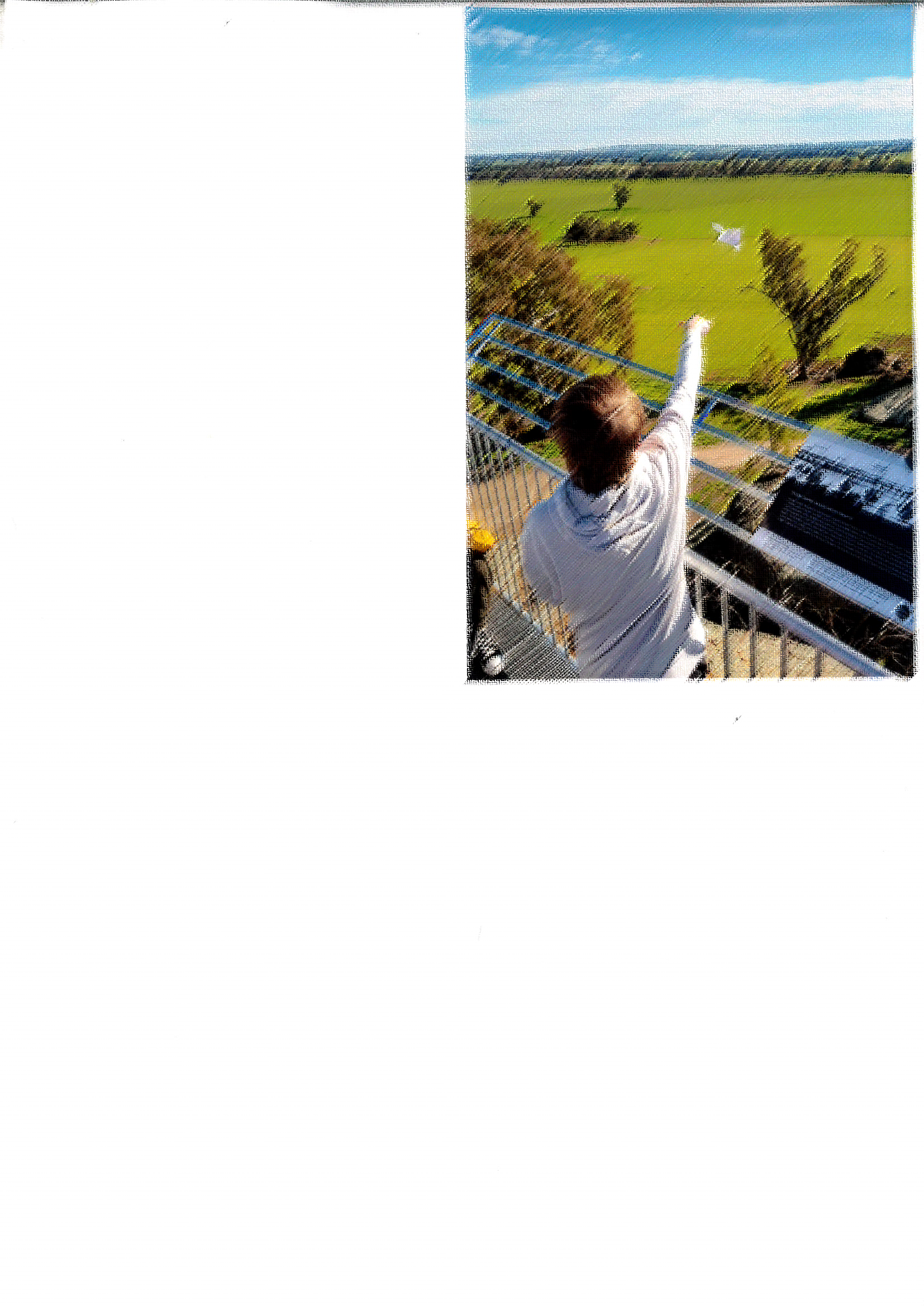
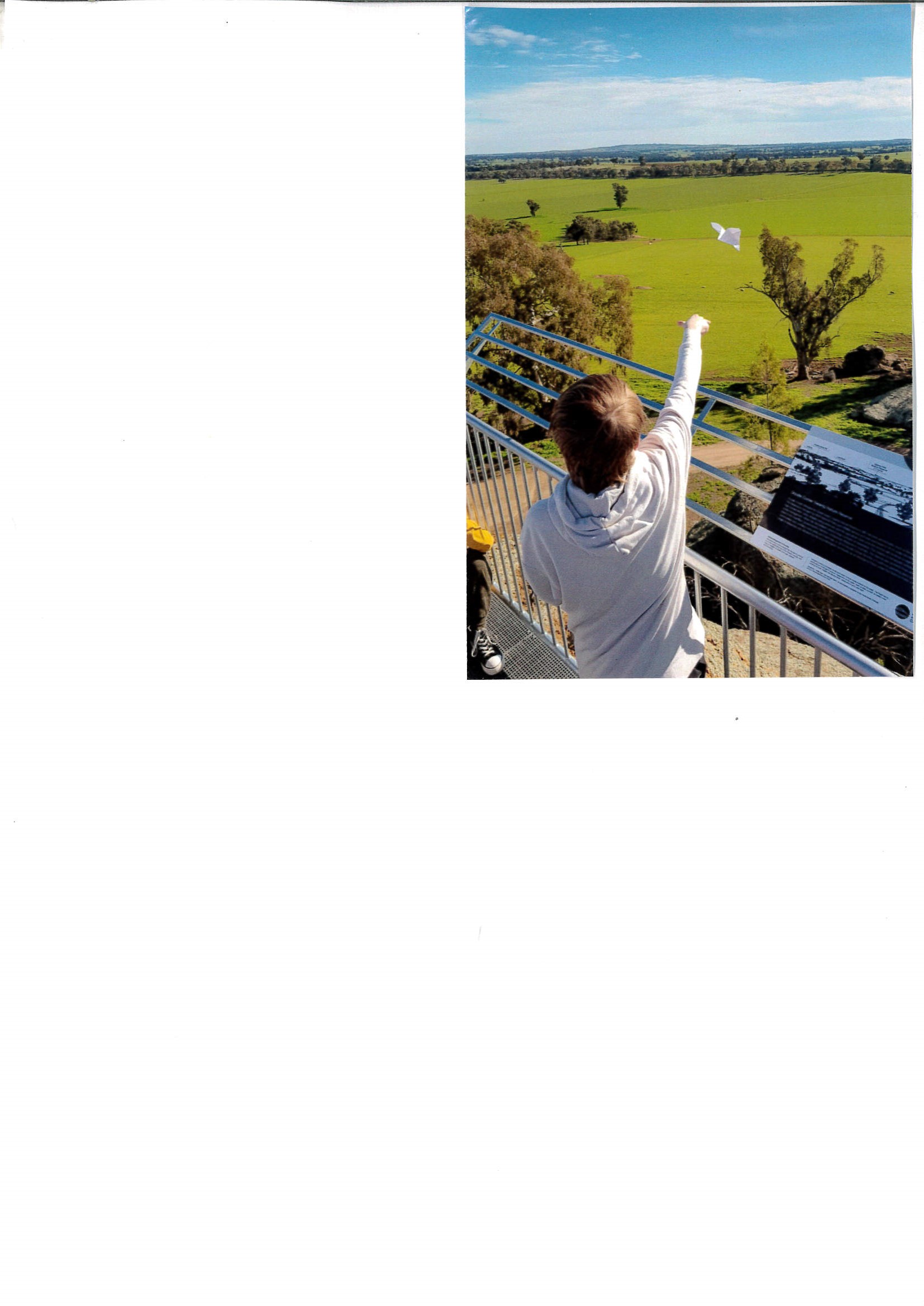
**Choice Learning Space**

Re-engagement and Education Team

Program Manual  
Updated 2023

**AGENCY INFORMATION**

Background information:

Junction Support Services (JSS) has been operating in the North East Region of Victoria since 1989. We provide a range of effective and integrated specialist child, youth, adult and family services and we provide these services with passion, and a commitment to working in people’s best interests. Through our advocacy, assertive outreach, case management, and therapeutic counselling services we influence the lives of people in a positive, caring and holistic way.

**Mission**

We work with individuals and families to support them to achieve their full potential

**Our Vision**

Communities without disadvantage.

**We Value**

Equity, access and diversity

Innovation

Collaboration

**We Foster…**

**Equity:** This means our resources, such as services and programs, are made available to everyone, not just certain groups of people.

**Access:** This means all our services are planned, managed, delivered and promoted in a way that enables all people to access and use them to meet their needs.

**Participation:** This means we:

Value the participation of clients, staff, volunteers, carers, and the wider community in the planning of services which will inform and guide JSS' planning and decision-making into the future.

Involve clients, staff, volunteers, carers, and the wider community in decision making processes that affect them.

Create an opportunity for all people to participate in the community by providing the services and supports available in that community.

**Rights:**

JSS believes that people have the right to receive appropriate quality services from our organisation and the wider community and that they a have a right not to be discriminated against.

**PROGRAM MANAGEMENT INFORMATION**

**Program Description:**

Choice Learning is a triad partnership between Wodonga Senior Secondary College, Wodonga Middle Years College and Junction Support Services. Wodonga Senior Secondary College and Wodonga Middle Years College provides two highly trained and experienced teachers, with therapeutic and trauma informed training and teaching practices. Wodonga Middle Years staff will work closely with Choice staff as each young person accessing the program must maintain an enrolment with WMYC Felltimber and Huon campuses.

Choice Learning is a transitional education pathway for young people disengaged from education, and identified through the Navigator or Education Support Programs. The Choice pathway is aimed for those young people with minimal to no attendance, mental health barriers, and extremely low academic abilities. Through a screening and matching process, young people are matched for their suitability to attend the Choice Learning space through consultation with the Education Program Manager and Choice teaching staff.

Choice Learning provides young people enrolled in Wodonga Middle Years College, with small group education and support. Choice Learning staff will undertake assessment and testing to identify learning and development gaps in the young people’s academic ability. Choice Learning staff will then provide intensive, individualised and targeted learning interventions to bring the young person’s ability to a level that would allow them to maintain learning progression in a mainstream classroom. By utilising strengths based and trauma informed practices, the teaching staff are able to develop the resilience, coping skills, and social skills of the cohort, which present as predominant barriers to the young people’s re-engagement to a mainstream environment.

The support and interventions at Choice are also complimented by the support provided by the Navigator Case Managers and Support Worker. Through Case Management interventions, and additional layers of support including assertive outreach and engagement, resilience building activities and social development, the young people benefit from a holistic intervention to the barriers they face attempting to return to the classroom.

**Choice Learning Staffing and Support**

The program has the following staffing provisions:

1. WSSC employs teaching staff at 1.8 EFT. The teachers are responsible for the delivery of the curriculum and the coordination of day to day tasks within the education setting, as well as transport, provision of food, coordination of parents, SSGS, testing and assessment and any additional education tasks that may arise.
2. Junction Support Services staffing: Navigator Case Managers x 4.0 EFT, Navigator Support Worker 1.0 EFT, Navigator Intake Worker 0.6 EFT, Education Support Worker 0.8EFT. Each young person accessing the Choice Learning pathway will have an allocated worker supporting them and providing interventions as required. The JSS staff are required to assist in transport, communication, engagement and coordination of the education journey of the young person. This additional layer of support for the young people accessing Choice ensures that previous barriers to their school engagement are eliminated.

**Management of staff**

JSS will provide the Re-engagement and Education Team and Service Managers to provide overall day to day task oversight and supervision of Choice staff (in regards to student wellbeing and engagement). The Education Program manager and will also coordinate and ensure the integrity of the model is upheld.

WSSC will provide management to the teaching staff in respect to teacher registration and curriculum.

Should a staff member become unwell or require personal leave, the staff member should contact WSSC who is responsible for providing a replacement staff member. The staff member should then inform the Junction Team Manager of their leave.

Where possible Junction Support Services will provide staffing to support backfill for the teaching staff for less than a 7.6 hour coverage, or when in the best interest of the young people.

**Operational Management requirements**

WSSC are responsible for:

* Providing the funds to purchase food for students.
* Providing educational and classroom resources.
* Providing and maintaining the Choice Learning vehicle.

JSS are responsible for:

* Funding the rent and associated rates for the classroom/s space at Gateway Island and are the contact for rent related issues.
* Providing adequate management and supervision to staff in regards to the model and the overall responsibility for the clients. This includes managing referrals, overseeing the timetable and providing direction in client related wellbeing matters.
* Providing materials, supports, strength tools, and

**Maintenance**

Maintenance is the responsibility of WSSC. For all maintenance requirements staff are to inform direct line manager and call Pam Heffey (60437500) at WSSC to rectify the issue. Should the maintenance issue be in relation to a structural or site issue, Wodonga Council are responsible and the Education Program Manager will contact the Property Officer.

**Provision of food at Choice**

WSSC will provide a Coles card (maximum value $3000 per annum) this is funded through the Advanced program funding. The teachers are responsible for the purchase of the ingredients each week. All receipts are retained and returned to WSSC weekly for reconciliation.

**Bus**

WSSC provides and maintains the bus that transports students attending Choice Learning in the morning and after class. All transport outside of these times will need to be organised by the Navigator Case Manager or student’s family/ support network.

The bus will be stored at WSSC over the weekend and at Choice Learning during the week. The bus will be picked up on Monday morning by the WSSC Choice teaching staff and returned by 3pm on Friday to WSSC.

All staff who drive the bus must complete relevant WSSC paperwork.

Any accidents are to be reported immediately the WSSC Business Manager (John McVean 6043 7500).

**Program Eligibility Criteria**

Young people eligible for the program will be considered on a case by case basis, however will be:

* enrolled at WMYC;
* be supported by either the Navigator or Education Support programs
* demonstrated poor or no attendance at WMYC;
* Wodonga based client, or transport available from supports/family
* have had collaborative discussions with WMYC that are agreeable to Choice

**Referrals**

Referrals are to be completed by the student’s case manager and returned to the Education Program Manager who will determine if the referral meets the above eligibility criteria, and consider matching and suitability of pathway. On acceptance of a referral, each new student will meet with teaching staff to discuss timetables and the space. The initial meeting will also focus on conversations identifying the student’s goals, aspirations, strengths and areas of concern. Before beginning their learning at Choice, students will complete Literacy and Numeracy testing. The collection of testing data needs to be negotiated with the student. They need to understand why it is being collected and what will happen to the results. Work samples may also be used to build a picture of the student’s needs.

Choice Learning is able to offer support to get to and from school (as determined on a case by case basis. Transport (in the form of a bus run) is provided to students attending Choice Learning in the morning and after class. All transport outside of these times, or outside of Wodonga central suburbs will need to be organised by the case manager or student’s family.

A weekly meeting will be held between teaching staff and management of Junction. This meeting will provide a space to identify current vacancies in the program and ensure appropriate matching of students to fulfil these vacancies. Furthermore, the wait list, timetables changes, student progress, Case Manager communications, student attendance, staff wellbeing and management of young people, clinical case discussions and directions and any other business will be discussed.

When risk is identified with regards to a young person's presentation, the Education Program Manager will call a joint meeting with WSSC, Choice Staff and Junction to consult and develop a plan to manage the situation.

**Enrolments**

Each student who is accepted into the program must be enrolled at WMYC. If they are already enrolled at WMYC they must be changed through CASES to reflect their enrolment and pathway through Choice. Teachers are responsible for ensuring this is completed.

If a student is attending Choice Learning in a part time capacity, while attending another school, the Assistant Principal of WSSC is to arrange the appropriate funding allocation to Choice Learning.

**Timetable**

Once the student is accepted into the program, the student will be allocated a minimum 1 hour, one-on-one session per week. As the need and availability arises, the allocated time will increase. This will be determined in collaboration with the Case Manager and teaching staff. When suitable matching of students is identified, small education based groups may be conducted. Once the students have engaged with the program, they will be offered opportunities to participate in the engagement and resilience building activities. Students will be offered sessions based on their individual needs and ongoing support will be provided to achieve their learning outcomes. Where possible it will be support for the young person to commence within the group setting without the need for the one-on-one sessions first.

**Engagement and Resilience Building Activities**

JSS management will liaise with the Navigator and Education Support staff about the activities offered to the students in the Choice Learning program. Activities will be designed and implemented to meet the interests and the needs of the students enrolled.

Examples of programs that may be offered are outlined below:

## Group Activities:

* Focus becomes on values instilled though typical group work activities (i.e. trust, self-esteem, confidence, leadership, resilience, coping skills, social skills, communication skills etc.)
* Through planning and availability of staff, JSS will provide group work and activities to the Choice young people which may include but not limit to: rock climbing, bush walking, mountain bike riding, swimming, cooking, art, mindfulness, scavenger hunts, museum trips.

Social Engagement

* Engaging with other students from varying schools and campuses, this is designed to strengthen connection to peer/school community and role model positive and appropriate social behaviour. This component may commonly occur during the school holiday activities targeted to Choice students.

Other possible engagement activities not included in the above Activities but are included in the general curriculum include:

## Living Skills

* Throughout the week the young people are responsible for the making their own lunches through food preparation or cooking.
* Designed to provoke thoughts on nutrition, budgeting, and planning
* Provides opportunity for young people to learn to cook and also clean up after themselves in a social environment.

## Community Engagement

* When engaging in the activity the young people are engaged in a social engagement in the local area, having contact with local business owners or members of the community
* Designed to strengthen connection to community and role model positive and appropriate social behaviour.

**Individual Learning/Education Plans**

Each student who has been accepted into the program is required to have an Individual Learning/Education Plan completed by the teaching staff. Each plan is negotiated, based on the data collected and the interests and needs of the student. Plans need to be reviewed and adjusted as required. A SSG meeting will be conducted and will include the young person, family/guardian, Case Manager and teaching staff.

**Behaviour and Crisis Management Plans**

Upon entry to Choice the young people are required to attend a meeting with the Choice teaching staff, their parent/s and/or support network, and the JSS allocated worker. During this meeting the Choice teaching staff will complete a Behaviour and Crisis Management Plan with the young person. This document covers every day behaviours or non-verbal communication that the young person may present with in order to show frustration, disappointment, or misunderstanding. Led by the young person, a list of signs to look out for are listed, as well as appropriate interventions that the young person would like utilised in order to help them self-regulate and return to a neutral state. The crisis management component of the plan is for when next level intervention is required by Choice staff. This section relates to behaviours that put the young person or others at risk, or are no longer manageable within the classroom. This part of the plan identifies what interventions the Choice staff will undertake to safely support the young person.

**Behaviour**

One of the goals of the Choice Learning and Literacy Outreach program is to ensure students are school/work ready. Behaviour that is suitable for a positive and productive working environment is the only acceptable behaviour. Students will be supported by the Choice Education Support Worker to de-escalate when appropriate. If the behaviour continues, the student is given the option to contact their case manager/family member or friend and to be taken home. The student is welcomed back to the next session, unless associated risks are identified. Each student will be encouraged to adhere to the Student Expectation Agreement and supported to manage behaviour in a positive manner.

**Student Absences**

If a student is going to be absent the student’s parent is required to inform the Choice staff of the student’s absence prior to the commencement of the session or where required the Navigator case manager will inform the teacher. An explanation for the absence is required. If the student does not arrive for their session, the teacher is to contact the case manager directly. If students are not present, the time will be used for planning and administration.

**Networks/Meetings to attend**

Communication pathways to and from JSS are vital in ensuring students are kept up to date with information relevant to their specific needs. It is important that Education or Navigator Support Worker/ Navigator Case Manager/ Education Program Manager attend the following meetings:

* Regular Choice team meetings
* Regular meetings with all schools and education providers relevant to the program

Staff and management have an important role to play in advocating for the needs of the young person and their family, representing the interests of JSS, WSSC and WMYC, and fulfilling a local community development and education role. To do this, staff and management have a responsibility to ensure they maintain current relationships/partnerships and foster new ones. Junction Support Services current primary partnerships/relationships for the Choice Learning Program include, but are not limited to:

* Department of Education and Training
* Schools
* Flexible Learning Centres
* Albury Wodonga Community College
* TAFE
* NESAY/ The Bridge
* The LOOKOUT program
* The Navigator program
* Department of Health and Human Services
* Out of Home Care providers

**Commitment to Service Standards**

Junction Support Service has a commitment to the guiding principles of the Human Services Standards. This commitment is reflected in the JSS’ client service practices through the promotion of client rights, client advocacy, and working with clients to achieve realistic and positive outcomes in their lives.

It is reflected on the JSS’ service development and design through cooperative and inclusive decision making processes that seek to involve clients in all aspects of service affecting their lives.

**Service Principles**

Junction Support Services affirms its commitment to Human Rights and Social Justice:

* All people have the right to be protected from physical, sexual, emotional and racial harm/ abuse
* Any planned intervention that has the potential to affect a person, and/or that persons’ family, is to be discussed with that person and/or his/her family, and agreed upon prior to implementation
* In considering any planned intervention, the best interests of the person(s) should be paramount and consistent with a **Rights-based approach.** This means that case/care/support planning **must take into account the person’s need for:** 
  + Protection from harm/ abuse and freedom from discrimination
  + Emotional, spiritual, physical and social development
  + Education, training and learning opportunities
  + A safe and stable environment
  + Privacy
  + Self-determination and choice
  + Active inclusion and participation in all decision-making processes that affect their life
  + Appropriate accommodation
  + Practice should be robust, assertive and coordinated to meet case plan objectives, identify intervention strategies, and secure the required specialist services.
  + Service delivery should aim to reduce risk behaviours, family conflict and increase stability in the individual’s and family’s life.
  + Continuity of relationships should be a high priority for all aspects of service delivery.
  + The Literacy Outreach and Choice Learning programs will promote collaboration and a shared responsibility for an individual’s and/or families welfare.
  + The program will ensure that service delivery is planned, managed, monitored and regularly reviewed.

The program will reflect these Service Principlesin all aspects of client management and support; ensure that the principles are the minimum requirement for all service delivery and practice.

**Evaluating the Service**

The Choice Learning and Literacy Outreach Program is evaluated by using several different formats:

* JSS agency Client feedback forms provided by Case Managers,
* Navigator entry and exit surveys
* Feedback from students to teaching staff/Education Support Worker presented at team meetings for review and program development feedback from schools of origin regarding young person’s engagement (where young person is also attending school of origin),
* Desire for young person to increase contact time with educational provider;
* Increase in self esteem and positive engagement in the wider community, and,
* Increased attendance at Choice Learning

Increased and positive transition to WMYC

Parent statements and engagements