

Position Description

Title	School Attendance Support Program (SASP) Practitioner
Business unit	Early Help & Entry Point, Child and Family Services South Melbourne
Location	Level 2, 50 Station Street, Pakenham, Victoria 3810 and 184 Sladen Street, Cranbourne, Victoria 3977 [and other locations as required]
Employment type	Full time Maximum term to 07 March 2025 [parental leave cover]
Reports to	Team Leader – Group Work and School Attendance Support Program (SASP)

About Uniting

Uniting Vic.Tas is the community services organisation of the Uniting Church. We have been supporting people and families for over 100 years. We work alongside people of all ages in local communities in Victoria and Tasmania. Our services reach to Albury-Wodonga in the north, Mallacoota in East Gippsland, the Wimmera region in the west, and across Tasmania.

We empower children, young people and families to learn and thrive. We are there for people experiencing homelessness, drug and alcohol addiction or mental illness. We support people with disability to live the life they choose. We assist older people to maintain their independence and enjoy life. We provide opportunities to access training and meaningful employment. We are proud to welcome and support asylum seekers to our community. We work to empower people with the information, skills and tools they need to live a healthy, happy life.

As an organisation, we work in solidarity with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as Australia’s First Peoples and as the traditional owners and custodians of this land. We celebrate diversity and value the lived experience of people of every ethnicity, faith, age, disability, culture, language, gender identity, sex and sexual orientation. We welcome lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, gender diverse and non-binary, intersex, and queer (LGBTIQ+) people at our services. We pledge to provide inclusive and non-discriminatory services.

Our purpose: To inspire people, enliven communities and confront injustice

Our values: We are imaginative, respectful, compassionate and bold

1. Position purpose

The School Attendance Support Program (SASP) is an innovative program, in Government Primary Schools within the City of Casey and Cardinia Shire. SASP is a multi-faceted program utilising family support with the overall aim of the program to improve school attendance and to facilitate student, family, school and community integration.

The Practitioner of the School Attendance Support Program will:

- Work collaboratively with a number of primary schools in the City of Casey and Shire of Cardinia, to identify and engage ‘at risk’ students with school attendance issues
- Explore barriers to regular school attendance and develop strategies to overcome these utilising case management and maintaining relationships with key agencies
- Provide information to schools and families on referral pathways to access other services e.g. Child FIRST, housing and assist in mapping such services in the Casey and Cardinia area

2. Scope

Budget: nil

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People: nil

3. Relationships

Internal

- Team Leader Group Work & SASP
- Manager Family Violence & Early Help
- Senior Manager Early Help & Entry Point
- Group Manager
- Family Services staff
- Other Uniting Team Leaders and staff

External

- Communities for Children (funding bodies)
 - Department of Education and Training personnel
 - School staff
 - Other professional staff of agencies providing services to families and the wider service network in Casey and Cardinia areas
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4. Key responsibility areas

Service delivery

- Liaise with key staff at the nominated schools participating in the School Attendance Support Project
- Undertake risk and needs assessments of children and families as referred
- Provide intensive short to medium term case management and casework to families where complex issues are likely to be present i.e., provision of practical support in the home, parenting advice and role modeling, individual work with the children, advocacy and referral to other services
- Arrange and participate in Care Team meetings
- Develop strategies to assist families to overcome the issue of non-attendance at school
- Provide proactive/assertive outreach to hard-to-reach families
- Maintain accurate and up-to-date case notes in line with policy and procedure
- Develop and maintain collaborative relationships with schools and other agencies providing client services
- Broker services appropriate to the family's needs to include linkage to community services and recreational activities
- Provision of flexible hours to meet the referred family's specific needs, i.e., early morning to assist in getting the children to school on time or some evenings to establish good eating and sleep routines
- Advocate for families as required
- Facilitation of evidence based group work programs
- Participate in regular supervision with line manager
- Set priorities and manage time appropriately

Quality and risk

- Undertake risk and needs assessments of children and families
- Raise and report any concerns about Child Safety immediately

Personal accountability

- Compliance with Uniting's values, code of conduct, policies and procedures and relevant government legislation and standards where relevant.
- Cooperate with strategies to actively ensure the safety, protection and well-being of children who come into association with us.

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- Ensure appropriate use of resources.
 - Work collaboratively with Uniting (Victoria Tasmania) employees and external stakeholders in accordance with Uniting's values and professional standards of behaviour.
 - Actively participate in initiatives to maintain, build upon and promote a positive and collaborative workplace.
 - Identify opportunities to integrate and work collaboratively across teams.
 - Take reasonable care for your own health and safety, and health and safety of others (to the extent required).
 - Promote a positive safety culture by contributing to health and safety consultation and communication.
 - Promptly respond to and report health and safety hazards, incidents and near misses to line management
 - Attend mandatory training sessions (i.e. equal employment opportunity, health and safety) and mandatory training specific to position.
 - Declare anything that you become aware of through the course of your engagement which may impede your suitability to work with children and/or young people.
 - Declare any potential or actual conflict of interest that you become aware of through the course of your engagement:
 - Based on a relationship with a current member of Uniting's workforce
 - Based on my ongoing work with another organisation
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5. Person specification

Qualifications

- A degree in Social Work, Psychology or a related tertiary qualification relevant to child and family welfare
- Current driver's licence valid in Victoria

Experience

- A good understanding of the 'Best Interests' framework, CYFA 2005 and the Child Protection system
- Sound knowledge of child development and experience in working with challenging behaviours
- Demonstrated knowledge and insight into barriers to school attendance and related issues such as family violence
- Demonstrated ability as a practitioner in the child, youth and family welfare field
- Experience in working in a child focused, family-centered approach with specific focus on family strengthening and empowerment models of practice
- Good knowledge of City of Casey, Cardinia Shire and local resources
- Ability to engage families and to provide outreach services
- Demonstrated knowledge of practices to engage and assure the cultural safety of clients from a diverse range of backgrounds, including those from an Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander or CALD background, or the LGBTIQ+ community

Core selection criteria

- **Values alignment:** ability to demonstrate and authentically promote Uniting's values
- **Communication:** open, honest, articulate and flexible approach to communication both written and verbal, ability to actively listen, well-developed written and verbal communication skills, including the ability to prepare for and conduct student support group meetings and provide reports to DSS
- **Interpersonal focus:** strong interest in people and respect for others, and ability to suspend judgement
- **Cooperative:** demonstrates team behaviours striving for co-operative and professional relationships
- **Conscientious:** responsible, dependable, organised and persistent

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- **Open to experience:** high level self-awareness, with the ability to admit mistakes, as an opportunity for reflection, learning and development
- **Professionalism:** professional, confident, focused and clear about purpose and able to set appropriate personal boundaries
- **Flexibility:** demonstrated ability to work flexibly to meet the current needs of families and children
- **Relationship management:** demonstrated ability to maintain cooperative working relationships
- **Organisational skills:** demonstrated organisational and time management skills
- **Computer skills:** competency in the use of Microsoft Office suite of computer programs

Other requirements

- Legal eligibility to work in Australia
- A satisfactory national police records check is a condition of this position and is repeated every three years and International police check if required

6. We are a child safe organisation

Uniting is a child safe organisation and is committed in everyday practice to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all children, at all times. As a child safe organisation, employment with Uniting is subject to a satisfactory national (and international where relevant) police check and relevant Working with Children Check (and NDIS Worker Screening Check where relevant) to your State prior to commencement of any paid or unpaid work and/or participation in any service or undertaking.

This position description is subject to review and may change in accordance with Uniting's operational, service and consumer requirements.
