

MARCH 2024

# Working with External Support Providers in Schools

## Factsheet for External Support Providers

This factsheet provides important information for External Support Providers (ESPs) that seek to provide support services for a student at a Tasmanian Government school site, during school time.

There are a range of situations, where additional health and/or wellbeing services are required to support positive educational outcomes for students.

The Department for Education, Children and Young People (DECYP)'s [Working with External Support Providers in Schools Procedure](#) has been reviewed and updated to ensure schools meet legislative and policy requirements, when considering External Support Providers (ESPs) to deliver one-on-one support and services to students at DECYP school sites, during school time.

## Before support services commence

### Decision to allow access

The decision to allow an ESP to deliver direct support to a student at school, during school time, will be made by a Principal (or their delegate) on a case-by-case basis considering the individual circumstances of the student. The best interests of the child or young person are paramount and are always the first and main consideration of the school. The impact of the support on school operations will also be considered.

As part of the decision making process, the school Principal will:

- assess whether the intended service is best delivered by the ESP at school, during school time, or better provided outside of school and school time; and
- consider the delivery of support provided by ESPs in relation to the identified learning and developmental needs of the student.

ESPs do not have automatic right of access to a school, even if they are already providing support to another student at the same school, or are working in another school.

Where access is approved, ESPs must work collaboratively with the Principal and school staff.

## Consent

Where a Principal has determined an ESP can deliver support to a student at the school, the school must obtain the written consent of a parent, carer or guardian before the ESP can work with a student.

The parent, carer or guardian of a student may need further information about the proposed support for the student in order to make a decision. This should include how information will be collected, held, used and disclosed by the ESP. If required, further information regarding the services might be sought from the ESP.

If the school is either notified by a parent, carer or guardian that they object to the student receiving support, or becomes aware that the parents/carers/guardians have an opposing view over the services, the ESP cannot deliver support to the student until the issue is resolved by the parents/carers/guardians. It is not the responsibility of the school to broker a resolution in a dispute between parents/carers/guardians in this instance.

## School-based Induction

Before a service or support is provided to a student in a school, ESPs and their staff must demonstrate that the necessary checks, protections and training are in place and complete a school induction.

The school-based induction will clarify the responsibilities of all parties and provide important information, including a general induction to the school site, safeguarding children responsibilities, supervision requirements and information sharing requirements.

At the induction, ESP staff are required to provide their Registration to Work with Vulnerable People (RWVP) and current public liability certificate.

ESP staff who are engaged with multiple schools and who have completed a full induction at another school will only need to undertake inductions at additional schools that cover site-specific information, such as emergency procedures and checking RWVP status.

ESP staff must agree to conditions of the ESP Agreement as part of the [Working with External Support Providers in Schools Induction Checklist](#) prior to delivering support to a student. This includes completing DECYP's safeguarding training prior to delivering support to students.

## Requirements when attending the school

ESPs should confirm the date and time of the visit with the key contact person at the school at least two days prior to the visit.

## Safeguarding children and young people

All children and young people have the right to be respected and protected from harm.

DECYP requires ESPs to comply with its [Safeguarding Framework: Safe. Secure. Supported](#) and deliver services in accordance with the [Child and Youth Safe Organisations Act 2023](#) as applicable.

ESPs must safeguard children and young people from abuse including fulfilling reporting obligations pursuant to the Registration to Work with Vulnerable People Act 2013 and Part 3 of the Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1997.

For questions relating to safeguarding requirements contact the Office of Safeguarding Children and Young People [safeguarding@decyp.tas.gov.au](mailto:safeguarding@decyp.tas.gov.au) or visit Safeguarding Children and Young People - Department for Education, Children and Young People.

## Using school equipment and materials

School-based programs have absolute priority over the use of school facilities and resources during school hours. It is the responsibility of the ESP to supply equipment, qualified personnel, and any materials necessary to deliver the support service during school times. The decision to allow an ESP access to school facilities and resources is at the discretion of the Principal.

## Information Sharing

ESPs may only collect information about a student that is directly relevant to their role in the provision of the support or service, and must adhere to the *Personal Information Protection Act 2004*.

The ESP must inform the parent/carer/guardian on how it will report, share and store personal and health information collected about the student.—In considering the context and views of the student, and with consent of the parent/carer/guardian, an ESP may share relevant information with a school where additional health and/or wellbeing services are required to support positive educational outcomes for student.

Where there is risk of harm to a student, there is an expectation that the ESPs will share relevant information with the school.

## Further Information

In the first instance, please contact the Principal of the school.

For questions relating to safeguarding requirements, please contact the Office of Safeguarding Children and Young People [safeguarding@decyp.tas.gov.au](mailto:safeguarding@decyp.tas.gov.au) or visit Safeguarding Children and Young People - Department for Education, Children and Young People.