

Therapy in Schools: QPS Rationale and Process



HELP FOR NON-ENGLISH SPEAKERS

If you need help to understand the information in this document, please contact Queenscliff Primary School on 03 5258 1696 or queenscliff.ps@education.vic.gov.au.

RATIONALE

At Queenscliff Primary School we are committed to embedding inclusive practices into each classroom, each day, and ensuring every student receives a high-quality education. Our school is responsible for providing our students with an education between the hours of 8:50am and 3:00pm and we adhere to the Department of Education's curriculum guidelines during this time to ensure our students have adequate access to the curriculum.

The school aims to accommodate requests for private or NDIS-funded therapy sessions, observation visits, Student Support Group (SSG) and Disability Inclusion Profile (DIP) meeting attendance of therapists where this is discussed and agreed between parents/carers and the school in advance. All requests for therapy sessions must be submitted to the principal following the procedure outlined in this document. When considering requests, the school will take into account the student's needs and the impact on school operations. In some cases, requests may not be able to be accommodated due to limits on suitable therapy spaces, staff supervision and child safety requirements, meeting size or structure, scheduling issues, or disruption to student learning and school operations. Outcomes of requests will be discussed with parents/carers on a case-by-case basis.

Schools are responsible for personalising learning and support for students that primarily relate to their educational attainment (including teaching, learning assistance and aids, school building modifications and transport between school activities) in accordance with relevant anti-discrimination laws.

The NDIS funds supports that are associated with the functional impact of the student's disability on their activities of daily living (those not primarily relating to education attainment). These include personal care and support, transport to and from school, and specialist transition supports to and from school to further education, training or employment.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

When considering a request for NDIS or private funded therapy during school hours at Queenscliff Primary School, the principal will review a variety of factors, including:

- the student's individual circumstances
- the student's access to the curriculum
- the [Child Safe Standards](#), including the ability of school staff to supervise the student while the therapy is being provided
- practical and administrative capacity
- anti-discrimination obligations
- school council support.

Individual circumstances

The overall benefit to the student is a key consideration. Any convenience for therapists in providing therapy during school hours must not take priority over what is best for the student. In making a decision, principals must consider

all relevant factors, including the particular family and social circumstances of the student, and the flexibility of the student's learning program. For example, a student who fatigues because of their disability may benefit from receiving therapy during school hours, rather than after hours.

Access to curriculum

Victorian government schools are based on the principle that all students should have access to education. When deciding whether a student can receive NDIS-funded support during school hours, principals must consider how this will affect the student's ability to take part in the school curriculum, noting that the main purpose of school hours is education. In some cases, allowing therapy during school hours may support or improve the student's access to the curriculum. For more, see: [NDIS Funded Therapy in Schools: Key Considerations](#).

Requests for therapy on school grounds outside of school hours

Principals maintain the right to decline a request for private therapy sessions to occur during or outside of school hours, particularly if there are concerns about the level of supervision that can be provided. For more information, see [NDIS Funded Therapy in Schools: Child Safe Standards and Duty of Care](#).

Practical and administrative capacity

Our school must ensure there is the practical capacity to accommodate NDIS funded or privately funded therapy, in person or virtually, to students on school grounds. This includes having the physical space available to accommodate the therapy and ensuring the school is equipped to manage the increased administrative workload.

Anti-discrimination obligations

There is no legal obligation on principals to approve a request for NDIS funded or privately funded therapy. This is because NDIS funded or privately funded therapy is generally not required to enable a student to access their education. A school's legal obligation under the [Disability Discrimination Act 1992](#) is to ensure students with a disability can access their education on the same basis as their peers without a disability.

Schools are responsible for providing [reasonable adjustments](#) to ensure that students with a disability can access their education on the same basis as their peers without a disability. Schools are legally obliged to provide these adjustments, regardless of whether a student is also receiving NDIS support or other funding (see [Students with Disability](#); [Disability Inclusion Funding and Support](#)).

School council support

School council support is required for the licence agreement and virtual agreement to use school premises, which must be signed before the NDIS funded or privately funded therapy can commence at school. An NDIS funded or privately funded therapist will not be allowed to commence providing regular therapy on school grounds until the relevant licence agreement is signed. Any licence fees associated with using the school premises must be charged to the therapist and not passed on to the NDIS participant. The school council, principal, and therapist are all responsible for the completion of the licence agreement. For more information, see [NDIS Funded Therapy in Schools: Guidance – Document the arrangement](#).

- [NDIS Funded Therapists Licence Agreement](#)
- [Other Private Therapists Licence Agreement](#)

PROCESS FOR THERAPY REQUESTS

To request NDIS or private therapy on school grounds during school hours, the following process must be followed:

1. Parents/carers download the [Therapy in Schools Parent/Carer Consent Form](#)

2. Parents/carers complete and return the above form via email to queenscliff.ps@education.vic.gov.au marked *Confidential*, att: *Principal*
3. The principal (or delegate) responds to the parents/carers with the outcome of the request (usually via email, within 10 days of the request)
4. The parents/carers inform the child's therapist of the outcome
5. If approved, the school provides a [Therapy Request Form](#) and [licence agreement](#) to the therapist
6. The therapist emails the completed documentation to queenscliff.ps@education.vic.gov.au marked *Confidential*, att: *Principal* to schedule in a mutually appropriate time to meet
7. Parents/carers attend a "first meeting" with the school principal (or delegate) and the therapist, to review and discuss practical arrangements for the therapy, as well as the licence agreement. The school must take minutes of the meeting outcomes and keep a record on the student's school file. This meeting will confirm the particular operational arrangements for the therapy including:
 - a. the therapy goals and educational goals for the student, to promote a shared support and planning approach between the school and the therapist
 - b. when, how often and where the therapy will take place (physical location)
 - c. supervision arrangements
 - d. notification arrangements – for instance, if the therapist has to change an appointment or the student is absent that day, who is responsible for informing whom
 - e. whether the family would like the NDIS funded or privately funded therapist to attend Student Support Group meetings.
8. Therapy commences once School Council approves the licence agreement. The school will inform the parents/carers and therapists of the start date and time.

Approval from the principal for a student to receive therapy on school premises or during school activities is required annually. This applies to students who have previously had therapy delivered at school in the year prior.

OBSERVATIONS

Student observation requests can generally be accommodated, and these are guided by our [Visitors Policy](#) and the department's [Visitors in Schools](#) policy. Observation protocols include:

- The Therapy in Schools Parent/Carer Consent Form, Therapy Request Form, and Licence Agreement are all in place prior to the observation occurring
- Therapists email the school at queenscliff.ps@education.vic.gov.au marked att: *principal* and '*confidential*' to arrange a mutually agreeable time for any observations to occur
- All therapists presenting for an observation at Queenscliff Primary School are required to sign in at the school office when entering, and provide a current Working with Children Check
- Therapists observing at school should only observe the particular child with whom they are working, and with that child's parental/carers consent
- Therapists/ observers should only make notes focusing solely on their client; protecting the privacy of other students in the class by not recording anything that in any way could identify them
- Therapists/ observers should not make any audio or video recordings of the class

- Therapists are to provide a copy of the notes and information gathered from the observation to parents/carers and the classroom teacher and/or school's Wellbeing Leader. This is integral to ensuring all stakeholders communicate effectively to support the child's learning and wellbeing.

ATTENDANCE AT SSG AND DIP MEETINGS

If a request to attend an SSG or DIP meeting is approved, the parent/carer must inform the therapist/s of the date and time of the meeting. The therapist's role is to provide additional knowledge of the child's educational needs and aid in development of educational goals for the student where requested. Therapist attendance is guided by our [Visitors Policy](#) and the department's [Visitors in Schools](#) policy. The payment for NDIS funded therapists attending meetings at schools is to be funded from the participant's NDIS plan.

INDIVIDUAL STUDENT THERAPY – FURTHER INFORMATION

Therapists are required to provide ongoing communication to parents/carers and the school regarding NDIS funded or privately funded therapy, as outlined in the Sharing Deed of the Licence Agreement.

All therapists delivering therapy at Queenscliff Primary School are required to sign in at the school office when entering, and provide a current Working with Children Check.

RELATED POLICIES AND RESOURCES

The Department's Policy and Advisory Library (PAL):

- [NDIS Funded Therapy in Schools Policy](#)
- [Child Safe Standards](#)

Our school policies and documents:

- [Child Safety Code of Conduct](#)
- [Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy](#)
- [Inclusion and Diversity Policy](#)
- [Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy](#)
- [Working with Children Check Policy](#)
- [Visitors Policy](#)
- [Duty of Care Policy](#)
- [Therapy Request Form](#) (NDIS Funded and Privately Funded Therapists)
- [Therapy in School Parent/Carer Consent Form](#) (Parents/Carers only)
- [NDIS Funded Therapists Licence Agreement](#)
- [Other Private Therapists Licence Agreement](#)

REVIEW AND APPROVAL

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