



External Providers Policy

Rationale

The fundamental purpose of schooling is to provide students with access to *educational* programs during school hours. The principles underlying school education include universal access to education and free instruction in the learning areas.

The health services are not educational nor are they related to assisting students with disabilities to access their education.

It is contrary to legal requirements for principals to permit parents to pay for reasonable adjustments that their child *requires* to participate in their school education. This is because the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* (ETR Act) provides for free education and also clearly states that parents of students with disabilities are not required to pay for additional support for their children. In addition, State and Federal discrimination law, imposes a legal obligation on schools to make (and fund) 'reasonable adjustments' that are required for students with disabilities to participate in their education on the same basis as their peers.

This policy clarifies the role External Providers may play within the school context

Guidelines

- The school may allow a private therapist to, on occasion as required, observe a student in the classroom or playground setting. This is on the basis that it enables the student and their family to feed those observations into the student's 'whole of life' treatment). Any decision of the Principal to allow attendance by a private therapist should take into account the impact on teaching staff and other students, the 'Therapist Visitor's to the School Protocol' (Appendix 1) will be followed;
- In approved circumstances, the school may allow a private therapist to provide non-educational services (e.g. physiotherapy) to a student on school grounds and during school hours, to accommodate the student's personal circumstances and their disability (e.g. where there are compelling reasons why a student cannot attend a therapy session outside of school hours).
This action would usually only be considered appropriate in extreme cases where the student's personal/family life prevents the student from accessing the treatment outside school hours; or
- Allow parents to take their child to additional therapy sessions during school hours where, for medical reasons, they must take place during the school day. In these instances, normal processes for student absences must be followed.
- Schools have a non-delegable duty of care to all students. The principal needs to be satisfied that appropriate steps have been put in place to enable a service provider access to students during appropriate hours of the day in a manner that is compatible with the school's duty of care.

If permission is granted for Provision of External services the following will be undertaken:

- the principal will consider what arrangements they will implement for the supervision of an external provider to ensure the principal and the school can discharge their duty of care to the student; and
- a meeting will take place between the school and the service provider (and the parents of the student who has requested the health services) to confirm the particular arrangements. Informed parental consent should also be obtained in writing.
- External Provider will provide Working With Children Check
- External Provider will provide evidence of Public Liability Insurance.

Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle and/or in response to DET requirements