Working with External Support Providers

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1. Scope (audience and applicability)

To support Principals and Support Staff who manage and guide the involvement of external support providers (ESPs).

To ensure that the services of ESPs complement and value-add to existing support structures and student programs.

N.B. In certain circumstances, immediate access to specific counselling services (e.g. Sexual Assault Support Service) is required. In this event School Social Workers or School Psychologists in consultation with the school Principal and staff will sanction these visits.

2. Purpose

In recent years there has been a noticeable increase in the number of ESP’s working within state schools. This in part can be attributed to Federal initiatives including the FaCHSIA Autism resource support and the Medicare ‘Mental Health Care Plan’.

Alongside these major initiatives there has also been a growth in Non-Government Organisations (NGO’s) working with and in schools.

The rapid increase in ESP’s working in schools has prompted the need to establish protocols to guide and manage their involvement and to ensure that their services compliment and value add to existing support structures and student programs.

3. Definitions

External Support Provider Definition (ESP): an accredited professional or organisation, independent of the Department of Education Tasmania, which provides a service/s to young people who are students within state schools.

4. Procedure Details

Pre School Visit

ESP or Contracting Agent to contact School Principal to:-

a) Request permission to attend school and
b) Outline purpose and intended outcome/s of visit/, and
   c) Provide credentials / accreditation details ... parent permissions etc.

The Principal or nominee will consult with key stakeholders (class teacher/s, senior staff, support personnel) and communicate to ESP and/or Contracting Agent.
If visit/s are approved:-

The ESP will attend a meeting with key school based staff and DoE support personnel and will:-

a) Provide a written outline of the purpose and intended outcome/s of visit/s including a schedule of visits, dates and times.

b) Establish communication modes and reporting processes (include nomination of key contact person at School)

c) Confirm parental permission has been sought.

School Visit

The ESP will confirm dates and times of visit with key contact person at school at least 2 days prior to the visit (confirmation of visit to be shared with all stakeholders – key contact person).

Whole school staff will be notified of visit (SharePoint, Whiteboard, Briefing).

The ESP will sign in at school office upon arrival and will then be escorted / directed to classroom or designated area.

The ESP will provide verbal report / summary of visit with key contact person or nominee upon the completion of the visit and then be escorted / directed to the office to sign out.

Post Visit

The ESP to provide a written summary of the visit to key contact person, this summary will be shared with all key stakeholders.

The ESP will ensure that all pre-arranged reporting processes are followed.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

Principal must ensure good character checks are current.

Principal or Nominee is to communicate with all key stakeholders regarding the intended visit/s.

The ESP is to follow school sign in procedures and is to communicate with the school the intention to visit at least 2 days prior to the date of the visit.

ESP is to provide a written report to all key stakeholders as per the pre-arranged processes.

6. Risk Management

Good Character Checks

All Tasmanian Department of Education school-based employees, volunteers, adult age students and others, such as contractors who work or operate in government schools and/or libraries, are required to obtain a Good Character Check prior to commencement of their role. This forms part of the
process of ensuring that the Department fulfils its duty of care responsibilities and provides a safe environment for students, staff and visitors.
All Good Character Checks must be renewed every three (3) years – this is done by completing a new Good Character Check application form and submitting it to the Conduct and Investigations Unit for processing. An updated Good Character Check clearance letter will then be posted to the applicant.

7. Associated Documents and Materials

Good Character Check Form (Doc ID: TASED-4-1314)

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<th>Liz Banks</th>
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