

OUTSIDE AGENCY INVOLVEMENT IN SCHOOLS

Background

The school district values collaborative partnerships that support student well-being, learning, and safety. Students and families may engage with outside agencies and professionals for assessments, therapy, advocacy, and health or social services. This Administrative Procedure sets out the district's expectations, permissions, and constraints for outside agency involvement on district property and within school programs, consistent with the *School Act*, applicable privacy legislation, collective agreements, and district policies.

Clear procedures are required to ensure: (a) student and staff safety; (b) privacy and confidentiality; (c) appropriate supervision and informed consent; (d) compliance with collective agreements; (e) equity of access; and (f) alignment with school-based services and educational programming. Public agency involvement may occur under specific conditions; private third-party service providers engaged by parents may not deliver direct services to students on district property.

Guiding Principles

- Student safety and privacy are paramount.
- School-based services remain primary and are not replaced by outside services.
- Involvement of outside agencies must support educational programming and avoid disruption of student instructional time.
- Collaboration is welcomed when it enhances learning and well-being and complies with legislation and collective agreements.

Definitions

"Direct Services" are services delivered to a student on district property or during school time (e.g., therapy sessions, intervention, training of school personnel).

"Private Third-Party Service Providers" are individuals or businesses contracted privately by parents/guardians to provide services (e.g., therapy, assessments).

"Public Agency" is a government or non-profit organizations (e.g., health authorities, child development centres) that provide services to children, youth, and families.

"School-Based Services" are services provided by district staff (e.g., teachers, counsellors, education assistants, youth care workers, indigenous education workers, inclusive education personnel).

Procedures

1. Public Agency Involvement

- 1.1. Public agencies (e.g., Northern Health, Child Development Centre, Provincial Outreach Programs) may, with prior approval of the Principal or designate, participate in school-based meetings (e.g., IEP, case conferences) and share information with informed consent from parent/guardian.
- 1.2. Where collaboration supports student programming, principals may authorize limited, non-disruptive services on school premises (e.g., consultation, observation) when: (a) the service aligns with educational goals; (b) appropriate consent is obtained and documented; (c) privacy and confidentiality requirements are met; and (d) school operations and, where possible, student instructional time are not interrupted.
- 1.3. Direct service delivery (e.g., therapy sessions) by public agencies on school premises may be permitted only when requested by the district, space allows, and supervision, safety, and privacy requirements are met. Principals may set schedules, locations, and conditions and may discontinue access if school disruption or safety concerns arise.

2. Private Third-Party Service Providers

- 2.1. Private third-party service providers engaged by parents/guardians shall not deliver direct services to students on district property, nor train district personnel on school premises.
- 2.2. Private providers may, with parent/guardian consent and principal approval, attend meetings to share information, reports, and recommendations. Participation is advisory; decisions about educational programming is determined by and remains the responsibility of the school team and district.
- 2.3. Private providers may observe a student in school for information-sharing purposes only when: (a) prior approval is granted by the principal; (b) consent forms are completed; (c) observation is non-intrusive and time-limited; and (d) no records or images of other students are created.

3. Consent, Privacy, and Information Sharing

- 3.1. Written informed consent from the parent/guardian (and the student, as appropriate) is required before any information is shared with outside agencies.
- 3.2. All parties must comply with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and district privacy procedures. Access to student records is limited to information necessary for the stated purpose.
- 3.3. Outside personnel present in schools must sign in, wear identification as required, and respect confidentiality of all students and staff.

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4. Roles and Responsibilities

- 4.1. Principals/Vice Principals: authorize access; coordinate schedules to minimize disruptions to instructional time; ensure consent, supervision, and privacy safeguards; manage disruptions.
- 4.2. District Staff (e.g., teachers, counsellors, education assistants, youth care workers, Indigenous education workers, inclusive education staff): provide school-based services; collaborate and share relevant information within consent parameters.
- 4.3. Outside Agencies/Professionals: attend meetings; share reports; comply with school protocols; refrain from direct services unless expressly authorized (public agencies only, per 1.3).
- 4.4. Parents/Guardians: provide consent; share relevant information; understand that school-based services remain primary support and educational decisions rest with the school team.

5. Safety and Maintenance of Order

- 5.1. If outside involvement disrupts, threatens, or interrupts the operation of a school or school function, administrators may take steps under Administrative Procedure 156 – Maintenance of Order, including issuing orders pursuant to Section 177 of the *School Act*.
- 5.2. Administrators may deny or revoke access to school premises where safety, privacy, or operational concerns exist.

6. Equity and Alignment

- 6.1. Outside involvement must not create inequitable access or duplication of service that undermines the services provided by the district.
- 6.2. Approaches must align with district policies, inclusive education practices, and collective agreements.

7. Records and Monitoring

- 7.1. Schools will retain consent and meeting records in accordance with district record-keeping procedures and privacy legislation.
- 7.2. The Office of the Superintendent may request annual reporting on outside agency involvement to support continuous improvement and safe, effective learning environments.

Reference: [BC Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act](#)