



Loch Primary School

STUDENTS WORKING WITH EXTERNAL PROVIDERS

Rationale:

This policy recognises the key role of schools in the delivery of educational outcomes and acknowledges the potential value of partnerships with non-departmental organisations in enhancing educational programs. This includes the support of Speech Pathologists, Occupational Therapists and other organisations included to meet the diverse needs of students throughout the school.

What are external providers?

For the purpose of this policy, the term *external provider* refers to any person, organisation or group offering their services and/or resources to support school-based education at a 1:1 basis, the individual classroom, sporting activity or whole-school level.

Overview

Clear and open communication that occurs well in advance of the planned program is the key to an effective and well-informed relationship between a school and an external provider.

Before an external provider is selected to assist with the delivery of a program, a thorough check should be completed by the school to ensure that they are appropriate for the program.

Prior to commencement of a program the school should ensure that the external provider has:

- a current public liability insurance certificate (minimum \$10 million)
- discussed with the school who has responsibilities for first aid, emergency communications and other specialist equipment
- demonstrated that staff have the correct qualifications and/or experience for their specific role/s
- a documented system in place to ensure that students are supervised by either a registered teacher or an approved staff member with a current Working with Children Check. A copy of a current Working with Children Check or VIT registration card is required to be given to the school prior to working with ANY student
- ensure that supervision of students is overseen at all times by a staff member
- read the relevant sections of the school's Child Safety policy and agree to comply with the policy intent.

While schools and their staff may be requested to evaluate, or provide comment on particular programs and services delivered by external providers, schools should not be seen to be openly endorsing particular external providers, their organisations or their resources.

Program responsibilities

Schools cannot sign 'Waivers of liability' on behalf of students. Regardless of the role of the external provider, schools retain overall responsibility for the program and any activities involving students.

Where not directly responsible for the instruction of the activity or assisting the instructor, the teacher responsible for the student must understand the activity and the environment in which it will be conducted. This teacher must confer with the designated instructor about the supervisory role and establish areas of responsibility.

Role of Teachers and Principals

Teachers have expertise in teaching and learning, and knowledge of their students' needs, abilities and the ways they learn. They are skilled in developing teaching and learning programs that address the needs of students within a curriculum context. Principals and teachers have primary responsibility for education programs in schools.

It is important to note that both the Department's and the Principal's 'duty of care' (and by extension, the duty of care of departmental officers, including school staff) cannot be transferred to external providers. Principals should be satisfied that any material to be delivered by external providers complies with the School and DEECD policy and implementation procedures.

While collaboration with external agencies can be beneficial to schools, this relationship should not result in external personnel being the sole source of curriculum delivery in any key learning area.

Considerations for School Leadership

The following are a guide when determining whether to use external providers to support curriculum implementation both within and beyond the school.

The questions are intended to assist the Principal when considering what is best for the school's curriculum programs, while supporting the values of schools.

Educational understanding

Does the external provider offer a service that will **support** one or more of the following:

- assess the additional information needs of teachers to teach the curriculum?
- enhance staff knowledge and understanding of relevant learning area content and/or pedagogy?
- assist in capacity building of teachers to deliver effective education programs, e.g. team teaching within a planned unit of work?
- add value to the *Victorian Curriculum* syllabus implementation?
- contribute to the planning process for developing education programs?
- provide opportunities for feedback through curriculum program evaluations?
- provide links between the school and other appropriate community agencies?
- reinforce messages taught in the classroom to the wider community?

Quality assurance

Is the external provider offering students a learning experience that cannot be provided by the school?

Is the learning experience appropriate for your school's education program or to the educational program of an individual student?

Have you reviewed the bona fides and background of the potential provider?

Do all external providers delivering the service have relevant qualifications and experience?

Have relevant staff members discussed the nature of the service and the delivery of content with the external provider and briefed them regarding requirements and expectations?

For example:

- curriculum links
- content consistent with the values of the school
- appropriate teaching and learning activities and strategies
- stage appropriate content
- support for an integrated approach rather than a one-off presentation
- feedback methods from external agencies to enhance participation in the classroom on a regular basis

Are relevant staff members aware of their responsibilities when engaging external providers for educational purposes as per policies and procedures?

Are there processes for evaluation and feedback between the school and the external provider?

Has a *risk management plan* been completed?

Evaluation:

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle, and at times when our emergency management procedures are under review.

This policy was last updated on Monday 18th December and is scheduled for review in December 2020. School Council was presented with this policy in February 2019.