

# Requesting the delivery of an NDIS-funded disability therapy service for your child at a NSW public school

Information for parents and carers

This document provides important information for parents and carers who are considering requesting that NDIS-funded services are delivered to their child while at school.

**There are 4 key steps for parents and carers who seek to have NDIS-funded services delivered in school:**

- 1. Ask the school in writing**
- 2. Meet with school staff to discuss details**
- 3. Principal considers your request taking into account the needs of your child, other students and the operations of the school**
- 4. If agreed, the service needs to enter into an agreement with the school and meet important legal requirements.**

## NSW public schools support students with disability and additional needs

Teachers make adjustments for students whose learning is impacted by disability so they can participate in school on the same basis as other students. Teachers work closely with parents and carers to plan for and deliver these adjustments.

Some children and young people may benefit from allied health and specialist therapies for disability related needs. Some examples include physiotherapy, speech pathology and occupational therapy.

This information sheet relates to providers of therapy services who are funded through a child's National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) support plan or package. Schools work with parents and therapy providers in a number of ways to help ensure that therapy services meet the needs of children and young people and support their participation in learning. This may include contributing to therapy assessments and planning therapy interventions.

The NSW Department of Education and the National Disability Insurance Agency recommend that therapy services for children's disability needs funded through a child's NDIS support plan are best delivered outside of school time. This allows the school to focus on teaching your child and all other students and ensures your child does not miss out on important learning time.

However, in some cases, it may be suitable for these services to be provided at school.

If this is the case, the school principal will manage these services in a way that does not affect your child's opportunity to take part in class. It is important that your child does not miss out on important learning and school programs because they are receiving therapy services.

Principals must also make sure that the school is able to run to benefit all students without undue disruption to learning.

## **How to request the service for your child is provided at school**

- 1) The principal must properly consider a request for a child's NDIS-funded therapy service to be provided at school. Put your request to the principal in writing so that it is clear what you are asking and there is a record of your request.
- 2) Organise to meet with school staff:
  - a) Make an appointment to meet with the principal or the school staff they nominate. This may form part of your normal planning meetings with the school about your child's learning and support. You may want to invite the therapy provider to the meeting or include them in the discussion. Note: Schools will not meet any costs for providers to attend meetings at school.
  - b) Bring all relevant documents and information to the meeting. This may include reports from specialists, therapists or, your child's NDIS support plan.
  - c) The meeting will help the principal to consider whether providing the service at school will fit with your child's personalised learning and support provisions and the operational arrangements at the school. This might include discussion of the times when the service would be provided.
- 3) The principal will then need time to consider your request. A service provider will not be able to work in a school before approval has been given by the principal.
- 4) If the principal agrees to the service being delivered at school, the school will let you know and will enter into a written agreement with the therapy service provider.

## **The principal will consider a number of important matters**

After the meeting, the principal will consider all of the information relating to the request and how the proposed therapy contributes to your child's personalised learning and support, as well as the potential impacts on other students and the school in general.

The principal will consider:

- the school's duty of care to all students and staff
- how the service relates to your child's personalised learning needs and agreed educational adjustments or supports.
- impacts on your child if he or she needs to leave the classroom to receive therapy
- arrangements to ensure that your child is adequately supervised when receiving the service
- effects on other students if the service needs to be provided in the classroom
- whether the service needs to be delivered at a particular time of the day.

## **The school will enter into an agreement with the provider**

Before starting work in a school, the service provider will be asked to show that they comply with certain legal requirements. This includes a Working with Children Check clearance for all provider staff delivering the service at the school. The school will give providers information about these requirements.

If they have not already done so, providers will be asked to sign a written agreement with the school. This agreement sets out how they will work when in the school. As part of this agreement, the provider will need to record the details of the particular services that they will provide to your child in the school. You can request a copy of the agreement between the school and the provider and the schedule or part of the agreement that relates to your child. Information about the attendance of the service provider at the school can also be made available on request.

The school reserves the right to stop access by a provider if they breach their agreement with the school or if the principal determines that the provision of the service at school does not align with the educational needs of your student or the operational requirements of the school. The principal will contact you before they take this step. If you are unhappy with this decision, you should discuss it with the principal.

## **Your ongoing role**

As part of your role in your child's NDIS plan, you will have a service agreement with the provider you have chosen for your child's therapy support. This means you will continue to have a role when it is agreed that the service will be delivered at school. This includes:

- Letting the therapy provider know that the school has agreed they are able to work with your child at school at the agreed times and any other conditions. This information will be included in the written agreement with the school.
- Telling the therapy provider as soon as possible if your child is absent from school on a day on which the provider is supposed to go to the school.
- Telling the service provider if other activities at school mean that therapy cannot take place. For example, when sports carnivals, excursions, or special events or assemblies are scheduled.
- Telling the school if you stop using the service or change providers.
- Meeting or talking regularly with school staff to review your child's personalised learning and support plan and talk about how the service is going.

## **Schools will not assess providers**

Schools will not assess the professional skills of therapy providers or evaluate their accreditation.

However, if the school has concerns about the service being delivered to your child, the school will discuss these concerns with you.