



CATHOLIC
EDUCATION
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Provision of Third Party Services in Schools

GUIDELINES

Under the *School Education Act 1999 (WA)*, the Principal has ultimate responsibility for the education programs provided by the school. Parents may seek to engage with external service providers when their child requires additional health, therapy, or wellbeing support. The services offered by the provider must align with or complement the reasonable adjustments the school provides to facilitate the student's access to education. If the service does not align with the student's learning needs, consider it being delivered outside of school hours. Acceptance of therapy services and incorporation of service provider's recommendations in a student's Individualised Plan is at the Principal's discretion.

The education system remains responsible for educational intervention to assist a student in educational attainment. NDIS funds a range of specialised supports for school-aged children with disabilities. Its aim is not to replicate or assume the responsibilities of the education system. Schools will continue to provide 'reasonable adjustment' for students with disabilities to enable them to access the curriculum on the same basis as their peers.

External Service Provision in a school setting is valuable when it enhances the educational outcomes and goals for the student and links to the student's existing Individualised Plan. When considering a "Request to School for Third Party Clinical Access," a Principal should consider all relevant factors including:

- the impact on the student's access to the curriculum;
- the school's capacity to provide available space and resources;
- the school's duty of care obligations;
- the student's family and social circumstances; and
- the effect of therapy on all students.

If the Principal or delegate agrees to an externally funded service being provided to a student at school, then the provider needs to:

- comply with all legal and policy requirements outlined in the Third-Party Clinical Access Agreement;
- enter into the Third-Party Clinical Access Agreement with the school;
- undergo an induction at the school before commencing services; and
- ensure that the service delivered aligns with the school's visitor/contractor arrangements.

A school may discontinue the service if:

- the service ceases to serve the educational needs of the student;
- there is an adverse impact on the school, staff, or other students;
- the external provider is unreliable;
- delivery is not consistent with the Third-Party Clinical Access Agreement; or
- the provider has displayed inappropriate conduct as per the school's *Code of Conduct*.

Duty of care considerations

Outside of school hours, the duty of care obligations owed by Principals and teachers is limited. Risk considerations should be discussed with parents/carers.

Principals and teachers continue to be responsible for duty of care, regardless of whether supervision has been delegated to another staff member or provider.



Guidelines for Principals

External Providers do not gain automatic access to the school and its students, even if they are:

- funded by the NDIS or Medicare;
- working with another student in the school; or
- working with students at another school.

1. Receive the parent-initiated request for clinical access

All access requests must meet the following criteria:

1. Initiated by the student's parent/guardian or the student's consent.
2. Submitted through the School Request for Third Party Clinical Access form (can be an online form, paper form, or fillable PDF).
3. After receiving a request, the school is required to provide written acknowledgment of the request.

Use [this link](#) to duplicate and create a school online version of the School Request for Third Party Clinical Access form. A QR Code can be generated to incorporate into your school website allowing parents/guardians to access the form.

2. Consult with parents and relevant school staff

The consultation process could include a formal meeting, phone conversation, or informal discussion involving relevant stakeholders. Parents have the option to invite the External Service Provider to participate in the consultation process. Discussion to include:

- how the support/therapy could be provided to the student;
- whether the service is suitable in the school context;
- access arrangements, including determining when access should be discontinued; and
- when all parties will review the access.

3. Consider the request for access

The Principal or delegate's decision to grant access should consider the following:

- the student's wellbeing and educational needs;
- the student's access to education (including any classes missed);
- the student's educational goals as per their documented plan (e.g. IEP, Behaviour Plan);
- the timing and duration of the access needed;
- the family's ability to access the service outside school hours;
- the school's capacity to provide facilities and resources;
- the impact on other students and staff; and
- the duty of care to all students and staff.

The Principal or delegate can discontinue the access to services that:

- do not support the student's educational needs;
- do not improve the student's access to education; and
- have an adverse impact on the school, staff, or other students.

The Principal or delegate may seek additional information prior to developing a Third-Party Clinical Access Agreement and granting approval.

4. Approve or deny access

If the Principal or delegate approves access:

- advise parent/guardian of approval;
- forward a copy of the Third-Party Clinical Access Agreement to the parent/guardian; and
- request both the parent/guardian and therapist to complete, sign, and return the Third-Party Clinical Access Agreement

If the Principal or delegate denies access:

- advise parent/guardian of your decision; and
- outline the reasons for the decision.

5. Complete the third-party clinical access agreement

After the Third-Party Clinical Access Agreement has been completed, signed, and returned to the school the Principal or delegate will organise:

- the location and time when the service provider will deliver the service to the student;
- the services the provider will deliver to the student;
- the frequency and duration of the sessions;
- how and when relevant confidential information will be shared between the school and the provider;
- when the school can discontinue access to the student; and
- a review date for the service.

The Principal or delegate will sign and date the Third-Party Clinical Access Agreement copies distributed to both the parent and the service provider.

If an external service provider requests access for more than one student, a separate Third-Party Clinical Access Agreement is required for each student.

6. Before commencement of service

External service providers must:

- have a Working with Children Check Western Australia
- have the NDIS Worker Screening Check or National Police Clearance – Educational; and
- complete yearly the CEWA Child Protection Procedures and Mandatory Reporting Online Training.



The Principal or delegate must ensure that the external service provider understands their obligations through an induction process which includes:

- Code of Conduct
- Visitor policy
- Internal Reporting
- Occupational Health and Safety Policy and Reporting
- Permitted areas within the school

7. Discontinue access

The Principal or delegate can discontinue access to the service provider if:

- the service no longer supports the student's educational needs;
- the service is impacting other students, staff, or school operations;
- the service is unreliable or breaches the Third-Party Clinical Access Agreement; or
- the provider has displayed inappropriate conduct as per the school's *Code of Conduct*.

When requesting student observations only

The following process is required prior to student observations:

1. Parent/guardian must complete the Request for Third Party Clinical Access to School form.
2. The Therapist or Clinician must complete the CEWA Child Protection Procedures and Mandatory Reporting online training.

The school will only communicate with the student's parent/guardian. Any requests from therapy services to the school, without prior arrangement and the completion of the Request for Third Party Clinical Access to School form will not be approved.

Process for requesting support and therapy services on a school site

Applications for external support/therapists to provide services on the school site, during school hours, may only be initiated by parents/guardians. The exception to this will be services that meet government regulation or legislation requirements, for example, School of Special Education Needs (Sensory or Medical and Mental Health) visiting teachers.

