



Northern School for Autism

"Learning for Life"

INCURSIONS (Safety of Children Working with External Providers) POLICY

Policy & Guidance

- External providers may be engaged to deliver specific activities or a whole program. They may provide expertise in a certain activity and can form a valuable addition to a program.
- Clear and open communication that occurs well in advance of the planned program is the key to an effective and well-informed relationship between a school and an external provider.
- Schools must be aware that even when they are using external providers, school staff still have duty of care for the students.
- Coaching clinics, music teaching, STEAM focussed activities or other extra-curricular activities are considered incursions for the purpose of this policy.

Purpose

- Incursions enable children to further their learning by complementing classroom lessons with experts and resources from outside the immediate school community. Incursions complement, and are an important aspect of the educational programs offered at the school.
- To reinforce, complement and extend the learning opportunities beyond the immediate classroom.
- To develop an understanding that learning is not limited to school and teachers, and that valuable and powerful learning is often achieved with other people and experiences.
- To ensure the safety of children at Northern School for Autism working with external providers.
- To ensure that appropriate standards of safety and compliance by the provider are in place at all times.
- To establish protocols for allowing services to be provided at the school by external providers.
- To ensure the school has strategies to enhance compliance with the Child Safe Standards 2 and 4.
- To ensure the school discharges its duty of care towards children.

Definition

An incursion is an activity that involves visitors to the school who provide a performance or service to the students either for a fee or voluntarily.

Implementation

- The safety and wellbeing of every child is a high priority for this school.
- The school has zero tolerance for any form of harm that may befall a child.
- All external providers, such as music instructors, coaches or similar professionals must have a Working with Children Check prior to providing services to the school. For further information regarding our requirements for Working with Children Checks, please see our *Visitors to the School Policy*.

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- The Principal will determine if the external provider can work with children without staff supervision e.g. instrumental music sessions for individuals or small groups.
- The Principal has overall responsibility for the conduct of all incursions.
- Staff organising an incursion must ensure:
 - a planning and approvals process is undertaken, in accordance with DET policy and guidelines and any internal policies or references
 - safety, emergency and risk management has been considered
 - informed consent from parents/carers has been obtained
 - appropriate staffing and supervision are provided
 - students have been prepared for the incursion and suitable follow-up activities have been planned
 - parents/carers, who are to sign consent forms, have sufficient information about the incursion to enable them to make an informed decision
 - only children who have a signed parent/carer permission form may attend
 - supervision and an alternative program is provided for children not participating in the incursion

Children will not be excluded from incursions for financial reasons. Parents/carers will be advised to make an appointment with the Principal or Business Manager (please refer to the *Parent Payments Policy*) who is authorised to make decisions about family hardship considerations on a case-by-case basis. All families will be given sufficient time to make payments for incursions.

External Providers

Before an external provider is selected to assist with the delivery of a program, a thorough check will be completed by the school to ensure that they are appropriate for the program and have experience working with groups of children and young people.

Prior to commencement of a program the school should ensure that the external provider has:

- a current public liability insurance certificate (minimum \$10 million) provided by an Australian Prudential Regulation Authority (APRA) approved insurer
- demonstrated that staff have the correct qualifications and/or experience for their specific role/s.
- staff that are either a registered teacher or an approved staff member with a current Working with Children Check
- agreed that the school has responsibilities for first aid, emergency communications and other specialist equipment
- agreed that the school will be responsible for emergency procedures, and that these procedures are well understood prior to the incursion taking place.

With respect to arrangements between the school and third parties, principals should:

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- carefully negotiate terms and conditions with third parties (e.g. specialist instructors,) prior to accepting arrangements
- ensure school staff know who to report any concerns to
- provide relevant information about students to the external providers that they need to know in order to look after the students and reduce risk

Invited speakers and presenters

On occasion, NSA may invite external speakers or providers to deliver incursions, presentations, workshops and special programs for our students. Consistent with Department of Education and Training requirements, NSA will:

- ensure that the content of presentations and programs by external providers contributes to the educational development of our students and is consistent with curriculum objectives
- ensure that any proposed visit, programs or content delivered by visitors complies with the requirement that education in Victorian government schools is secular
- and is consistent with the values of public education, Department policies and the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* (Vic). In particular, programs delivered by visitors are to be delivered in a manner that supports and promotes the principles and practice of Australian democracy including a commitment to:
 - elected government
 - the rule of law
 - equal rights for all before the law
 - freedom of religion, speech and association
 - the values of openness and tolerance
 - respect the range of views held by students and their families.

REFERENCES

Please refer also to the school's *Camps and Excursions (including local excursions) policy*, *Visitors to the School Policy*, *Duty of Care Policy* and the Child Safe Standards.

<https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/excursions/guidance/external-providers>

REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle or if guidelines change. This policy was updated in June 2021 and is scheduled for review in June 2024.

EVALUATION

School Council Approval No Longer Required

Although an operational policy, the Principal may choose to present the policy to Council for noting

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