

Homework Club Resource Kit

Minimum Standards for Good Practice in OSHLSPs





About this guide

As the state-wide resource body for Out-of-School-Hours Learning Support Programs (OSHLSPs), also known as Homework Clubs, CMY has identified a number of features that underpin safe, inclusive and effective programs.

This guide provides an outline of these features and includes more detail about elements of good practice in the delivery of OSHLSPs. The guide has suggested minimum standards that all programs should demonstrate and the features of high quality programs.

What are OSHLSPs and why are they important?

Out-of-School-Hours Learning Support Programs provide extra learning support to disadvantaged young people and those from migrant and refugee backgrounds.

OSHLSPs are held in schools, libraries, and community centres across Victoria. They support students with literacy, numeracy and study skills, help build confidence, self-esteem and feelings of connection to school and the wider community and provide a safe place to study. They can also assist families to gain greater knowledge of the education system and provide opportunities for families to explore practical strategies to support their children's learning at home.

OSHLSPs can provide extra learning support to students who have had disrupted education and to those who may receive limited study assistance at home. They can also assist those at risk of low academic achievement and early school leaving.

OSHLSPs can have positive effects on children's academic, social, and emotional lives. They provide opportunities for small group or one-to-one support tailored to their needs. By helping students develop social, communication and academic skills in an informal setting, they contribute to students' wellbeing and confidence, which can lead to greater participation in classroom settings and in education generally. Due to the involvement of volunteer tutors from a diverse cross section of society, these programs also support students to build meaningful social connections through the interactions they promote between students, tutors, staff, teachers, and parents.

Key features of high quality OSHLSPs

Program objectives of OSHLSPs will vary according to the particular needs of the target community that the program is designed to address. However, there are some key features that should be present in all good quality programs.

Key features include:

- A target group of children and young people who need extra learning support out-of-school hours to achieve educational outcomes is clearly articulated.
- Program needs and objectives have been identified by engaging the target group using consultative and participatory processes and the program has been designed to meet those needs.
- Program coordination includes session planning, safety and risk management systems, volunteer recruitment and management, program promotion and community and school engagement.
- Child safety measures are in place including policies, code of conduct, and training for staff and volunteers
- Programs are designed in a culturally responsive manner, and culturally responsive practice training is provided to staff and volunteers
- Family and community engagement strategies are in place to provide a welcoming and well-considered program.
- Sessions are held regularly at safe and appropriate locations, venues, and times to meet the needs of the target group.
- Tutors are screened, trained, and supported to provide appropriate learning support and are available regularly in sufficient numbers.
- Mechanisms are in place for stakeholder and student feedback, monitoring and evaluation and program improvement.
- Strategies to improve program sustainability are present including school and community partnerships and willingness to be involved in the wider OSHLSP sector.
- An unmet need has been identified in the community and the need is not currently addressed by an existing program.

Program elements	Minimum standards for good practice	Features of high quality programs
Program participants i.e. children, young people and their families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants attend with regularity and are provided with 1:1 or small group based tutoring support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tutor/student ratios of 1:1 or 1:2 Participants are involved in making decisions about aspects of the program and their feedback is collected and used to evaluate and improve the program For example, students and families are able to describe: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The changes made in learning skills and confidence as a result of attending the program How the program has increased their social connections, understandings of the education system and the benefits they have gained from new relationships
Program design, coordination and evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programs employ a program coordinator with adequate planning and liaison time, in addition to their service delivery responsibilities Programs include thorough volunteer recruitment and induction processes Programs implement child safety, cultural inclusion, a Code of Conduct and OHS policies. Online OSHLSPs have considered the additional safety requirements of an online program and implemented changes in response Programs hold public liability insurance Programs provide safe environments and appropriate learning activities Coordinators have immediate access to children's and volunteers' emergency contact details Programs provide water and nutritious snacks At least one adult trained in first aid (paid or voluntary) is onsite during program delivery times Programs have basic data collection systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organisations effectively plan programs for sustainability to ensure retention of quality staff and maintenance of strong relationships with volunteers and students EFT provided to coordinators is at least twice the hours required to deliver a program (e.g., a 2-hour session requires 4 hours coordination time, minimum) Programs have comprehensive policies and procedures about volunteers, privacy, complaints, and feedback, and these are documented and implemented Program data collection includes data on students' experience in the program, to reflect on achievements and to develop more effective strategies for individual students Programs have systems to enable participant and stakeholder feedback and review and improvement of program practice
Tutors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tutors are screened for suitability e.g. Working with Children Check; Police Check; communication skills Tutors receive induction and ongoing supervision and sign a volunteer code of conduct Tutors commit to a minimum weekly or fortnightly period of involvement and ideally a minimum amount of time in the program e.g. 6-12 months. Flexibility is considered for individual needs Tutors receive cultural training when working with young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds Tutors are offered training at least annually 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tutors are rigorously screened, using phone or face-face to interviews and referee checks prior to induction Tutors are provided with regular training to increase knowledge and skills in assisting students with their school work, language development and social skills Tutor feedback is sought to improve program quality and the tutoring experience Tutor contributions and successes are recognised and celebrated Specialist tutors are recruited for particular needs, such as subject-specific tutors in VCE or bilingual tutors Resources and support are provided to tutors to assist with activities and to improve learning outcomes
School and community partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Links are present between OSHLSPs, schools and relevant community agencies in a local area Schools are aware of community run homework programs in their local area School run OSHLSPs engage with relevant community agencies and other schools in the area Community programs are aware of other programs in the area and support students to transition across programs as needed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programs and schools develop partnerships and regular communication mechanisms to improve student learning outcomes, identify and address individual student needs, create referral pathways, and increase links to school curriculum School teaching staff provide input into tutor training to improve and develop consistent pedagogical approaches that assist young people in their homework Teachers are aware of local homework programs and actively assist their students and families to access programs <p><i>Note: School and community partnerships with clearly defined roles have a greater likelihood of sustaining funding from different sources and attracting volunteers through various networks</i></p>
Family and community engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programs welcome parents, carers, and families to visit and ask questions Families perceive the program to be safe, culturally appropriate (e.g. dietary requirements taken into consideration) and valuable in providing a positive learning environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programs offer opportunities for parents and community members to share their interests and skills with children and young people, and participate as volunteers where appropriate Programs foster positive cross-cultural relationships and links Programs increase parents' understanding of the education system and improve capability to support learning at home Programs provide opportunities for the whole family e.g. adult learning or early childhood activity
Venue and timing for sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programs are delivered at a safe and suitable venue which is conducive to the study/learning requirements of students Venue is easily accessible for students and families Timing of programs is appropriate for the needs of the student group. e.g. finishing early enough for younger students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programs are co-located with other relevant agencies and can offer opportunities for improved community links
OSHLSP sector involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organisational support for the program coordinator Program coordinators access professional development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programs share expertise and innovations with other programs Program coordinators access professional development and participate in OSHLSP networks Planning and coordination of programs within local regions occurs, to ensure student needs are being met and program duplication is avoided Collaboration is fostered amongst programs to enhance possibilities for sharing resources and achieving sustainability Coordinators are involved in OSHLSP sector events and contribute to the development of the sector

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we're here to help**

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