

Responding to requests for NDIS funded therapy in schools

FACT SHEET

Background

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) provides increased choice and control for children with disabilities and their families on how disability services and supports are delivered.

As a result, school principals may receive parent requests to allow NDIS funded therapists to:

- observe a student in the classroom or in the school environment
- attend a Student Support Group meeting to monitor and tailor the support provided to the student.

These requests can generally be accommodated by schools and complement holistic student planning and support processes.

Principals may also receive requests for NDIS funded therapists to deliver therapy on school grounds.

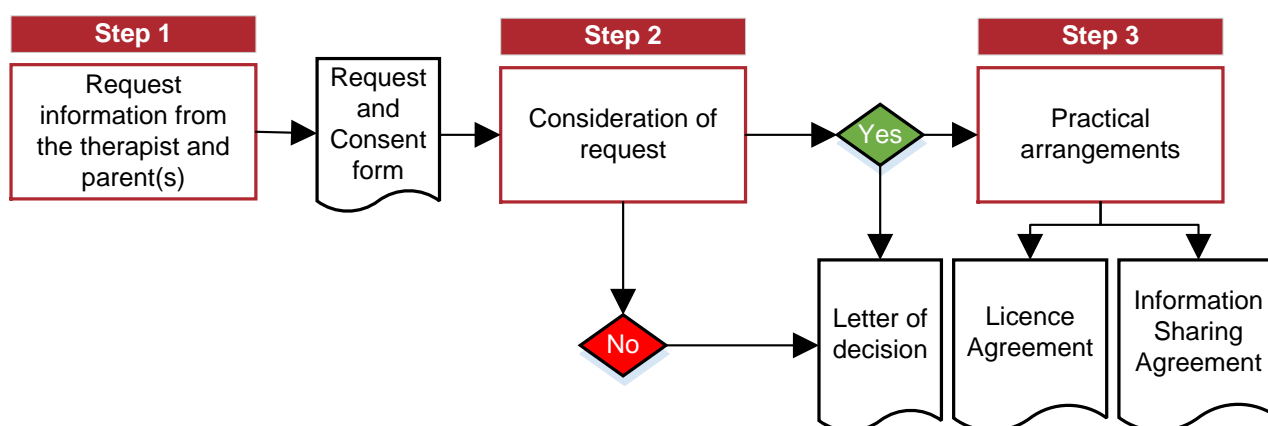
The Department of Education and Training (the Department) is committed to supporting NDIS participants, and their families, to optimise the benefits offered by the NDIS. Consistent with this commitment, Victorian Government schools are encouraged to accommodate students and their parents exercising choice and control in relation to NDIS supports.

On this basis, requests for NDIS funded therapy to be delivered at school should be approved unless the specific circumstances raise practical, legal and/or educational issues that make the approval of the request unfeasible.

Ultimately, the decision rests with the school principal.

Three Step Process

The Department has designed a three step process to assist school principals in finalising their response to therapy requests on a case by case basis.



Step 1

The school principal gathers information about the proposed therapy to be provided at school, and the reasons for the request, by asking the therapist and parent to complete a **Request Form** and **Parent Consent Form**.

Step 2

The principal considers the request in light of all relevant factors and makes a decision as to whether the therapy can be provided on school grounds.

Key considerations include:

- the school's ability to adequately fulfil its duty of care to all students and meet Child Safe Standards;
- the school's responsibilities under the Reportable Conduct Scheme;
- the purpose of the request - for example, whether the proposed therapy is to provide benefits that would normally be accessed outside of school;
- the relative benefits of the therapy when compared to any anticipated disruption to student learning or the needs of other students and other programs at the school;
- the flexibility of the student's learning program;
- the school's specific circumstances, including the location and suitability of an area at school where the proposed therapy could occur; the model and make-up of classroom teaching arrangements;
- the individual circumstances of the student and the student's family and social circumstances; and
- if the school council supports allowing an NDIS funded therapist on school grounds.

After making a decision principals send a **Letter to Parents** which outlines the reasons for their decision to accept or decline the request.

Step 3

If the principal approves the therapy to be provided at school, appropriate arrangements are put in place:

- The therapist signs a **Licence Agreement** to use school premises and enters into an **Information Sharing Agreement** to set out how and when the therapist will share information with the school about the student.
- Principals inform relevant school-based therapists and Student Support Services (SSS) staff about the services being delivered by the NDIS funded therapist, to ensure services are coordinated.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Where can I find out more information?

- Detailed guidelines, forms and template agreements are available for principals [here](#).
- Principals should contact their Senior Education Improvement Leader in the first instance for specific queries about requests for NDIS funded therapy at school.
- The Department's Legal Division can provide advice about duty of care, anti-discrimination obligations and licensing agreements: legal.services@edumail.vic.gov.au
- Other enquiries may be directed to the Department's NDIS Reform Branch: ndis@edumail.vic.gov.au
- For general information about the NDIS: www.ndis.gov.au