

# Working with External Providers Procedure

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

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1.	Purpose.....	3
2.	Overview.....	3
3.	Roles and Responsibilities.....	3
4.	Process.....	3
5.	Related policies.....	5
6.	Related procedures.....	5
7.	Supporting information/websites.....	5
8.	Legislation.....	5
9.	Definitions.....	5

## 1. Purpose

This procedure supports principals and support staff who manage and guide the involvement of external support providers (ESPs).

The procedure has been developed to ensure that the services of ESPs compliment and value-add to existing support structures and student programs.

## 2. Overview

In recent years there has been a noticeable increase in the number of ESPs working within DoE schools. This in part can be attributed to Federal initiatives including the FaCHSIA Autism resource support and the Medicare 'Mental Health Care Plan'.

Alongside these major initiatives there has also been a growth in Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) working with and in schools.

The rapid increase in ESPs working in schools has prompted the need to establish protocols to guide and manage their involvement and to ensure that their services compliment and value add to existing support structures and student programs.

In certain circumstances, immediate access to specific counselling services (e.g. Sexual Assault Support Service) is required. In this event, school Social Workers or School Psychologists, in consultation with the school principal and staff, will sanction these visits.

## 3. Roles and Responsibilities

### 3.1 Principal

Principals must ensure ESPs maintain a current Registration to Work with Vulnerable People. Principal or nominee is to communicate with all key stakeholders regarding the intended visit/s.

### 3.2 External Support Provider (ESP)

The ESP is to follow school sign-in procedures and is to communicate with the school the intention to visit at least two days prior to the visit.

The ESP is to provide a written report to all key stakeholders as per the pre-arranged process.

## 4. Process

### 4.1 Pre School Visit

ESP or Contracting Agent to contact School Principal to:-

- a) Request permission to attend school and
- b) Outline purpose and intended outcome/s of visit/, and
- c) Provide credentials / accreditation details ... parent permissions etc.

The Principal or nominee will consult with key stakeholders (class teacher/s, senior staff, support personnel) and communicate to ESP and/or Contracting Agent.

If visit/s are approved:-

The ESP will attend a meeting with key school based staff and DoE support personnel and will:-

- a) Provide a written outline of the purpose and intended outcome/s of visit/s including a schedule of visits, dates and times.
- b) Establish communication modes and reporting processes (include nomination of key contact person at School)
- c) Confirm parental permission has been sought.

## 4.2 School Visit

The ESP will confirm dates and times of visit with key contact person at school at least 2 days prior to the visit (confirmation of visit to be shared with all stakeholders – key contact person).

Whole school staff will be notified of visit (SharePoint, Whiteboard, Briefing).

The ESP will sign in at school office upon arrival and will then be escorted / directed to classroom or designated area.

The ESP will provide a verbal report / summary of visit with key contact person or nominee upon the completion of the visit and then be escorted / directed to the office to sign out.

## 4.3 Post Visit

The ESP is to provide a written summary of the visit to key contact person, this summary will be shared with all key stakeholders.

The ESP will ensure that all pre-arranged reporting processes are followed.

## 4.4 Risk management

DoE requires all employees, volunteers, contractors and external providers, or persons otherwise engaged in or associated with a child regulated activity, to maintain current Tasmanian Registration to Work with Vulnerable People (RWVP).

There are two categories of registration – employment/volunteer or volunteer. Registration may be issued with conditions as determined by the Department of Justice (DoJ).

DoJ has established minimum mandatory standards for assessing employees and volunteers for RWVP in organisations involved in delivering child related services and programs.

The *Registration to Work with Vulnerable People Act 2013* allows for exemptions from RWVP under certain circumstances, however DoE has determined that given the nature of the regulated activities within DoE and associated risk of harm to children, exemptions will not apply. Accordingly all employees, volunteers, contractors and external providers are required to maintain a current Tasmanian RWVP.

DoE is comprised of multiple sites including child and family centres, schools, colleges and locations associated with Libraries Tasmania. Due to the diverse nature of child related activities that occur at these sites, DoE considers exemptions to be unmanageable and may create a risk to children and other vulnerable people.

Complete an online application form at <https://www.cbos.tas.gov.au/topics/licensing-and-registration/registrations/work-with-vulnerable-people/risk-assessment-process> (ensure DoE and the school/s are nominated).

## 5. Related policies

- Registration to Work with Vulnerable People Policy

## 6. Related procedures

- Nil

## 7. Supporting information/websites

- Registration to Work with Vulnerable People
- Minimum Mandatory Standards for Assessing Employees and Volunteers

## 8. Legislation

- *Emergency Management Act 2006*
- *Registration to Work with Vulnerable People Act 2013*
- *State Service Act 2000*

## 9. Definitions

### External Support Provider (ESP)

An accredited professional or organisation, independent of the Department of Education Tasmania, which provides a service/s to young people who are students within state schools.

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