



# Ben Venue Public School

## Guidelines for Therapy Provision

Ben Venue Public School supports the individual needs of all students and believes in working collaboratively with families and external agencies. Strong and positive relationships with all key stakeholders is beneficial in providing quality support for students at our school. This document serves as a guide for school staff, parents and carers and service providers working with students in the provision of therapy services at Ben Venue Public School.

### **THERAPY SERVICES AT BEN VENUE PUBLIC SCHOOL**

Staff at Ben Venue Public School are responsible for the development and implementation of student learning programs, incorporating curriculum outcomes. Staff are responsible for ensuring any individual learning goals are collaboratively constructed with parents/carers and are reflective of the educational learning needs of the student. These goals are represented in a Personalised Learning and Support Plan. The approval and delivery of therapy services in the school is appropriate when there is a clear link between the therapy service and the goals indicated in the Personalised Learning and Support Plan. The school values the positive relationships between each therapy service provider in the effective provision of these services in our school. Decisions around whether to provide school access to externally funded providers will be based on whether it is in the best educational interests of the student for the service to be provided at the school, if there is an appropriate space, time, supervision and the school's duty of care towards all staff and students.

Ben Venue Public School recognises the joint NSW Department of Education and NDIS Operational Guidelines recommendations that "therapy services 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, we also realise that in some cases, it may be suitable for these services to be provided at school.

### **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF EDUCATION AND THERAPY ORGANISATIONS**

The role of the school in relation to therapy services is to liaise with families to facilitate any reasonable request for such a service during school hours which will lead to improved educational outcomes.

The role of the therapist when working in schools is to contribute to positive educational outcomes for students in a planned, collaborative and cohesive manner ensuring that the focus is upon the agreed educational goals.

### **GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

- Student safety, wellbeing and educational development is the priority for any therapy service provided in the school setting.
- Students are best served when both school staff and visiting therapists have a clear understanding of the specific purpose of each visit to the classroom.
- Schools are ultimately responsible for student educational outcomes. The decision as to whether a therapy service is to operate within a school is entirely at the discretion of the Principal.
- Therapy service providers are responsible and accountable to the student and parents for the service they provide. School staff will not 'sign-off' on any service conducted in the school as the agreement is between the parent and the service provider.
- A collaborative approach between teachers, therapists, families and carers is in the best interest of the student and will assist in achieving positive educational outcomes.
- At the beginning of the school year staff create safe learning environments with established timetables, routines and programs along with getting to know their new students. Taking this into consideration, the

best educational interests of the students at this time is to engage and focus on their school learning environment. For this reason, requests for externally funded service providers will be considered from Term 1 Week 6 onwards.

- Externally funded service providers negotiate the best times to visit with the Learning and Support Coordinator. Once these times have been set, they cannot be rescheduled within that term.
- Counselling sessions are best held outside of school hours; however, the school understands that there might be extenuating circumstances where this will need to be reviewed. If this is the case, counselling sessions may be approved for afternoon school sessions only.
- Session times are limited to a maximum of 45 minutes to support all students to engage in their regular class program.
- At all times, the teacher is responsible for the student's learning program and the students remain under the duty of care of the school whilst on school grounds.
- Therapists are to collect students from the office at the beginning of a therapy session and return the student to the office at the conclusion of each session. Therapists are only to use the space that has been allocated to them.

### **GUIDING PRACTICES FOR RELATIONSHIPS**

- The delivery of therapy services in school **MUST** be planned and documented in partnership with the school and family or carers. In this way all stakeholders have a clear understanding of their roles and can resolve any arising issues in a collaborative manner.
- We encourage and support collegial discussions between staff and therapists. However, class time is for teaching. Service providers will need to seek a mutually appropriate time for discussion and consultation. Therapists are not to approach classrooms and teachers without prior arrangement.
- Effective relationships between therapists and teachers are responsive and have the flexibility required to meet educational goals where resources and priorities change.
- A high standard of confidentiality is maintained where information is shared between stakeholders. Information pertaining to students other than those receiving therapy services in the school will be held with confidence by school staff and visiting service providers. Reports will only mention the names of students receiving therapy without any reference to any other student in the class.
- Any concerns regarding students or staff should be immediately brought to the attention of the Principal. Such information is also considered confidential. Inappropriate disclosure of students or staff breaches the trust and spirit in which agreements with external providers are made and may lead to the termination of the agreement.

### **REVIEW OF SERVICES**

Whilst our school welcomes the provision of therapy during school time, it acknowledges that not all proposed activities and lessons are conducive to being provided in the classroom context. Some sessions have the potential to be disruptive to other learners in the classroom. The Learning and Support Coordinator, classroom teacher and their supervisors will review the suitability of a therapy session being conducted during school hours at the end of each term, or as the need arises, with parents and therapists.



## FLOWCHART OF ACTIONS TO TAKE WHEN REQUESTING PROVISION OF THERAPY SERVICES AT BEN VENUE PUBLIC SCHOOL

Parent/Carers make a request for the provision of therapy services in the school by completing the request form. The request form is to be handed into the Learning and Support Coordinator and discussed with the Learning and Support Coordinator. If parents/carers need support to fill in the form, they are welcome to make a time with the Learning and Support Coordinator.

The Learning and Support Team (LST) in collaboration with the class teacher discuss the appropriateness of therapy with the service provision in the school for the student listed. The LST make a recommendation to the Principal. A decision is made by the Principal as to whether the service provision will be conducted in the school or not.

**Yes**

Provision of services in school is appropriate.

**No**

Parent is informed by the school that the provision of services in school is appropriate. Parents are to contact the service provider.

Parents are informed that therapy cannot commence at school. This may be reviewed.

The Service Provider contacts the Learning and Support Coordinator to complete DoE requirements and provide the required documentation to Ben Venue Public School. Service provider organises a time and date for an induction to occur.

During this time, the Learning and Support Coordinator will organise a meeting with the service provider and parent/carer. This meeting allows conversation about the interventions the service provider will be implementing and is an opportunity to complete the school induction checklist, engagement agreement and service schedule with the provider.

Service provider communicates directly with the Learning and Support Coordinator to negotiate session times for the whole term.

The agreement will be reviewed at the end of a determined timeframe communicated by the school to determine if the service provision will continue at the school or not.