

DEFENCE SCHOOL MENTOR (DSM)

What is a Defence School Mentor?

The Defence School Mentor (also known as the Defence Transition Mentor) assists young people from ADF families to make a smooth transition between schools. The role is a College-based resource available to ADF young people and their families.

The aim of the role is to provide a link between the College and the family that compliments the support services offered by the College, whilst recognising the unique challenges faced by mobile Defence families.

The DSM is funded by the Department of Defence but is considered an employee of O'Loughlin Catholic College. The role is provided on a part-time basis, and is responsible to the College Principal.

The aims of the program are to:

- Support and assist young people from ADF families to integrate into the College community.
- Create a greater and ongoing awareness of mobility issues within the College community.
- Work with individuals, groups, families and stakeholders to develop, implement and evaluate relevant programs.
- Provide advocacy for students and provide information and appropriate referral to support services.
- Develop resources and programs to support mobile young people.
- Proactively contribute within the College environment on a variety of programs.

Who is the DSM?

*Katherine Peel is the Defence School Mentor for O'Loughlin Catholic College.
She is available for students in the Resource Centre each Tuesday and Wednesday.*

What can the DSM do for students?

- Facilitate the best possible outcome for ADF young people by recognising and working to address unique needs.
- Encourage friendships and reduce isolation by connecting young people to their community within College and more broadly.
- Encourage students that they are not alone in their experience.
- Facilitate the development of pride and a sense of belonging in the College by ensuring the student's efforts to contribute to the College are recognised.
- Support new students to adapt to a different way of doing things, while acknowledging that change is not always comfortable or easy.
- Organising welcoming and farewell activities for and highlight their achievements whilst at the college.

What can the DSM do for families?

- Provide a point of contact for parents and young people.
- Act as a link between home and the College.
- Assist with enrolment procedures and the obtaining of resources to ensure new students arrive at College in the appropriate grade and class, and with the correct uniform and stationery.
- Encourage the development of informal and formal support networks.
- Support ADF families to develop social groups with other families.
- Provide support and information regarding the books, uniforms and other supplies.
- Liaise with both College staff and other support agencies to develop innovative programs to reduce the impact of frequent postings on ADF personnel and their families.

What can the DSM do for College staff?

- Provide on-site, direct and flexible assistance to students, their parents, teachers and other support staff.
- Increase understanding of the difficulties faced by ADF young people amongst students and staff.
- Provide additional support to assist with the orientation and integration of new students into the College community.