Social Work

Field Education Placements in Schools
Social Work

Field Education Placements in Schools

THE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT
Promoting and supporting positive mental health, wellbeing and resilience are key themes in school contexts and underpin learning engagement and learner success.

Bachelor and Master degree Social Work (SW) students on Field Education Placements in schools work to further help implement and embed wellbeing frameworks and initiatives, and to provide individualised as well as group based support for vulnerable students.

IN PRACTICE
Central to social work practice is the recognition that people exist within several environments simultaneously: family, neighbourhood, school, the broader community, and cultures. Within these environments, social workers are able to provide counselling or therapy, or provide support and interventions to individuals or groups.

Social Workers in schools focus on the child or young person in the learning environment, understanding that when children are safe and their health and wellbeing are prioritised that the best learning will occur.

The goal of the school based Social Worker is to strive for access, social justice, inclusion and engagement for all children and young people, with a particular focus on those who are most vulnerable.

SW students have the opportunity to work with individuals and with groups but also to support schools to further implement and embed a range of wellbeing initiatives aimed at building community capacity and further developing a strong school culture that values all its members.

PLACEMENT LEARNING
Wellbeing and support structures are likely to be in place which will allow clearly defined placement learning opportunities to occur.

Utilising a management framework like Be You; Positive Education or other models, can help identify gaps and guide decision making to effectively and efficiently utilise the placement as a resource for the school, as well as provide appropriate and valuable student learning experiences.

School Site Improvement Plans often detail school priorities in relation to wellbeing and mental health which may help frame social work student roles and designated activities.

PARTNERSHIPS
At a partnership level, Flinders University has a group of organisations, schools and people committed to ongoing development of a social work placement program in schools. The university has increased placement numbers and been able to focus efforts and resources on quality placement development and support.

SW students have reported that their presence in schools has contributed to school wellbeing outcomes and their own learning outcomes. For schools, leadership has indicated that SW students contribute meaningfully to operationalising and achieving wellbeing outcomes and objectives.

PARTNERING SCHOOLS
Schools are a key practice context for SW students, giving students an opportunity to engage across the SW continuum.

Flinders University partners with all education sectors (DfE, CESA, and ISSA), and the SW placement program has seen SW students placed in schools sites within Catholic, DfE, Secondary, Primary, R-12 or Area Schools, and specialists and other contexts (including Learning and Behaviour settings, and Children’s Centres).

Many schools are implementing and/or embedding Be You (previously KidsMatter and MindMatters) in their sites, or engaging significantly with another wellbeing frameworks, including Positive Education, Reggio Emilia Philosophy, Restorative Practices and Trauma Informed Practices.
WHAT IS FIELD EDUCATION

In Field Education or ‘field placement’, SW students are placed in an agency undertaking social work related tasks and responsibilities under the supervision of key staff (and with most schools a social worker who is external). It offers the student the opportunity to integrate theory and practice in real life situations.

The learning of practice skills is often incremental and takes time. It occurs through learning, doing and interaction, in both the university and an agency setting. The model for field education is one of adult learning, requiring students to be an active participant in achieving successfully the attributes of Australian social work graduates.

Students spend 1000 hours of placement in agency settings (including schools), undertaken as two 500 hour (approximately 70 day) placements. Placements take place in the 3rd and 4th year of the Bachelor program and the 1st and 2nd year of the Master’s program. Placements are generally four days a week and take place over almost two full school terms. Students are responsible for checking their eligibility to undertake placement. Before going on placement, students must complete required pre-requisite topics, be enrolled in co-requisite topics and meet the following compliance requirements:

- Obtain current DCSI Screening and Background checks
- Complete Child Safe Environment Training and Reporting Abuse and Neglect (RAN-EC) training

AUSTRALIAN ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS (AASW) FIELD EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS

The AASW is the professional organisation for social workers in Australia and accredits social work programs. To maintain accreditation and ensure graduates are eligible for membership of the AASW, Flinders field education programs must comply with the Australian Social Work Education and Accreditation Standards (ASWEAS, 2012).

The key ASWEAS field education requirements are as follows:

- Developmental – placements must demonstrate a developmental approach to learning and must differentiate between first and final placement
- Duration – a minimum of 500 hours (just over 70 days, based on a standard 7 hour working day)
- Intensity – generally 4 days minimum per week in placement
- Variety of experience – two different placements in at least two different fields of practice and organisations, with different client groups
- Supervision - provided by an appropriately qualified and experienced social work field educator with formal supervision 1.5 hours per 35 placement hours
- Quality – all placements meet the educational requirements of the field education program.

THE SCHOOL HANDBOOK

Together with this overview, we have provided your school with a handbook that contains the following information:

1. Field Education Staff contact details
2. Roles and responsibilities
3. Placement processes and guidelines
4. What students learn at university
5. Orientation and induction
6. Structuring a placement
7. Assessment
8. Key SW roles in schools
9. Keeping connections
10. Comparison: SW & Education placements
The Field Education program is staffed by academic staff and a highly experienced team of Field Education Coordinators/Liaison Officers and External Field Educators whose roles are to develop placements and liaise with agencies and field educators, contribute to student and field educator learning and monitor and assess students on placement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Nature of Enquiries</th>
<th>Contact Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manager, Field Education</td>
<td>Placement development, Fitness for placement, Overseas placements, Extenuating circumstances, Student and agency complaints</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mary.duncan@flinders.edu.au">mary.duncan@flinders.edu.au</a> (08) 8201 5653</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary Duncan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Integrated Learning (WIL) Support Team</td>
<td>General enquiries, InPlace Record Management, External Field Educator register</td>
<td><a href="mailto:swplacements@flinders.edu.au">swplacements@flinders.edu.au</a> (08) 8201 3923</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field Education Coordinator (FEC) or Liaison Officer (FELO)</td>
<td>Student and agency liaison, Student assessment, Placement matching</td>
<td>Provided once student placement confirmed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kerry Hoare</td>
<td>Regular structured social work supervision, Liaison with school</td>
<td>Provided once student placement confirmed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External Field Educator (EFE)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field Education Coordinator (FEC) – Schools Kerry Hoare</td>
<td>Student and agency liaison, Student assessment, School placement development and support, Orientation and training students and schools</td>
<td><a href="mailto:kerry.hoare@flinders.edu.au">kerry.hoare@flinders.edu.au</a> (08) 8201 2654 0466 779 279</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Field Education Staff contact details
Social Work

Field Education Roles and Responsibilities

There are several key participants in the placement process with distinct roles and responsibilities as well as accountabilities to each of the other participants.

**Topic Coordinator**
- Overall responsibility for the topic and determination of the final grade

**Field Education Coordinator / Liaison Officer**

**Agency Field Educator**

**External Field Educator**

**Student**

**Work Integrated Learning Administrative Staff**
- follow organisational policies and procedures
- act professionally
- take responsibility for own learning
- prepare for supervision
- provide feedback and discuss concerns with supervisor
- prepare for and participate in assessment
Agency Field Educator (AFE)  
*school leader or supervising teacher*

- provide appropriate accommodation, orientation, safe work practice training
- provide learning opportunities, and allocate and supervise tasks
- support the development of the Field Education Assessment Document (FEAD)
- provide regular supervision, and timely, constructive feedback
- assist with integration theory into practice
  - if the AFE is not a qualified social worker the University will provide an **External Field Educator** to support this outcome through regular formal supervision in accordance with the AASW requirements
- contribute to student assessment
- address issues as they arise and communicate with the EFE and FEC/FELO in a timely manner

External Field Educator (EFE)

- Support the development of the Assessment Document (FEAD)
- Attend the Early Placement meeting with the FEC/FELO and AFE
- Provide regular supervision
- Assist with the integration of theory into practice
- Provide support and link students to **Health, Counselling & Disability Services** as needed
- Address issues as they arise and communicate with the AFE and FEC/FELO in a timely manner

Field Education Coordinators (FEC) / Field Education Liaison Officers (FELO)

- Ensure all information regarding placement arrangements is provided to the AFEs and students
- Review supervision requirements and arrangements with the student, AFE and EFE
- Review and approve the FEAD to ensure it provides sufficient opportunities for learning
- Provide consultation and support to the Field Educator(s) and the student to support learning, and address questions, concerns or issues
- Take primary responsibility for placement-related assessment
- Complete written reports in the event of a placement breakdown/termination
- Inform and consult with the Manager, Field Education regarding students at risk of failing placement
- Provide support and link students to **Health, Counselling & Disability Services** as needed

Manager, Field Education

- Field education staff management
- Placement development
- Agency engagement and training
- Field education administrative policies and procedures
- Managing students and agency complaints
- Liaising with field education professional and academic staff about at risk students
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Placement Processes & Guidelines

Stages of pre-placement planning and placement

Once a placement match has been made students are required to undertake the following before a placement can be confirmed and commence:

matching

• contact the school to arrange an interview within three days of receiving an email advising of a placement offer
• prepare for the interview and present in a professional manner
• receive advise from the school that they’ve been successful in securing a placement and provide required confirmation paperwork to the university
• early start of the placement, outside of the usual semester timetable may be considered if this fits with the school’s needs (e.g. early in February)

Placement structure

Most SW students will be on placement 4 days per week and be required to attend university on the other day. The table below summarises placement details based on four days per week.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>BSW (BACHELOR)</th>
<th>MSW (MASTERS)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Placement dates</td>
<td>Semester 1: February to mid/end of June</td>
<td>Semester 1: February to mid/end of June</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Semester 2: mid-July to mid-December</td>
<td>Semester 2: mid-July to mid-December</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Placement duration</td>
<td>16-17 weeks</td>
<td>16-17 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Placement days</td>
<td>Generally Tuesday-Friday</td>
<td>Generally Monday-Thursday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Placement hours</td>
<td>In schools this can vary</td>
<td>In schools this can vary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students can do 8am until 4pm if this works for the setting and the student</td>
<td>Students can do 8am until 4pm if this works for the setting and the student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University and seminar attendance</td>
<td>Generally on Monday</td>
<td>Generally on Friday</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

Students are required to conduct themselves in a professional manner with regard to appearance, dress-code, conduct and interpersonal interactions appropriate for the profession. It is the student’s responsibility to understand and comply with the school’s protocols and university expectations for a professional work-based placement.

ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS

Students are expected to attend placement consistently and not miss placement days to work on university assignments. Students are required to keep a time sheet and submit this to Field Education Coordinators/Liaison Officers at the end of placement.

The following counts as part of placement hours:

- all placement-related activities at school and visits to other organisations
- attendance at field placement seminars (up to 14 hours)
- attendance at university coordinated orientation workshops and learning circles
- After hours work (eg camp)

The following do not count as part of students’ placement hours:

- lunch breaks
- sick leave
- travelling between placement and home
- Child Safe Environments training
- activities related to other university subjects
- time spent as a volunteer in other human service agencies

Students cannot change their agreed placement days without approval from you and from their Field Education Coordinator.

Students cannot work from home during placement. There are exceptions, eg students might undertake a project during the school holidays. Any time spent on placement related activities at home must have prior approval from Field Educator(s) and the Field Education Coordinator/Liaison Officer.

SCHOOL HOLIDAY ARRANGEMENTS

Where possible, students can be involved in school holiday programs such as OSHC or professional development/ training days. If the school is not able to be accessed across the break, students can attend and continue with planning and project work. If the school is not able to be accessed across the break, students may undertake a project that is negotiated before the holiday period. Evidence of completion of work should then be produced and verified by the school and the Field Education Coordinator/ Liaison Officer.

SICK LEAVE ARRANGEMENTS

If a student falls sick they must:

- comply with school procedures on providing medical certificates
- notify the Field Educator immediately of absence when ill or providing care
- contact the Field Education Coordinators/Liaison Officers and provide a medical certificate if absent for more than 3 placement days

Students are required to make up time lost due to sickness or other reasons.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidentiality is core to the social work profession. Students exercise great caution in relation to confidentiality connected to school students and school projects and business and this aligns with their professional obligations as outlined in the Social Work Code of Ethics.

WORK HEALTH & SAFETY

The school’s policies on WHS need to be fully explained as part of the student’s orientation and detailed in the students Learning Plan. Students should ensure that they fully understand the policy and approach the Field Educator over any incident or issue about which they are concerned or unclear, and report any incident following the school’s WHS policy.

TIME SPENT ON ASSIGNMENTS AT PLACEMENTS

The AASW Field Education guidelines allow for students to work on field education assignments whilst on placement. Students should negotiate this at the commencement of their placement. Students can allocate thirty minutes per day for reflection and to work on other field education assessment tasks. Students should build this in to their daily and weekly timetable and share with you.

FIELD EDUCATION COORDINATOR/ LIAISON OFFICER CONTACTS

A key role of University Field Education Coordinators/Liaison Officers is to liaise and maintain contact with students and the schools they are placed in. Each student will be visited twice during their placement: an early placement visit (in week 1-3), and for the Mid- Placement Assessment meeting.

EXTERNAL FIELD EDUCATOR (EFE) CONTACTS

The student’s appointed EFE will meet with students on site at the school either weekly or fortnightly to provide required social work supervision. This staff member is an important point of initial contact for clarification, advice and troubleshooting.

EARLY CONTACT AND VISITS

Field Education Coordinators/Liaison Officers will make contact with students and schools early in the placement and will generally organise an early placement visit.

MID PLACEMENT VISITS

All Field Educators and their students will have a Mid Placement Assessment meeting which is takes place in late term 1 or early term 2. Mid placement visits should take approximately one hour and involve the student, Field Educator(s) (onsite and external) and the Field Education Coordinator/Liaison Officer.

OTHER POLICIES AND DOCUMENTS

Before beginning placement students need to be familiar with policies and procedures relating to field placement from the Australian Association of Social Workers and Flinders University.
AUSTRALIAN ASSOCIATION OF SOCIA L WORKERS CODE OF ETHICS

These procedures align with the Australian Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics (3.3) and Practice Standards 2 (Professionalism). In accordance with these policies, behaviours that may result in harm to other students, professionals and/or clients and or inappropriate conduct including unsafe, illegal, unprofessional or unethical practice may result in students being withdrawn from field education, receiving a fail grade for the placement topics and no credit for hours worked.

AUSTRALIAN ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS PRACTICE STANDARDS

The Australian Social Work Education and Accreditation Standards (ASWEAS) set out the principles, standards and graduate attributes for social work education in Australia. The standards are used as the criteria for the accreditation of a professional social work course with the Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW).

The Practice Standards for Assessment are outlined in Making the links – Social Work Practice Standards in Schools.

This document will also support students in thinking about how they can demonstrate and evidence their learning in a school setting. As the supervising teacher it will be important to have some beginning familiarity with the standards that Social Work students are assessed against. You may well find that many are similar to standards for Education students.

PRACTICE STANDARDS FOR SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK

Additionally there is a specialised set of Practice Standards, developed by the AASW School Social Work Special Interest Group (SSWSIG) that 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.

INSURANCE FOR PLACEMENT

Students on placement are covered by the University’s insurance policy. (refer Administrative Procedures for Student Work-Integrated Learning Placements) as follows:

- Professional indemnity – for a breach of professional duty and/or the execution of professional activities by reason of act, error or omission
- Public liability – for negligence by the student resulting in injury and/or property damage
- Personal accident – for students who have an accident while on placement, which prevents them from earning their usual form of income. Limited hospital and medical expenses and permanent disablement and accidental death benefits also apply

Details are available on request from the Insurance Officer, Financial Services Division, Flinders University.
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What students learn at University

Masters Students (MSW)

In addition to Field Placement, in their first year of study MSW students will generally study:

- Social Work Theories
- Social Work with Diverse Populations
- Engaging in Professional Contexts
- Complexities in Work with Children and Families
- Social Work Research in Practice Settings
- Social Work with Groups and Communities

Bachelor Students (BSW)

In their first two years of study, BSW students will generally study:

- An Introduction to Democracy and Government
- Reasons for Social Work
- Mental Health and Public Participation
- Sociology
- An Introduction to Aboriginal Studies
- Social Planning Theory
- Critical Thinking and Communication
- Practice with Individuals
- Human Social Development
- Community Development
- Social Policy Practice
- Human Geography: Geographies of Oppression
- Social Work with Groups
- Social Work with Diverse Populations
- Social Work and Reflective Practice
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Orientation and induction: A shared responsibility

Social Work students at the commencement of their placements must make a significant effort to ensure they have made connections across the school community and that they have managed to introduce themselves and their roles to learners, teachers and parents.

School leadership and onsite Field Educators have a role to play in supporting or in fact leading out these introductions and opportunities.

This can take a number of forms including:

- Writing small introductory articles for school newsletters
- Introducing themselves at school staff meetings and/or school assembly
- Writing a brief professional profile and displaying it in the staffroom or giving it to staff in their pigeon holes
- Attending individual classes and building relationships
- Attending existing groups already happening in schools and informally making introductions and connections, e.g. parent coffee morning, weekly lunchtime SRC meetings, Breakfast Clubs, etc.
- Being a presence and visible in the staffroom and in the yard
- Making specific times to meet with key members of school wellbeing teams, e.g. Pastoral Care Worker, Wellbeing Coordinator, school counsellors, year level leaders, Aboriginal Support Staff, Special Education Staff, etc.

To orient to important policies/ procedures and frameworks, students have found that accessing the following has been particularly useful:

- School intranet/ email system to support navigation of policies and to stay connected to various school happenings and events via email
- School policies and procedures often found in Induction Handbooks given to incoming teachers and education students
- Term overview/calendar and the school newsletter with important dates, PD, closures, etc.
- School implementation plans/strategic plans for wellbeing frameworks (e.g. KidsMatter, MindMatters, etc.)
- Previous survey data, reports in relation to wellbeing
Social Work

Structuring a placement: Wellbeing frameworks and programs

Wellbeing frameworks and programs in partnering schools

Positive mental health and wellbeing are vital for learning and life. Children and young people who are mentally healthy learn better, benefit from life experiences and have stronger relationships with family members, school staff and peers.

School is often the most significant developmental context, after family, for children and young people. Schools, working closely with families and the community, are key environments for comprehensively supporting children's mental health and wellbeing.

There are a range of frameworks and programs which Social Work students learn about and become connected to. They also connect with relevant wellbeing teams and wellbeing staff in school sites. Frameworks and programs which Social Work students may wish to explore and that you may wish to expose them to are identified below.

Encourage Social Work students in your school to engage with (and where possible lead out!) all the processes and mechanisms you have for supporting whole school wellbeing.

**Wellbeing frameworks/guiding philosophies**
- Be You (previously Kids Matter and MindMatters)
- Positive Psychology
- Trauma Sensitive Schools
- Reggio Emilia philosophy
- Walker Learning Approach
- Restorative Practices
- Play is the Way
- Australian Student Wellbeing Framework
- Wellbeing for Learning and Life (SA)

**Wellbeing programs/models**
- Mindfulness in Schools
- Program Achieve
- What’s the Buzz?
- Sensability
- PATHS curriculum
- Drumbeat
- Behaviour Education Approaches
- Loose Parts Play
- Play at Lunchtimes Program (PALS)
- Better Buddies
- Lego Club

**Wellbeing team may include**
- Principal
- Assistant/Deputy Principal/s
- Senior Wellbeing Leaders
- School Counsellor
- School Counsellor (external e.g. Centacare)
- Pastoral Care/Support Worker
- Youth Worker (internal or external)
- School Chaplain
- Aboriginal Community Education Officers
- Invested parents
- Student voice
Social Work

Structuring a placement:
Social Work

Assessment

General
Students are required to demonstrate competence, in their first and final placement, against the AASW eight Practice Standards and associated Learning Outcomes detailed in the Field Education Assessment Document (FEAD). This document and other Field Education assessment templates and information sheets can be found in the Document and Forms section of the SW website.

Assessment Tasks
Students need to provide sufficient evidence against all the Learning Outcomes in order to pass the field placement topic. By the end of placement, evidence of learning must include all assessment components as per students’ Topic Guides. In addition to demonstrating progress via their FEAD, students will be required to submit up to four additional assessment pieces across placement. This might include an organizational analysis, considering the social work role and purpose in a school, presenting an ethical dilemma, reflecting on placement learning including acquisition of knowledge, skills and professional identity formation.

Assessment Meetings
School leaders/supervising teachers (AFEs) are key players in informing student assessment and attend and contribute to student assessment meetings. The mid placement meeting in particular is a collaborative process; an opportunity for AFE, EFE (Flinders Social Work Supervisor), and student to meet with their FEC/FELO to:

- Assess student performance and progress
- Provide clear feedback and reinforce expectations and requirements
- Maximise, enhance and deepen student learning from practice
- Explore further opportunities for student learning
- Monitor and resolve any issues arising in the placement

The end of placement meeting involves the student and the FEC/FELO where the students’ progress in the second half of the placement is evaluated. AFEs provide written commentary to inform this process. Students receive additional information from the allocated FEC/FELO about the meeting requirements as placements commence.
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Key SW roles in schools

Groups: Supporting school students’ social and emotional learning and development

One central role that SW students take on is to engage and work with children and young people in groups - universal (whole of class), targeted and intensive.

Students have engaged in a wide range of groups with students, designed to support and develop students’ social and emotional wellbeing. Many students have worked with ‘off the shelf’ packages (Eg What’s the Buzz?) and others have developed stand-alone programs, designed specifically to meet the needs of a student cohort. Programs students deliver are selected based on schools’ experiences of them, along with them having a sound theoretical framework and evidence of effectiveness.

Youth empowerment and student leadership: Building community capacity

- Social Work has a strong history and investment in building individual and community capacity and empowering individuals, groups and communities to take control of their circumstances and to contribute to making decisions and in fact leading change. Many of our Social Work students have been partnering with school students in their school sites who have been identified as school leaders generally through existing mechanisms such as SRC’s and Youth Empowerment Groups.

- Social work students have needed to grapple with their roles as ‘enablers’ and ‘educators’ with young people, creating opportunities to develop students’ potential and help them make an impact, rather than seeing themselves as event coordinators with ultimate responsibility for the success of endeavours. Our shared goal is to provide young people with the opportunities to develop the competencies they need to become successful adults.

Parent engagement in learning

Many of our social work students have worked in partnership with their host schools and most importantly with their parents/families to further understand and then strengthen parent/family meaningful connections and partnerships with school.

This focus on parent engagement and developing effective partnerships makes sense - we know that parents/caregivers are the first educators of children and that effectively engaging them correlates with improved student outcomes in relation to learning and attendance. Parents are critical stakeholders in building community capacity and provide an important lens on what is working well and what the needs are of their children.

Key SW roles in schools
Social Work

Keeping Connections: Ensuring shared learning for both SW students and involved school staff / leadership

Connecting and resourcing SW students across their placements

Social Work students placed in school settings have a number of opportunities to connect with each other to share their learning, resource each other and connect theory to practice. All students attend the University for Seminars (or online) where it is likely that many seminar peers will also be in school settings. Additionally, we offer an online forum/discussion board specifically for those students in schools. This forum covers a number of themes and topics relevant to students.

All students placed in schools will be expected to undertake a minimum of two days of Schools’ Orientation, provided by Flinders University and an ongoing series of Learning Circles across the semester. The Orientation Program introduces students to education sectors and settings; protective practices and child protection; issues/needs/complexity in the school context; building a toolkit for supporting children and young people; key theories when working with children and young people; and wellbeing frameworks and programs in schools.

Connecting school leaders / school field educators who support SW students

Given the uniqueness of school based practice settings and acknowledging that many schools are relatively new to the partnership with Flinders, the goal will be to communicate via an Enewsletter routinely across the terms. In a similar way to connecting the SW students, relevant topics and themes will be covered. Additionally, information sessions (Field Education Orientation Workshop) for school Field Educators will continue to be offered to keep schools informed and to create networks.
# Social Work

## Differences between SW and Education placements

A snapshot guide for teachers working with SW students

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SW Field Education Placements</th>
<th>Education Pre-service Teacher Practicum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of placements</strong></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>up to 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Length of placement</strong></td>
<td>500 hours (70 days): first and second placement.</td>
<td>Varies depending on the year of study. First placement 1 week in length.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Focus of practice</strong></td>
<td>Direct and indirect practice: Work with individual students, groups, parents, project work and research tasks across school community.</td>
<td>Generally classroom based development and delivery of learning in one year level or one teaching area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relationships</strong></td>
<td>Relationships across school community central to success, including leadership, wellbeing staff, students, relevant committees, SRC, external stakeholders and agencies.</td>
<td>Central relationship with classroom teacher or subject specialist, students in class and respective parent group(s).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Supervision</strong></td>
<td>Informal and formal. Supervision is a key SW requirement to support reflective practice and learning. Onsite and external (SW supervisor).</td>
<td>Informal and formal with assigned classroom or subject teacher.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Location</strong></td>
<td>Students require designated work area as placement is not classroom based. Students engage in some activities in classroom (generally with wellbeing focus). Students are able to use placement time for their placement assignments and activities and engage in activities outside of classroom and outside of school setting during placement time – e.g. agency visits, external supervision, seminar participation at the university, research and planning.</td>
<td>Students are generally classroom based. Students engage in most activities within school and classroom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Involvement in meetings and training</strong></td>
<td>Students benefit from attending a range of meetings including staff meetings, Action Teams, parents and friends, governing council, case conferences to understand and input into the strategic work of the school. Students take lead in convening meetings and taking minutes where appropriate, etc.</td>
<td>Students attend staff meetings and relevant training. Students encouraged to attend other meetings as appropriate.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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### Differences between SW and Education placements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SW Field Education Placements</th>
<th>Education Pre-service Teacher Practicum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learning</strong></td>
<td>SW students’ focus is to support students to be successful learners through addressing barriers to learning, providing needed wellbeing focused interventions and working across the broader school community.</td>
<td>Education students’ focus is to support students to be successful learners through delivering pedagogically sound curriculum and managing needs and behaviours across the classroom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assessment</strong></td>
<td>Assessment is competency and evidence based and assessed against relevant practice standards (8 in total). Increased competency expectations from first placement to final placement. Students complete assessment pieces and engage in learning plan and mid placement visits with school and university staff</td>
<td>Assessment is competency based assessed against relevant criterion/professional standards. Increased competency expectations from first placement to final placement. University liaison staff and mentor teachers contribute to assessment.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

### Activities for SW students

- In the first few weeks of the placement, building relationships with children in the classroom, yard and with parents before and after school
- Undertake formal observations of children (using observational template) to further support teachers understanding of children’s needs
- Support learning and wellbeing needs of ‘focus’ children in the classroom and document progress
- Within the classroom integrating language from wellbeing frameworks across all areas of the curriculum eg: Play is the way: “strong choices weak choices”; growth mindsets “you can’t do that YET”
- Support whole of class wellbeing activities eg Circle Time, Mindfulness, Play is the Way
- Where possible observe school based case conferences involving vulnerable families and DECD staff; observe wellbeing staff in their work with children/families
- Group work: eg: established groups such as What’s the Buzz or develop their own groups based on student needs – friendship groups, emotional regulation, social skills etc
- Community development: developing and running activities to engage entire school community eg: Harmony Day, Book Week
Social Work Student Project Snapshots

Our students undertake projects that are evidence based, aligned with school practices and add value to current policies, procedures and programs.

Eugena and Kiki: Multicultural Breakfast Program

Eugena and Kiki were keen to explore ways of bringing parents, particularly parents from diverse cultural backgrounds, into closer connection with the school to build community capacity and aid socialisation, and to acknowledge and celebrate the school’s diversity. After consulting with leadership, teachers and the children, the two students established a Multicultural Breakfast Program offered one morning a week across the school term. Eugena and Kiki’s multicultural focus coincided with classroom themes of inclusivity and fairness and fit with their learning goals around celebrating diversity, engaging parents and community development. The students held planning meetings with staff to develop necessary policies and procedures and address risks (i.e. food handling and allergies) and developed a communications strategy to promote the program and engage parents. Eugena and Kiki invited parents to work with them in preparing food from their cultures, such as Greek and Italian, and the Social Work students prepared food from their own cultures to give students and parents an opportunity to try some Chinese dishes. In addition to learning about food from diverse cultures, social skills were also considered. Feedback from children, parents and the teaching community was enormously positive.
Nicole: Understanding and Responding to Student Needs

Nicole undertook her placement in a large, independent school in Adelaide’s northern suburbs and provided one-on-one support to students whom were referred by teachers. To inform her assessment of these children and their needs, Nicole observed them in the classroom and yard, and engaged with them individually using tools such as genograms and ecomaps. She also used the Personal and Social Capabilities Rubric\(^2\) to develop an understanding of the children’s self-awareness and self-management, and their social awareness and social management. This allowed her to identify and name behaviours, difficulties and strengths using a framework familiar to teaching staff to create a shared language and foster closer collaboration to understand and meet the needs of children. This approach enabled the school to meet its commitment to develop the personal and social capabilities of students as required by the Australian Curriculum (ACARA).\(^3\)

Claire and Helen: Implementing the KidsMatter framework

Claire and Helen worked with a Catholic Primary school, supporting the school in events to further value the uniqueness of the school community and engage parents to celebrate diversity. Each child was supported to draw an image of themselves, which was then positioned on the exterior school fence with parent support and involvement. This work aligned with Component 1 of KidsMatter\(^4\): building a strong school community. The social work students also developed a plan and then piloted the Friendly Schools Plus\(^5\) program, designed to enhance children’s social and emotional awareness and competencies (Component 2 of KidsMatter). The program will be implemented more broadly across the school community as a result of the students’ work. Claire and Helen learnt about principles of community development, along with group work theory, and how to empower students to better manage themselves and their relationships.

References