

EXTERNAL PROVIDERS/CONSULTANTS PROTOCOL

*The Currajong School takes a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse and is fully committed to ensuring that its strategies, policies, procedures, and practices meet all **Child Safety Standards as specified in Ministerial Order No. 1359 (2022)***

The Currajong School recognises the valuable contribution provided by external allied health professionals who support the wellbeing and learning of children and young people, for example, speech pathologists, educational psychologists and occupational therapists. Utilisation of these services, as well as the incorporation of recommendations from assessments and/or reports, should be considered in Student Support Group meetings and where possible included in students' Individual Learning Plan ILPs. This practice reflects The Currajong School's commitment to a strong multi-disciplinary approach.

The Currajong School's allied health team will also refer and liaise with the students external providers, as required when given notice by families or the external health professionals.

EXTERNAL EDUCATIONAL PROVIDERS/CONSULTANTS & PRIVATE THERAPISTS

The Currajong School recognises that from time to time external private therapists including psychiatrists, psychologists, speech therapists, occupational therapists, behaviour specialists are engaged by families to support their children. From time to time the school employs external educational providers/consultants to support students and/or provide professional learning and support to school staff.

The Currajong School's Principal is responsible for the determination of the curriculum programs within the school and although parent consultation is desirable, neither parents/carers nor external providers/consultants have responsibility for developing educational programs. Program development and implementation are the responsibility of class teachers under the direction of the Principal.

It is not always possible for the school to accommodate the various programs and procedures recommended by private therapists within the educational programs in place at the school.

Private therapy or other specialised services arranged by parents/carers are generally encouraged to be arranged outside school hours and not on school premises, as there are risk factors associated with external providers working on school premises. These risks include public liability, confidentiality, educational implications, space requirements and supervision as well as duty of care - **refer Child Safe Standards/Ministerial Order No. 1359 (2022)**. For reasons of confidentiality and

professional practice requirements, the supervision of visiting private therapists will be limited to visual observation of the area.

Parents seeking to arrange for external private therapists to visit the School are required to discuss the purpose of the visit with the Assistant Principal and to obtain Principal/Assistant Principal approval. In regard to external providers visiting or working in schools, the following procedures should be followed:

Prior to any visit external private therapists should:

- contact the Principal/Assistant Principal for permission to visit and detail the specific purpose of the visit
- Parents should not organise any external allied health meetings or visits at school with the classroom teacher. These meetings must be organised with the Assistant Principal first.
- provide identification and evidence of agency authorisation
- provide evidence that they have parent/carer permission to discuss and/or to visit a student at the school
- arrange specific dates and times with the Assistant Principal well ahead of the intended visit
- arrange a pre-visit and/or post-visit time convenient to the class teacher as teachers are seldom in a position to discuss a student's needs or progress during class time. These visits and discussions will be done outside of school hours, and should not be done between 9.00am-3.00pm, as the teachers will be in class.
- note that external allied health are not to work with other children on school grounds, and would attend Currajong School grounds for observational purposes for the child agreed upon. (as outlined above)

Prior to any visit/s by external educational providers/consultants the School will:

- advise that external providers/consultants are not permitted to work alone 1:1 with a student without the supervision of school personnel in accordance with Child Safe Standards specified by Ministerial Order 1359 (2022)
- ensure that there is a documented system in place to ensure that students are supervised at all times by either a registered teacher or an approved staff member with a current Working with Children Check (WWCC) or Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) registration.
- ensure that external educational providers/consultants have the correct qualifications, experience, and professional registration for their specific role/s.

If the purpose of the visit is to provide input into a student's Individual Learning Plan this must be discussed with, and approved by, the Principal/Assistant Principal. In such cases the external provider/consultant must agree to provide a report and/or attend a follow-up Student Support Group meeting.

If the purpose of the visit is to provide professional learning and support to teaching staff this must be discussed with, and approved by, the Principal/Assistant Principal.

If Principal class permission is provided for the visit/s and times and dates have been agreed, external providers are required to:

- advise the front office of their arrival in the school, provide the school with their WWCC card, sign the visitors' register, read and sign the schools Child Safe Code of Conduct prior to going to a classroom, and sign out when they leave the school premises
- remain as unobtrusive as possible if they are working within a classroom so as not to disturb teaching and learning programs in progress

When reporting back to parents, external private therapists must refer only to the child for whom permission has been given to visit, and not provide information about, or refer to, teaching staff or other students.

All observations, information and documentation pertaining to school visits must be treated as confidential and the school, with permission of parents/carers, should be provided with a copy of all reports from the external provider/consultant.

All external educational providers/consultants and private therapists are required to fully comply at all times with the Child Safety Standards as specified in Ministerial Order No. 1359 (2022). This includes agreement in writing to comply with the school's Code of Conduct in relation to these Standards.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority

Child safe standards website (all schools): www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafestandards

Independent Schools who are members of Independent Schools Victoria

Telephone: (03) 9825 7200

Email: enquiries@is.vic.edu.au Website: www.is.vic.edu.au

The Victorian Institute of Teaching

For *Victorian Teaching Profession Codes of Conduct and Ethics* and information about employer responsibilities to report action taken against registered teachers in response to allegations and concerns about registered teachers.

Website: www.vit.edu.au

EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed as per our three-year review cycle or more often if necessary due to changes in regulations or circumstances.

Approval date:	Approved by:	Next Review:
July 2024	Principal	July 2027



The Currajong School acknowledges the traditional owners of this country throughout Australia and their continuing connection to land and community. We pay our respects to them and their cultures and to the Elders past, present and emerging.