

Partnering with External Organisations Procedure

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1. Purpose

This procedure is designed to support effective partnerships between educational settings including schools, senior secondary schools, early childhood settings including Early Childhood Intervention Services (ECIS), Child and Family Centres, libraries and external organisations.

2. Overview

External organisations have considerable capacity to add value to programs and support the learning outcomes of learners. The products and services offered by these organisations are usually well defined and often long term.

This procedure provides a process for Department of Education (DoE) principals and managers of educational settings to work through before committing to a partnership with an external organisation.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 Deputy Secretary

The Deputy Secretary must:

- Ensure this procedure is adhered to across all educational settings.

3.2 Directors/Managers

Directors and Managers must:

- Ensure all principals and managers of educational settings are familiar with this procedure
- Approve in principle the proposed partnership
- Ensure the completed partnering agreement (or similar) is sent to legal.services@education.tas.gov.au for checking prior to signing.

3.3 Principals/Managers

Principals and Managers must:

- Adhere to this procedure
- Gain in-principle approval from their Director/Manager
- Undertake due diligence in respect of the external organisation
- Be aware of other whole-of-agency partnerships that exist that may impact on the decision to partner with an external organisation
- Be aware of other external organisations that may already be working in the educational setting and what impact this may have
- Ensure that a partnership agreement (or similar) is the correct tool and that another form of agreement such as a contract, grant, lease, licence or casual hire agreement is not more appropriate
- Consult with relevant stakeholders
- Draft the agreement
- Forward the agreement to the relevant Director/Manager for final approval
- Nominate a project manager

- Have regular meetings with the project manager to ensure effective management of the project.

3.4 Educational Setting Staff

Educational Setting Staff must:

- Ensure that all queries regarding partnerships with external organisations are directed to the Principal/Manager who is the authorised person to approve a partnership with an external organisation.

4. Process

4.1 Accessing Organisations

From time to time, the DoE enters into whole-of-agency partnerships with external organisations. Before negotiating with external organisations, principals and managers must have in-principle approval from their Director/Manager and determine:

- whether there is already an existing partnership at a whole-of-agency level;
- whether a partnering or other type of agreement is the appropriate tool to use as opposed to a specific contract, grant, lease, licence or casual hire agreement; and
- the needs of the educational setting and the specific learner cohort.

4.2 Approaches by Organisations to Educational Settings

Organisations will, on occasions, approach educational settings to offer their services and in such situations it can be difficult to say 'no'. External organisations have performance expectations in the same way that commercial companies do and have quotas and targets that they are required to meet. It can be an attractive proposition for an educational setting to be approached by a third party and be offered a service at no cost.

Principals and managers must carefully consider and negotiate the delivery of support programs and services provided by such organisations in support of the identified learning and development needs of learners.

4.3 Approaches by Educational Settings to Organisations

There is a huge range of organisations that can offer a wide variety of services to educational settings. Some of these organisations and their services are well known while others are not.

Note: this does not constitute a DoE endorsement of products, programs or services.

4.4 Starting the Negotiations

Prior to negotiating with external organisations, principals and managers must read this procedure, the *Partnering with External Organisations Policy* and the *Tasmanian Government Approach to Collaboration* which outlines the benefits and costs of collaboration and identifies six critical factors for working together successfully:

- Leadership;
- Trust;
- Shared Aims;
- Membership;
- Accountability; and
- Information sharing.

Other DoE procedures that may impact on the decision to undertake a partnering agreement include the *Sponsorship and Commercial Arrangements for Educational Settings Procedure*.

Principals and Managers must consider:

- the needs and priorities of the educational setting
- how the proposal links to the 2018-2021 DoE Strategic Plan *Learners First: Every Learner, Every Day*
- how the proposal links to individual strategic plans including School Improvement Plans.

The following planning questions must be considered prior to any commitment to a partnership:

- What is the specific problem we are trying to address?
- Does the educational setting currently have the capacity to address this issue?
- What is the capacity of the program or service being offered to address this issue?
- Is it the best solution?
- What other external organisations are currently working in the educational setting and what impact might this have?
- Is the program or service looking to replace or replicate the work of school staff?
- Is the program being offered directly linked to the strategic directions of the educational setting and [Learners First?](#)
- What are the costs (financial, time, effort, focus, lost opportunity etc.) associated with the program or service?
- What is the timeframe of the program or service?
- Is it appropriate to the needs of the educational setting and most importantly its learners?

4.5 Operational Issues that must be Considered

A range of operational matters are likely to arise in circumstances where a third party is involved in the educational setting. The following list represents some of the issues that must be considered.

- Has due diligence been undertaken in respect of the organisation?
- Is there a whole-of-agency partnership with the external organisation that may impact on the capacity of the organisation or the educational setting to fulfil its obligations?
- Do the personnel involved have a Registration to Work with Vulnerable People (RWVP)?
- Do they have liability cover? Do they need it?
- What is the process for inducting people into the educational setting?
- What Health and Safety issues must be brought to their attention?
- In what capacity will the organisation work with the educational setting's community?
- What communication strategy will be employed?
- What consents will be sought?
- Are there any timetabling issues?
- Does this program impact on any subject areas?

This list is not complete and will change according to the nature of the program or service under consideration. It is the responsibility of the principal/manager to ensure that all relevant issues are identified and addressed.

4.6 Consultation

The final decision about whether or not to engage with an external organisation rests with the principal/manager in discussion with their Director/Manager; however, effective consultation is crucial. Principals/managers must consult with all key stakeholders before making a final decision is made. Consultation must include:

- Director/ Manager;
- School Association or other advisory body;
- Staff;
- Parents;
- The broader community; and
- Local business or service providers as required.

4.7 Purchasing Services

On occasions schools may be asked to purchase or supplement a service or program from an external organisation. In such circumstances the procedures above are especially important.

Any commitment to fund a program in the long term must only be made after a detailed analysis of the financial circumstances of the educational setting including a 'cash flow' projection for the life of the program has been undertaken.

4.8 Committing to a Partnership

Principals/managers must document all agreements with external organisations. Legal Services (Legal.Services@education.tas.gov.au) should be consulted prior to drafting a partnering agreement to determine the type of legal instrument required for the partnership.

Where necessary, Legal Services will facilitate contact with Crown Law to assist in drafting an appropriate document for parties to use.

Note: Prior to signing, the completed agreement must be sent through the Director/Manager to legal.services@education.tas.gov.au for checking.

4.9 Managing the Project

Principals/managers are responsible for what happens in their educational setting and must ensure any program or service delivered by a third party is effectively managed.

A project manager or responsible person must be nominated. Specific outcomes and deliverables must be clearly stated.

A cycle and process for monitoring the implementation of the program or service and reviewing its effectiveness must be developed and actioned from the beginning of the partnership.

The monitoring and review cycle must identify a clear timetable for deliverables and identify a predetermined series of review points to ensure the program is effectively implemented.

4.10 Risk Management

A risk management plan must be completed for all partnerships with external organisations.

5. Related Policies

- Partnering with External Organisations Policy
- Registration to Work with Vulnerable People Policy

6. Related Procedures

- Sponsorship and Commercial Arrangements for Educational Settings Procedure

7. Supporting Information/Websites

- 2018-2021 Department of Education Strategic Plan Learners First: Every Learner, Every Day
- Tasmanian Government Approach to Collaboration

8. Legislation

None.

9. Definitions

Educational Settings

Include schools, senior secondary schools, early childhood settings including ECIS, Child and Family Centres and libraries.

External Organisations

Include non-government organisations (NGOs), not-for-profit organisations, sporting clubs and other third party providers.

Partnering Agreement

A partnership is a mutually beneficial relationship that extends beyond what educational settings, the DoE and other organisations can achieve in isolation and is a relationship where all partners work together to achieve common goals and outcomes for learners. An agreement is required to formally document the terms of the partnership.

DoE Legal Services should be consulted to determine what type of legal instrument should be used to document a partnership.

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