

CONCORD SCHOOL POLICY

EXTERNAL PROVIDER POLICY

GENERAL STATEMENT

Concord School recognises that students at the school may be receiving support outside of school hours from private therapists to assist with their day-to-day living and for their social, physical and emotional wellbeing. These supports may be funded by the family, another organisation or a funding program (such as Medicare or NDIS).

Supports that do not have an educational focus and are not a required reasonable adjustment should be delivered to students outside of school hours and outside of school grounds.

At times, supports that do have an educational focus may be delivered to students during school hours on school grounds, within the terms of this policy and at the discretion of the Principal or nominee.

The Principal's decision to accept or decline a request for private health or other services to be conducted during school hours will be made on a case-by-case basis in light of all the relevant circumstances.

RATIONALE

State and Federal discrimination law imposes a legal obligation on schools to make reasonable adjustments for students with disabilities to ensure that they are able to participate in their education on the same basis as their peers. In addition, the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* provides for free education and states that parents of students with disabilities are not required to pay for additional educational support for their children.

Therefore, a clear delineation is adopted between the student's school-based educational program and the reasonable adjustments that the student requires in relation to schooling, and any additional therapies or tutoring that parents choose to pay for which are not required reasonable adjustments and which should be occurring after school and outside of school premises.

Concord School is not a public place and our primary consideration is to ensure that the school can provide a safe environment and fulfil its duty of care obligations to students. It is also a student's right to access educational programs during school hours with minimal disruptions to the educational environment.

IMPLEMENTATION

Private therapists will be invited to attend Student Support Group meetings in terms 2, 3 and 4.

In general, Concord School does not allow private therapists to attend the school and provide services to a student during school hours.

However, special considerations may apply on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of the principal or nominee.

The Principal or nominee may exercise their discretion to:

- Allow a private therapist to, on occasion and as required, observe a student in the classroom or private setting to provide recommendations for the student's educational program or other treatment. This will be conducted in liaison with the school's relevant teaching and therapy teams.
- In exceptional circumstances, allow a private therapist to provide therapy services that are not part of their school educational program to a student on school grounds and during school hours, to accommodate the student's personal circumstances and their disability (i.e. where there are compelling reasons why a student cannot attend a therapy session outside of school hours).

The Principal or nominee must consider the following factors in determining whether to grant a request for private therapy sessions to take place at school during school hours:

- It will benefit or be in the best interests of the student for the proposed private therapy sessions to be provided at school and in school time;
- The therapist has a Working with Children Check and can comply with the Department and Concord School's Child Safe policies;
- A Criminal Records Check has been undertaken in relation to the therapist;
- The therapist can provide relevant certificates of registration and copies of certificates of currency for public liability and professional indemnity insurance;
- The school can provide safe and suitable premises for the therapy to take place;
- The school can fulfil its duty of care obligations to the student, including to provide adequate supervision, for example, through line of sight to the therapy session or an additional staff member present to supervise the therapy;
- The impact of allowing the therapy during school hours on the student's participation in their educational program, on other students and on the teachers in the learning environment;
- The social and family circumstances of the student (for example, if it is difficult for the student to access therapy out of school hours);
- Whether appropriate practical arrangements can be put in place by the school, including a licence agreement, and an information sharing agreement between the therapist and the school;
- Whether there is prior written consent from the student's parents for the external provider to provide the services at the school and to disclose information to school staff members in certain circumstances; and
- Any other factors the Principal or nominee considers relevant.

School procedures if the Principal or nominee grants a request for external therapist to provide services on school grounds

If the principal or nominee grants a request from an external provider or parent/guardian for the therapist to attend the school to provide services to a student, the following procedures must be followed:

- Parents must be contacted to obtain written consent for a therapist visit and all information disclosed to the therapist will be via the parents or through an information sharing agreement between the therapist and the school.
- Relevant school employees must be notified and organise a suitable time with the private therapist for the visit to occur.
- Private therapist must be inducted into the school as per the school induction policy.
- The Principal or nominee will ensure a meeting takes place with the parents/guardians, therapist, principal or assistant principal to discuss the purpose of the visit/therapy goals, to obtain consent for the therapy from the parents/students, and to confirm the particular arrangements for the therapist's attendance at the school. All meeting outcomes will be documented and kept in the student's file.
- Arrangements must be made to ensure a teacher is present during the visit or therapy session to adequately discharge the school's duty of care to the student.
- A licence agreement must be entered into with the school council that gives permission for an external provider to deliver their services from the school premises.
- Practical arrangements must be put in place prior to therapy commencing, including obtaining copies of Working with Children Checks, Criminal Records Check, and an information sharing agreement between the private therapist and school council.



If further visits/therapy sessions are requested and approved, the above procedures must be adopted in collaboration with the relevant therapist and student's parents/guardians.

Collaboration with other professionals

If a student is accessing support from a private therapist and a Department funded school therapist, it is highly recommended that the parents notify and provide relevant information to the relevant therapist at Concord School and allow for communication between the two therapists. Collaboration will allow therapists to work as a team to provide consistent and complimentary goals and supports for the child.

Providing support for external purposes

The school will provide copies of any previous assessment and/or reports in the student's files, when requested by parents or guardians. These are only to be given in hard copy, directly to parents or guardians. If third parties, including private therapists, wish to have copies of student assessments or reports, the school requests that they obtain them directly from parents or guardians.

REVIEW CYCLE

This policy was last approved by school council in February 2022 and is scheduled for review in February 2025.