

Requesting an NDIS-funded therapy service for your child at a NSW public school

Information for parents and carers

This document provides information for parents and carers seeking to have NDIS-funded services delivered at school.

There are 4 key steps for parents and carers who want an NDIS-funded service delivered in school:

1. Ask the school in writing
2. Meet with school staff to discuss details
3. The principal considers your request, taking into account the needs of your child, other students and the operations of the school
4. The principal lets you know whether or not the provider can deliver their services at the school.

NDIS-funded therapy supports and schools

Some children and young people with disability may benefit from allied health and specialist therapies. Examples include physiotherapy, speech pathology and occupational therapy. In most cases, these therapies can be delivered at home or in a therapist's office. Some therapies may be best delivered in school during school time.

The NSW Department of Education and the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) recommend 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.

Schools work with both parents and allied health providers to meet the needs of students and support their learning and development. This may include sharing information about the student and what activities might work best to support them. In some cases, where it is suitable, this may mean working directly with the provider in the classroom.

The principal is responsible for deciding when and how therapy services are delivered in the school. The principal will make decisions that ensure that the school is able to run to benefit all students and without disrupting learning. The principal will manage any services that come into the school in a way that supports children to continue to take part in classes and school activities.

How to request the service for your child to be provided at school

1. Firstly, make your request to the principal in writing so that there is a record of your request. The principal will consider your request.
2. Meet with the principal or the school staff they nominate. This may be during your normal planning meetings with the school about your child's learning and support.
 - a. You may want to invite the therapy provider to the meeting. 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 or therapists, or your child's NDIS support plan.
 - c. Discuss with the school possible days and times for the service to be provided at school.
3. The principal will then need time to consider your request and let you know their decision.

The principal will consider a number of important matters

After your meeting with the school, the principal will consider a number of matters including:

- the school's duty of care to all students and staff
- how the service relates to your child's needs
- impacts on your child if they will need 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 principal will let you know about their decision

If the principal agrees for the service to be provided at the school, you will need to let the provider know. This includes letting them know the agreed times and days for the service to be delivered at school.

If the principal decides that the service is not able to be delivered at the school, talk to the school about how the service delivered outside of school can support your child's learning. The school may decide to talk directly with your provider about how the provider's services can help with your child's learning goals.

Providers coming into a school need to meet legal requirements

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 working in the school. The school will give providers information about these requirements.

Providers will be asked to sign a written agreement with the school. This agreement sets out how they will work in the school, including the agreed times and days for the service to be delivered. The provider will need to record the details of the 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, including information that relates to your child.

The school has the right to stop a provider's access if:

- the provider breaches their agreement with the school
- the principal decides the service does not support your child's educational needs or goals
- the service impacts on school operations.

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 when a provider is working in a school

Under 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 to them working 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 when 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 talking 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.