

### INTRODUCTION

The NDIS is an Australian Government scheme providing eligible persons with significant and permanent disability (participants) greater choice and control over the delivery of their disability support. A consequence of participants in the NDIS having greater choice and control over how their disability services are delivered is that schools have seen an increase in requests for approval of NDIS-funded support delivered in schools. While delivery of therapy services in a school is a partnership between the school and parents or guardians, it is the principal's decision whether an externally funded service can be delivered in the school.

When managing requests for delivery of externally funded services in schools, the principal needs to consider a number of factors:

- ❖ Is this in the best interest of the student who is receiving the service/s?
- ❖ How will this impact other students in the school?
- ❖ How will this impact the operational requirements of the school?

A request for access must come from the student's parent or carer or, where appropriate, with the student's express consent. Considerations and access details must be documented to ensure all parties have a clear understanding of their responsibilities. Providers do not have an automatic right of access even if delivering a service to another student at the school. Decisions are to be made on a case-by-case basis.

### Considerations

In receiving requests from parents/guardians, the Principal will take into consideration:

- if the direct service enhances the student's educational program
- if there is any impact on the student's engagement and access to the curriculum
- physical space available
- increased administration due to allowing a provider on school grounds
- timetabling requirements
- supervision of the student, with line of sight to the therapy session or an additional staff member in attendance
- if the provider holds a current National Police Certificate and Working with Children Check.

### Speech Therapy

St Mary's College is fortunate to be able to provide speech therapy to all our students on a rotational basis through our own Speech Language Pathologists. Therapy is closely tied to the educational program and curriculum and is delivered in partnership with classroom teachers and teachers of the deaf. As such, there is no need for external providers to deliver additional speech services on the school grounds during school hours. To do so is more likely to cause unnecessary disruption the student's learning program and the operation of the school.

## Other services

A request for services other than speech therapy must be submitted to the Principal. Considerations and access details must be documented to ensure all parties have a clear understanding of their responsibilities. Providers do not have an automatic right of access even if delivering a service to another student at the school. Decisions are to be made on a case-by-case basis.

If agreed, those providing the externally funded service (providers) need to:

- meet all legal and policy requirements
- enter into a **Clinical Access Arrangement** with the school
- undergo an induction at the school prior to commencing services
- ensure the provided service is delivered in accordance with the school's visitor/contractor arrangements.

## Anti-discrimination obligations

In accordance with anti-discrimination obligations, schools are responsible for providing 'reasonable adjustments' for students with disabilities to enable access to their education on the same basis as their peers. However, external funding for therapy is not funded for educational attainment, but a whole of-life approach, providing support to participants to live an 'ordinary life'. Consequently, where all 'reasonable adjustments' are in place, principals are unlikely to be in breach of antidiscrimination obligations if they decline a request for NDIS externally funded therapy.

## Related Policies and guidelines

NDIS/External Providers: Guidelines for Schools, Catholic Education Commission of Victoria.

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