

Bendigo Primary School NDIS Funded Therapy Policy

BACKGROUND

Bendigo Primary School has a number of students in receipt of funding through the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) for a variety of allied therapy input. To allow Bendigo Primary School to continue to provide optimal access to education for all students, a policy to ensure NDIS funded therapists do not diminish this role, is required. This policy is based on information from the Victorian Department of Education.

There is a difference between what is funded by the NDIS and what the school's responsibility is.

Generally speaking:

- Schools are responsible for personalising learning and support for students with disabilities that primarily relates to their education. This includes teaching, learning assistance and aids, school building modifications and transport between school activities. This is in line with relevant antidiscrimination laws.
- NDIS will fund supports that a child needs which relate to the functional impact of their disability on regular activities that are a part of daily living. These supports are not primarily related to the child's schooling.

PURPOSE

This policy aims to clarify Bendigo Primary School's responsibility regarding allowing NDIS funded therapists to operate within the school. It will:

- Ensure that Bendigo Primary School staff and families have a clear understanding of the role of school-based and NDIS therapists
- Provide a clear framework and reasoning for decision making regarding NDIS funded therapists visiting Bendigo Primary School for assessment or therapy purposes
- Support school-based staff to continue to assist in the making of 'reasonable adjustments' to help students to attain their educational goals as required by the Department of Education.

OBJECTIVE

- To ensure that Bendigo Primary School meets its responsibilities in supporting students with their educational attainment.
- To ensure clarity regarding NDIS therapists attending Bendigo Primary School to observe or work with students.
- To establish clear guidelines for, and information sharing with, external therapists.

SCOPE

The principal, as the delegate of the Minister, has the right to permit or refuse entry onto Victorian Government School premises. This policy applies to:

- all staff, including casual relief staff, contractors and volunteers
- all external therapists funded through student NDIS packages

POLICY

School based therapist report writing and provision:

- Bendigo Primary School will provide copied versions of any information/reports that the school has previously obtained from educational or allied health professionals to parents to assist them in providing supporting evidence for NDIS planning, as requested.
- Bendigo Primary School will not arrange for or pay for new assessments to be completed for the sole purpose of NDIS funding which do not directly benefit the child and his/her schooling.

NDIS therapist school visits:

- In general, NDIS therapists will not be permitted to provide therapy to students on an individual basis in the school during the school day.
- Observations within the classroom from NDIS therapists may occur on a once per term basis provided that these occur without disruption to the class, and NDIS therapy goals overlap with the school environment.
- There must be at least two weeks' notice to the school (via the school office) prior to any requested school visit to observe a student. This request for observation requires the completion of the Request Form and Parent Consent Form by the NDIS therapist in collaboration with the student's family and should include the goals and expected impact of the observation on therapy. The following must be attached to the Request Form and Parent Consent Form;
 - Working With Children Check
 - Certificates of Currency: public liability insurance, professional indemnity insurance
 - Working With Children Check or Criminal History check
 - NDIS Worker Screening Check
 - Evidence of appropriate qualifications
 - Evidence of insurance and NDIS registration.
- Bendigo Primary School may negotiate a better time if the one requested by the NDIS therapist is not suitable.
- Collaboration with school therapists and teachers is expected for issues directly relating to overlapping with school therapist roles and responsibilities. It is expected that school and NDIS therapists have similar goals and approaches, as discussed with parents/carers.
- Communication with school staff by NDIS therapists will need to be planned and succinct given the volume of correspondence from NDIS therapists. NDIS therapists should communicate with school staff (teacher and Principal) via email or during scheduled Student Support Group meetings (if invited by the parent/carer to participate).
- The principal has the discretion to permit NDIS funded therapists to provide individual therapy, in the school, in particular circumstances where they deem it necessary to maximise outcomes for students. In making such a decision, consideration will be given to the relative benefits of an external therapist providing therapy versus the anticipated impact on student learning, disruption to classes, ability to provide supervision, the availability of an appropriate space to work in and timing of such requests.
- Following consideration of individual requests from parents/carers for NDIS funded therapists to work in the school, the principal (or nominated school personnel) will provide a written response of their decision within 10 days and will articulate reasons for granting or refusing NDIS funded therapy in school during school hours.
- Where the Principal approves a NDIS funded therapist to provide individual therapy during school hours, the principal must then be satisfied that appropriate checks have been put in place to allow access in a manner that is compatible with the school's Duty of Care. This will include:
 - Working With Children Check or Criminal History check
 - NDIS Worker Screening Check
 - Evidence of appropriate qualifications
 - Evidence of insurance and NDIS registration
 - Documentation regarding licence to use school premises and information sharing
 - Compliance with Child Safe Standards including line of sight of the therapist working with the student.
 - Certificates of Currency
- NDIS therapists will provide relevant school staff, copies of their reports, programs and recommendations as appropriate.
- The school will provide NDIS funded therapists with information as necessary once parental permission is provided and, if approved, will offer observational/therapy visits.
- NDIS therapists are welcome to be part of a student's Student Support Group, if permitted by the parent/carer.

COMMUNICATION PLAN

This policy will be communicated to all families in the school community by the following means:

- Being published on our school website
- Being available in hardcopy at the front office
- Being provided in hardcopy to a parent should they wish to have a copy.

REVIEW CYCLE AND EVALUATION

Policy last reviewed	6 December 2022
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	2023

This policy is written in accordance with the Child Protection Reporting Policy and Education and Training Reform Act, Child Safe Standards, Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools, Ministerial Order No. 870. Bendigo Primary School will work to ensure a safe and secure environment is provided for all students, staff, school community and visitors to the school. We will do this by ensuring the highest standards in care and supervision, having a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse and by clear and sound staff practices that place safety at the heart of all decisions.

Glossary.

Reasonable adjustments - An adjustment that is a measure or action taken to assist a student with a disability to participate in education and training and access the curriculum on the same basis as other students.

School [based] therapist – allied health professional (physiotherapist, occupational therapist or speech pathologist) employed by Bendigo Primary School.

NDIS therapist– allied health professional (physiotherapist, occupational therapist, speech pathologist, social worker or other therapist) arranged by the student’s family and paid for through the student’s NDIS package.