

Risk & Compliance - Information Regarding External Providers

External providers

Students may be supported by an external service provider due to disability, the investigation of disability, or other therapeutic needs. These providers may include individuals such as speech pathologists, occupational therapists or psychologists, as well as agencies such as Autism Queensland or those associated with the [Specialist Disability Support in School Program](#) (SDSS).

Brisbane Catholic Education values these services and is committed to partnering with providers to align therapy and educational goals to progress the engagement, progress, achievement and wellbeing of students.

Service delivery at school

Any externally funded service provision (NDIS or non-NDIS) should support a student's access to curriculum and learning. Where the service is not primarily connected to curriculum and learning, the service is most appropriately undertaken outside school hours and off-site.

However, Brisbane Catholic Education recognises there may be extenuating circumstances under which a family may require a service to be delivered at school.

Key considerations for Principals:

- permission to access the school, school staff and students is determined by the Principal following a request from a parent/legal guardian
- whether the service is a single consultancy or observation, or if it will be delivered to the student regularly over a period of time
- the impact on teaching, learning, and curriculum access if the student is withdrawn from the classroom
- how the support, information, and/or observation will align with the education goals of the student
- the operational context of the school and the impact on maintaining the ordinary running of the school for all students, including adequate supervision of the external service provider, use of space, equipment, and facilities
- case-by-case circumstances, including whether the denial of access within the school setting will result in the student not receiving the service e.g. in a rural/remote area or due to family circumstances
- the timing and documentation of regular feedback to and from the classroom teacher.

Classroom Observations

At times, schools may receive requests from external service providers to make an observation/s of a student in the classroom/school setting. Such requests should be considered very carefully with close attention to:

- the necessity and purpose of the observation
- whether there is a viable alternative such as the Guidance Counsellor/STIE conducting the observation and providing the notes to the parents for forwarding on to the provider
- clear written instructions to the provider (could be via email) regarding the boundaries of the observation such as:
 - only the subject student is to be observed and any data collection is for that student only
 - no other student is to be observed or included in any data collection
 - no information about the teacher or school staff is to be collected, documented or discussed
 - how the provider will be supervised by a school staff member
 - requirement to complete [Student Protection and Code of Conduct Training for Volunteers and Other Personnel](#) and provide certificate to the Principal

Legal, policy, and safeguarding obligations

Where access to school premises and a student/s has been granted, the Principal must ensure:

- evidence of current public liability insurance cover is sighted
- providers complete the Third Party training ([click here for link to online module](#))
- providers read the [Third Party Safeguarding Requirements](#) and complete a Third Party Registration and Declaration Form (accessed at the end of the training), a copy of which is shared with the school
- a regular review of the arrangement and any impact on learning and teaching is conducted and documented
- no student from any other sector e.g. Department of Education is to access therapy services on a BCE school site
- a service fee to cover regular use of school facilities is levied to the service provider.

St Mary's Primary School



BCE Legal Counsel are available to assist Principals with the development of a document which addresses service providers' access to and use of school premises.

Principals may withdraw an external provider's access to a school where it has been determined that the service is no longer in the student's educational interest. This will be done in collaboration with the family.

Consulting with external service providers

Consultation with external service providers such as medical and allied health professionals, advisory visiting teachers and other agencies may assist schools to better understand student needs and provide advice about effective adjustments. Schools should partner with parents/legal guardians when consulting with external providers. The [National Catholic Safeguarding Standards](#) requires parents and students to be involved in decisions that directly affect them.

In limited circumstances, where parents request/authorise schools to communicate with their child's external providers, consent must first be obtained from the parent/legal guardian. The BCE Consent to Share form, email communication or documented meeting notes can be used for this purpose.

Informed consent means consent that is:

- **Voluntary** – the person giving the consent knows that they do not have to give consent and that there will be no adverse consequences if they do not give consent.
- **Informed** – the consenting individual knows for what purpose, how, to whom and under what conditions information will be recorded, used or disclosed before agreeing.
- **Specific** – consent must be specific and identify the activities, information and parties that it will cover.
- **Time-limited** – for a particular purpose for a specified period. Parents/legal guardians can revoke consent at any time.