practice knowledge and experience.
- These have been considered in relation to existing policy and issues remaining to be addressed have been identified.

Action for policy development, implementation and change

Standard 4.5

Appropriate action is initiated by the social worker for the development, implementation and/or change of policy in their practice context.

AASW 2003, p.23

Indicator

The school social worker has:

- raised the issues within the school context for further consideration;
- researched or encouraged further research of the issues if needed;
- proposed an approach or approaches which might be taken to address the issues, including further research of the issues, consultation with relevant others and the development of appropriate policy options; and
- maintained an appropriate active involvement to promote the implementation of appropriate policy.

Evidence that appropriate steps taken

Standard 4.6

The social worker has taken relevant and reasonable steps to have appropriate policy developed, accepted and implemented.

AASW 2003, p.23

Indicator

- There is evidence that the school social worker has taken appropriate, reasonable steps to address policy issues.

Policy review and evaluation

Standard 4.7

Provision is made for the review and evaluation of policy and its outcomes and this is undertaken in a timely manner.

AASW 2003, p.23

Indicators

- The need to review and evaluate policy and its outcomes is recognised by the school social worker.
- The school social worker seeks to establish and/or advocates for appropriate mechanisms and plans to be put in place in the school context.
- Review processes, documents and consideration of the outcomes are evident.

Public awareness

Standard 4.8

The social worker contributes to increasing public awareness of client needs and social justice issues generally and in specific circumstances when they arise.

AASW 2003, p.23

Indicators

- The school social worker contributes to public awareness – raising initiatives within the school context.
- The school social worker identifies needs and issues for consideration and possible action by the AASW and other relevant bodies.
- When the opportunity arises, the school social worker responds to requests for information and comment on policy issues.

Ethical considerations

Standard 4.9

The social worker is able to identify circumstances in which policy requirements or directions in their practice context raise social work ethical issues and is able to deal with this appropriately.

AASW 2003, p.24

Indicators

- The school social worker recognises an ethical issue when it arises.
- The school social worker raises the matter within the school and proposes solutions.
- If the issue remains, the school social worker consults with social work colleagues to seek other possible solutions or seeks the advice and assistance of the AASW.
- If the issue is sufficiently serious and remains unresolved, the school social worker determines whether remaining in the situation would place them in an unacceptable position with respect to the Code of Ethics and takes appropriate action.

Client involvement

Standard 4.10

The social worker uses and encourages approaches to policy development, review and change which maximise client involvement and contribution.

AASW 2003, p.23

Indicators

- The school social worker is able to identify appropriate ways in which this could be done.
- The school social worker has taken reasonable steps to encourage this to be done when necessary or appropriate in the school context.
- Where undertaken by the social worker, student and/or family involvement has been managed appropriately.

5. Research

Objective

Student needs, organisational goals, and social policy, are addressed through the application of the school social worker's values, knowledge and skills in the research process.

Summary

Research is broadly defined as the systematic search for knowledge to inform school social work practice. It comprises a range of activities including the searching through literature bases for knowledge to inform practice, the evaluation of research studies, the evaluation of social policy, the planning and implementation of research projects, and the critical evaluation of the school social worker's own practice.

Key aspects and concepts

- research methods, including quantitative and qualitative approaches
- codes of ethics for research, including the role and operations of Research Ethics Committees
- critical analysis of practice
- research literature
- dissemination of research findings

Outcome Indicators for School Social Work: Research

Social work values as the focus of school social work research

Standard 5.1

The social worker conducts all aspects of research consistent with the five basic values of social work practice: human dignity and worth, social justice, service to humanity, integrity, and competence.

AASW 2003, p.25

Indicators

- Research questions chosen in school social work are based on the five basic values of practice. Research is directed at the resolution of school social work problems in practice and policy.
- The relationship between the school social work researcher, research colleagues, and the subjects of research is based on the five basic values of practice.

Social work research consistent with the Code of Ethics and other formal ethical guidelines

Standard 5.2

The social worker conducts all aspects of research within the constraints of the AASW Code of Ethics and the legal framework for the management of ethical issues in research such as the operations of the NH&MRC.

AASW 2003, p.25

Indicator

- Research activity in school social work is consistent with the NH&MRC *National*

statement on ethical conduct in research involving humans 1999 which provides the framework for the conduct of research with human subjects.

- In conducting research involving children, special care is taken to safeguard their interests.

Competence

Standard 5.3

Research activities are based on a solid understanding of research principles and research methods.

AASW 2003, p.2

Indicators

- School social work researchers demonstrate a range of skills in searching out knowledge for practice. These include skills in searching data bases and other library resources.
- School social work researchers demonstrate a knowledge of a range of specific research methods, their limitations and application.

Evidence based practice

Standard 5.4

The social worker's practice is informed by the evidence based research in the area of practice.

AASW 2003, p.26

Indicators

- Connections between school social work practice and the knowledge base for practice are clearly articulated.
- The school social worker regularly updates knowledge and skills for practice through a range of professional development activities such as systematic reading of the research literature and the attendance of conferences, seminars and workshops.

Dissemination of research findings

Standard 5.5

The social worker shares the outcomes of research with colleagues so that the research product is available to other practitioners.

AASW 2003, p.26

Indicator

- The school social worker submits research findings to the scrutiny of peers through a range of activities such as writing research reports for publication in professional journals and presentation of research at appropriate professional forums.

6. Education and Professional Development

Objective

The school social worker recognises the importance of continually increasing their knowledge and skills and is committed to a process of continuing education.

Summary

Education in social work encompasses the formal training received in Schools of Social Work at both the undergraduate and post-graduate levels, the range of professional development activities undertaken throughout the working life of a social worker and the learning, which takes place through supervision. This standard builds on the Principles Underlying Social Work Education described in the document *Policy and Procedures for Establishing Eligibility for Membership of AASW* (2000). It seeks to extend those principles throughout the working life of a social worker. It also reflects the principles set out in some detail in the AASW's Policy on Continuing Professional Education contained in the *Policy Planner Logbook* (2000).

Key aspects and concepts

- commitment to the ongoing development of skills and knowledge in relation to school social work
- importance of supervision for school social workers
- reflection on practice in school social work
- development of ethical practice
- relationship between research and learning
- the development of skills and knowledge related to the demands of a changing society

Outcome Indicators for School Social Work: Education and Professional Development

Commitment to ongoing development of skills and knowledge

Standard 6.1

The social worker is engaged in a process of continuing professional education which assists the development of their skills and knowledge in their chosen field of practice and their understanding of the issues facing the wider community.

AASW 2003, p.27

Indicators

- The school social worker keeps abreast of developments in the school system and, where possible, across social work generally.
- The school social worker identifies training required for particular aspects of practice and ensures that appropriate training is undertaken.
- The school social worker is able to relate their developing skills and knowledge to the school system in which they work.
- The school social worker is able to relate their developing skills and knowledge to the social, economic and political context in which they work.
- The school social worker's practice is informed by their developing understanding of wider social issues.
- Where a school social worker develops particular expertise, they offer training and/or supervision to other practitioners requiring further development in that area.

Importance of Supervision

Standard 6.2

The social worker includes supervision as an important part of their continuing professional education.

AASW 2003, p.28

Indicators

- The school social worker participates in and contributes to regular supervision.
- The school social worker uses supervision to develop their skills and knowledge.
- The school social worker uses supervision to help identify their professional education requirements.
- The school social worker uses supervision to develop a greater understanding of the organisational, social, economic and political contexts in which they work.
- The school social worker uses supervision to reflect on interventions made in their practice to assess their appropriateness and effectiveness.

Reflection on Practice

Standard 6.3

The social worker uses ongoing reflection on practice in order to enhance the development of their skills, knowledge and understanding.

AASW 2003, p.28

Indicators

- In supervision, the school social worker reflects on the issues arising in their practice, particularly as they relate to the values and principles of social work.
- The school social worker is able to relate their reflection on practice to their developing skills and knowledge.
- The school social worker is able to reflect on the broader context in which their practice is undertaken.
- The school social worker's reflection on practice leads to the development of practice which gradually becomes more and more consistent with the values and principles of social work.

Development of Ethical Practice

Standard 6.4

The social worker views their own development as an ethical practitioner as essential.

AASW 2003, p.28

Indicators

- The school social worker reflects on the ethical dilemmas arising in their practice.
- This reflection on practice contributes to the development of their capacity to make ethical decisions.
- The school social worker draws on appropriate resources when faced with an ethical dilemma. These resources include supervision, the AASW *Code of Ethics* and, if necessary, a consultation with their local AASW Branch Ethics Committee.
- As the school social worker gains experience, they become more able to make ethical decisions.

Relationship between research and learning

Standard 6.5

The social worker conducts or participates in research that informs their practice and contributes to the understanding of issues facing individuals and communities.

AASW 2003, p.29

Indicators

- The school social worker keeps abreast of developments in research to ensure that practice standards continue to develop

alongside theoretical knowledge and understanding.

- The school social worker is involved in a constant reflection on practice which will lead to the development of best practice in the school system.
- The school social worker incorporates a research component into their work wherever possible and makes accurate data available, as appropriate, to the research process.
- The school social worker incorporates the results of social research undertaken in their community in a way which ensures that the social work service they deliver is as relevant and appropriate as possible.

Development of skills and knowledge related to the demands of a changing society

Standard 6.6

The social worker incorporates research, knowledge and understanding of the changing needs of their community into their social work practice.

AASW 2003, p.29

Indicators

- The school social worker is aware of the changes taking part in the community and the ways in which those changes may have an impact on the needs of individuals and groups within the community itself.
- The school social worker is aware of the social, economic and political factors affecting the community.
- The school social worker contributes to the understanding of the issues facing individuals and groups within the community.
- The school social worker contributes to the development of social policy which aims to redress inequalities and other injustices, in line with the values and principles in the AASW *Code of Ethics*.

Student Education

Standard 6.7

At the appropriate time, the experienced social worker provides field education learning experiences for social work students.

AASW 2003, p.29

Indicators

- The school social worker identifies appropriate opportunities for student field education in the school system.
- The school social worker negotiates field education opportunities with the relevant Schools of Social Work.
- The school social worker provides student supervision in a manner consistent with the principles of the AASW *Code of Ethics*.