



Guidelines

**Managing NDIS externally funded service providers
in Independent Schools**

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Through the introduction of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), more families are accessing private therapy services for their children who have a disability. As a result, Principals in all Education sectors have received requests for NDIS funded therapeutic support to be delivered during school hours and on school premises.

As a scheme the NDIS recognises the importance of education in the life of students with disabilities. Through the planning stages of developing an NDIS plan families are encouraged to work with their school to ensure that the NDIS plan and the school's Individual Learning Plan for the students complement each other. Families are also encouraged to ensure that service providers support schools as they work to agreed goals, and that service providers do not duplicate or detract from the educational program.

These guidelines have been developed by the Association of Independent Schools of the ACT to support Member Schools to develop or change relevant policies to include NDIS externally funded service providers as potential visitors to schools.

1.0 Key information

1.1 Who is an NDIS externally funded service provider?

Provider is a term used by the NDIS to describe an individual or organisation that delivers a support or a product to a participant, in this case a student. In a student's NDIS plan they may have a number of providers to help them in achieving their NDIS goals or assist them in engaging with and participating in the community, e.g. their school.

Examples of providers that may support a student assist them in engaging with and participating in school are:

- Psychologists
- Physiotherapist
- Occupational Therapists
- Speech Pathologists
- Audiologists
- Nutritionist
- Social worker
- Behavioural Management Therapist
- Exercise physiologist
- Massage Therapist
- Counsellors
- Music therapists

Providers are not employed to provide support for the student to access the curriculum this is the responsibility of the school.

1.2 Who is responsible for providing which services to a student who is an NDIS participant

Schools are required to make reasonable adjustments for students with disability under the *Disability Standards for Education 2005*. These adjustments are the enable to student to access the curriculum on the same basis as a student without a disability. This include adjustments not for the purpose of learning e.g. ramps for mobility. The adjustments made for a student should be outlined in the student's individual learning plan.

Schools are responsible for the funding of aids and equipment which are fixed or non-transportable in schools, including equipment not for the purpose of learning e.g. for personal care.

The NDIS will fund whole of life services, these services are aimed to better the student's life to enable them to engage with and participate in their community.

These can include:

- Development of behavioural management plans (can be prepared for a school setting)
- Psychological/counselling services
- Physiotherapy
- Occupational Therapy
- Speech and Language Therapy
- Support with eating and diet
- Massage therapy
- Music therapy

Families/carers cannot use NDIS funding, or privately fund, a Learning Support Assistant to support their child at school, be this to access the curriculum or for assistance not for the purpose of learning e.g. for personal care.

1.3 Purpose of a visit by Providers

The service should align with both the students NDIS goals, educational programs and the individual learning plan, and should always be in the best educational interest of the student. At the same time, the service and its impact on the needs of other students and school staff should also be taken into consideration.

1.4 Who should approve a request for visitors to provide therapy services in school time?

The Principal has final approval for requests from parents/carers to allow external service providers to work with a students during schools hours and/or on a school premises.

When considering the provision of a paid service by a visitor to support students during school time, all parties should be involved in the decision process; the Principal, classroom teacher, learning support staff, parents/carers, students (if appropriate) and the service provider. It is important to discuss an appropriate way to manage the expectations of all parties in relation to the benefit, responsibilities and payment of an additional service to support a student.

There is no obligation on a Principal to either accept or decline a request, and the decision should be made on a case-by-case basis in light of:

- The relative benefits of the service/therapy and the educational value of that support
- The particular circumstances of the student (including social circumstances)
- The particular circumstances of the school.

1.5 Delivery of the Service/Therapy

The time and space allocation is subject to the Principal's approval. In initial conversations with parents/cares and the provider, a question in relation to the amount of time they wish to have the service/therapy provided, and what space will be required e.g. a class room, a private space or other (the service/therapy may be able to be conducted in the class room while the child is participating with the curriculum).

Principals should then work with classroom teachers, learning support staff and timetabling staff to determine if the requested time and space is available. This should be investigated before a decision on whether the provider is able to provide the service/therapy in school is made.

1.6 Duty of Care

It is the Principal's responsibility for developing and administering a policy for the adequate supervision of students and to ensure the school's duty of care is met.

When an NDIS provider is in a classroom, the class teacher has the duty of care and must always ensure that adequate supervision of the visitor is met.

2.0 Initial considerations prior to the commencement of the service

When initially considering the provision of a paid service by a visitor to support students during school time, all parties should be involved in the decision process; the Principal, classroom teacher, learning support staff, parents/carers, student (if appropriate) and the service provider.

Throughout the decision making process the following questions could be used to guide the decision making process.

- Is the school the best site for the delivery of this service?
- What is the potential impact on other students or staff?
- How do the proposed arrangements fit with the student's education program?
- What time allowance is needed for the service?
- How long will the student require the service?
- What is the frequency of the service?
- What resources does the service require?
 - o Teacher discussion time?
 - o A classroom?
 - o A private room?
 - o Table and chairs?
 - o Other equipment?
- If the service is long term, what is the potential impact of the service for the student in terms of their access to, and participation in, their learning?
- Is there likely to be any conflict of interest with the service provider delivering the service at school?
- Who has responsibility for ensuring that the visitor undertakes the services contracted?
- When is the best time in the student's timetable for the service to occur?
- Does the provider have the required qualifications to provide the service?
- How does the service relate to the student's NDIS goals and ILP goals?
- Where will the service take place in the school?
- Will the service being provided in school have a positive effect on the school's understanding of the student and their disability?
- Who will receive feedback on the progression of the service?
- What would be an adequate amount of time to review the service being provided at the school?
- How will the student cope with the service being provided during school hours?
- Is the school set up to support the service being provided?
- What are the potential risks associated with the service being provided during school hours and on school premises?

The student's best interests should be kept at the centre of all discussions. If it is felt in any way that providing the service at the school is not in the best interests of the student, then the service should not be provided during school hours.

All conversations should be documented and maintained on the student's file.

3.0 Provision of documentation prior to the commencement of the service

If through the initial considerations, it is found that the service being provided during school hours is in the best interests of the student, a meeting may be arranged between the service provider and the principal/school business manager to ensure that the provider has the correct documentation.

It should be noted that some NDIS providers are organisations who have multiple therapists providing different therapy. It is recommended that each individual is required to provide the correct documentation.

Below is a list of suggested documentation that schools should obtain before the service is conducted.

3.1 Parents/cares to provide to the school:

- Parent/carer consent in writing addressed to the Principal for the visitor to carry out the service at school.
 - o Including:
 - Agreement that the parent/carer will contact the provider if the student is absent from school or is on an excursion/camp on the day that the service is to be provided.
 - The goals/learning outcomes that the service provider will work on with the student.
 - Agreement that the parent/carer notify the school of any changes that occur with the service being provided to the student. E.g. change in time/space required to provide the service, the service provider, the type of service provided, if the therapy is to discontinue.
 - Agreement that the parent/carer will notify the school that the therapy will not occur on a particular week.
 - Notification of who will receive progress reports of the provided service.

3.2 Individual visitor to provide to the school:

- Documentation outlining the intended learning outcomes of the service and how they relate to the student's NDIS goals.
- The timeline of the service to the student.

- Copy of ACT Working with Vulnerable People Card (where applicable).
 - o Note that health professionals registered with the Australian Health Professional Regulation Agency (AHPRA) are not required to register under WWVP. They should be asked to show their AHPRA card with a current registration date, a copy should be provided to the school.
- Emergency contact details.
- Current Insurance documentation, including public liability, professional indemnity insurance and workers compensation and personal accident cover.
 - o This may come from the therapist's employer e.g. As One Therapy, however should be sited and recorded for each visitor to the school.
- NDIS registration number or registration letter from the NDIS.

The school should ensure that each individual visitor to the school who is providing a NDIS service receives an induction to the school, and signs all relevant documentation required under the school's policies.

4.0 Physical arrangements to be finalised prior to the commencement of the service

Prior to the visitor's first appointment with the student, the Principal/classroom teacher/learning support coordinator should confirm arrangements with the visitor regarding:

- Time and day of the provision of the service
- Provision of a suitable space for the service provider to work if required
- Responsibility for the provision of materials for the service e.g access to photocopying, computers or office supplies.
- Activities/goals for service from both parent/carer and visitor

5.0 Delivery of the service

It is the responsibility of the visitor to provide regular reports on the student's progress to the required parties. Who the reports should go to and the frequency should be negotiated between parents/carers, Principal and the visitor in the initial consideration period. The decision should be stated in the consent letter from the parents/carers provided to the school before the commencement of the service.

The request for a review process is the school's decision. Ideally it should occur if

- an incident occurs during the service being provided or;
- there are significant changes to the service being provided or;
- if a new service needs to be provided or;
- when the student's NDIS plan is reviewed or;
- at the end of the year before the student changes year levels.

6.0 Further information

For further information or questions please contact the AISACT office.

Ph. (02) 6162 0834

Director@ais.act.edu.au