

External providers engaged for teaching and learning - guidelines

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Contact details	Quality Teaching and Learning at qtl.doe@nt.gov.au
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Acronyms	Full form
ABN	Australian Business Number
NQF	National Quality Framework
NT	Northern Territory
NTG	Northern Territory Government
TRM	Territory Records Manager

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1. Introduction

From time to time, schools may be approached by, or consider engaging with, external providers to supplement or enrich teaching and learning programs when addressing curriculum requirements.

The department acknowledges the potential value of engaging with external providers to enhance education programs. These guidelines are designed to support school leaders and teachers that are considering their use.

A checklist is provided at Appendix A to assist schools to determine whether a provider is suitable and to guide both parties through the process.

2. Definitions

Educational settings - include early childhood settings, primary schools, middle schools and senior secondary schools.

External provider - for the purpose of these guidelines refers to any person, organisation or group offering their services or resources to support school-based education or specialist support at the class, year or whole-school level. Providers operate under various business models and may offer their services to schools at a cost.

National Quality Framework - is a regulatory system agreed to by all Australian governments, through the Council of Australian Governments, to raise quality, and drive continuous improvement in early childhood education and care services, including preschools.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1. Principals

- consider the school strategic plan and overall benefit for students when deciding to engage an external provider
- work with the school council to determine the suitability of engaging the provider where applicable
- confirm budget availability where applicable
- ensure that the external provider has the qualifications and/or experience to deliver the service and meet all necessary legal and safety requirements including a current working with children card
- ensure that the external provider is adequately inducted into school protocols and the code of conduct, and is aware of their responsibilities towards students including record keeping, information sharing and reporting obligations when working in schools
- ensure that the school's supervision arrangements are adequate
- ensure that teachers and relevant members of staff have an understanding of the services being provided and their role in delivery
- ensure a risk assessment and management plan is in place where appropriate
- approve the use of the external provider.

3.2. Teachers

- seek the approval of the principal or their delegate when engaging an external provider
- identify the relevant links between the service provided and curriculum priorities
- understand the service being provided through working with the provider to add value and depth to existing teaching and learning programs
- ensure that the material to be delivered is appropriate for the age and developmental stage of students
- understand their obligations to:
 - ensure adequate supervision
 - define and manage concerns regarding student wellbeing and safety.

3.3. External providers

- hold a current working with children card
- understand their responsibilities to students including record keeping, information sharing and reporting obligations as explained in the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations
- give careful consideration to the appropriateness of the service for students
- recognise that their service must align with the curriculum
- be willing to modify the service delivery in consultation with the principal or their delegate, if necessary
- gain the approval of the principal or their delegate prior to delivering their service.

4. Guidelines

External providers may be engaged by the school to provide specialist expertise and to enhance specific learning area achievement. The programs, sessions and services provided should always be evaluated on their capacity to contribute to the learning described in the school's curriculum and assessment plan, and their ability to provide services beyond the scope and expertise of the teacher.

4.1. Key points for consideration

- External providers will have greatest impact if the service or session has a clear educational purpose, is delivered as part of a teaching and learning sequence and is contextualised to meet the students need.
- The most effective outcome for students will be achieved when the school and provider engage in adequate dialogue so relevant information can be shared, issues negotiated and educational outcomes optimised. It is important to establish and maintain clear and open communication prior, during, and post implementation of the service.
- An alternative program is to be made available to students who will not be attending or participating in the session.

- Where the external service attracts a fee, the school council can assist the principal in deciding whether to engage a service, and whether funds are available to cover costs so that all students are able to participate.
- Any commitment to fund a program in the long term can be made by the principal in consultation with the school council.

4.2. Risk assessment and management

Contextual factors need to be considered when analysing the risk associated with a service. The attached checklist titled Considerations list for the school principal, teacher and external provider, assists with an initial assessment of risk, with analysis tools such as a risk-rating matrix then being recommended to be used to identify significant or high-risk activities. For more information about the risk-rating matrix, staff can go to the Risk register template page on the Education intranet.

If significant risks are identified then a risk management plan, that is current and relevant to the service and the context, should be developed. All documents that would assist with risk management must be lodged with the principal.

4.3. Feedback and review cycle

A process for evaluating the provision and outcomes of the service should be in place. This would involve a process for reviewing the implementation and effectiveness of the service, including consultation, communication and collaboration prior, during, and after the service was delivered. All stakeholders should have the opportunity to provide feedback, including students.

From time to time, schools may be requested by the external provider to evaluate their programs and services. If doing so, the school should take care to not be seen as openly endorsing a particular service provider.

4.4. Scope exclusions

These guidelines are not intended for use in relation to chaplaincy services in schools or during excursions for which there are separate policies. For more information about these policies, go to the [Department of Education, Policy and advisory library web page](#).

4.5. Information for staff

To find out more information about external providers in schools, go to the [department's eLearn website](#).

5. Appendix A

Considerations list for the school principal, teacher and external provider

Legal Requirements		
1	External provider has current public liability insurance – a minimum \$10 million, which covers the program activity	Yes/No/NA
2	External provider has current workers compensation insurance	Yes/No/NA
3	External provider has business registration, including an ABN	Yes/No/NA
4	Evidence has been provided – all external staff must hold a current NT Working With Children Check – an Ochre Card	Yes/No/NA
5	Legal advice is sought before signing contract, licence agreement, indemnity form or any other document the service provider has asked the school to sign	Yes/No/NA
6	Signed, informed consent is obtained for each student – where necessary	Yes/No/NA
Safety Requirements		
1	Documented evidence of relevant qualifications and experience of external staff is provided	Yes/No/NA
2	The teacher-student ratio is appropriate for the activity or, if a preschool regulated under the National Quality Framework, ratios and qualification requirements are maintained, including first aid, anaphylaxis and asthma management qualification requirements	Yes/No/NA
3	Transport requirements and arrangements are appropriate	Yes/No/NA
4	Assessment of the environmental opportunities and challenges	Yes/No/NA
5	Individual student wellbeing and medical needs have been identified	Yes/No/NA
6	Staff have current first aid qualifications and at an appropriate level	Yes/No/NA
7	First aid equipment is adequate and readily accessible	Yes/No/NA
8	Asthma first aid kit is readily accessible	Yes/No/NA
9	Specialist equipment and specific safety procedures are considered	Yes/No/NA
10	Contextualised risk assessment has been conducted	Yes/No/NA
11	Current risk rating and management plan is provided	Yes/No/NA
12	Emergency response procedures are in place	Yes/No/NA

Prior planning and service delivery		
1	The service or session forms part of a current school/class learning program	Yes/No/NA
2	Evidence of educational benefit and links to the school's curriculum and assessment plan	Yes/No/NA
3	Service reflects identified school ethos, values and goals	Yes/No/NA
4	Content and resources used by the external provider are evidence-based and approved by the principal and teacher	Yes/No/NA
5	The external provider employs a range of strategies and activities that are student centred and developmentally appropriate	Yes/No/NA
6	Activities are contextualised and able to be modified to meet diverse student backgrounds and learning needs	Yes/No/NA
7	Resources and equipment are sufficient to allow full engagement of all students	Yes/No/NA
8	School council approval has been obtained, if required	Yes/No/NA
9	Ensure equitable access is available to all students - timetabling, affordability	Yes/No/NA
10	Ensure all reasonable accommodations are made for students with a disability	Yes/No/NA
11	A medical form has been completed for all students, if required	Yes/No/NA
12	Accident reporting protocols are explained to the external provider	Yes/No/NA
13	Alternative activities are available for students who are not able to participate	Yes/No/NA
Working collaboratively in educational settings		
1	The external provider will be made aware of the code of conduct in schools, and the school's expectations for safeguarding children	Yes/No/NA
2	The teacher will be engaged in the planning and delivery of the service or session	Yes/No/NA
3	In accordance with the NT Information Act, the teacher will provide relevant student and school information to the external provider to optimise student participation and program effectiveness	Yes/No/NA
4	A registered teacher will be always present during the delivery of the service or session	Yes/No/NA
5	The teacher is aware of their specific supervision and safety responsibilities	Yes/No/NA
6	The teachers will provide feedback regarding the effectiveness of the service or session to the principal	Yes/No/NA
7	The external provider is able to describe the links to the curriculum	Yes/No/NA
8	There is opportunity for capacity building and professional learning for teachers	Yes/No/NA

Engaging with parents and community		
1	Adequate consultation has been made to ensure the external provider is aware of issues or needs within the local community	Yes/No/NA
2	Adequate information has been provided to parents and caregivers regarding the service or session being provided	Yes/No/NA
3	Informed consent has been obtained for each child, where necessary	Yes/No/NA
4	Opportunities are provided for parents and caregivers to give feedback regarding the service or session, where appropriate	Yes/No/NA