

# EXTERNAL PROVIDERS POLICY

Hume Valley 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. 870 (2015)

## RATIONALE

The School recognises the valuable contribution provided by external providers who support the wellbeing and learning of children and young people. This policy ensures that the behaviour of external providers is consistent with the School's Child Safe Standards - Code of Conduct.

## EXTERNAL PROVIDERS

External providers are personnel from non-school organisations who attend the school to work with students individually or in small groups, for example, visiting teachers, social workers, speech therapists, educational psychologists, occupational therapists and workshop providers.

Under Ministerial Order 199, Part 11, Division 2 (Duties 11.2.2) the Principal is responsible for the determination of the curriculum programs within the School. While parent consultation is an obligation, neither parents nor external providers have responsibility for determining curriculum programs or developing educational programs. Program development and implementation are the responsibility of the class teacher.

When parents choose to engage external providers, it is not always possible for schools to accommodate the various programs and procedures recommended by such providers within the educational programs provided by the school. Schools are education providers not therapy providers. Private therapy or other specialised services arranged by parents are generally provided outside school hours and not on school premises, as there are risk factors associated with external providers working on school premises including public liability, confidentiality, educational implications, space requirements and supervision/Duty of Care-refer Child Safe Standards/Ministerial Order No. 870 (2015).

Parents seeking to arrange for external providers to visit the school are required to discuss the purpose of the visit with the principal and to obtain principal approval. In regard to external providers visiting or working in schools, the following procedures are required.

Prior to any visit parents/carers must:

- contact the principal for permission to visit and to detail the specific purpose of the visit
- provide identification and evidence of agency authorisation
- provide a copy of a current [Working with Children Check](#) card.
- provide evidence that they have parent/caregiver permission to discuss and/or visit a student at the school
- arrange specific dates and times with the principal well ahead of the intended visit
- disclose if small group work is intended and outline the plan to obtain permission of other parents beforehand for each student involved

- arrange a pre-visit and/or post-visit time convenient to the class teacher as teachers are generally not in a position to discuss a student's needs or progress during class time.

Prior to any visit/s by external providers the school should:

- ensure external providers demonstrate that personnel have the correct qualifications and/or experience and/or professional registration for their specific role/s.

If the purpose of the visit is to provide input into a students' Individual Learning Plan this must be discussed with, and approved by, the Principal. In such cases the external provider 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.

If Principal 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, sign the visitors' register prior to going to a classroom, and sign out when they leave the school premises
- remain as unobtrusive as possible within the classroom so as not to disturb teaching and learning programs in progress
- When reporting back to parents external providers 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, should be provided with a copy of the report from the external provider.

All external providers are required to fully comply at all times with the Child Safety Standards as specified in Ministerial Order No. 870 (2015). This includes agreement in writing to comply with the school's Code of Conduct in relation to these Standards.

#### References

VRQA Website <http://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafes/Pages/default.html>

DET Website

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/regulation/Pages/childsafestandards.aspx>

Commission for Children and Young People Website

<http://www.cryp.vic.gov.au/>

#### Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's two year policy review cycle.

<b>Ratified By Hume Valley School Council</b>	September 2016
<b>Review Date:</b>	September 2018

