

# EXTERNAL PROVIDERS POLICY

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## PURPOSE

Saltwater College actively maintains a safe learning environment for all students while maximising learning opportunities, experiences and a rich student centred Curriculum. At times, where specialised expertise is required, the school may utilise the services of suitably qualified External Providers to meet the needs of our students. This may include specialised providers of incursions, excursions, camps, OSHC, or Curriculum specific programs. A wide range of external providers in Victoria offer specialist programs for schools. External providers may be engaged to deliver specific outdoor or adventure activities or a whole program. They may provide expertise in a certain activity and can form a valuable addition to a program.

## POLICY

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 cannot sign 'Waivers of liability' on behalf of students. Regardless of the role of the external provider, schools retain overall responsibility for the program and any activities involving students. As a Government school, when using residential campsites in Victoria as a venue for our camp or excursion, we are required to use only accredited campsites. Where not directly responsible for the instruction of the activity or assisting the instructor, the teacher present must understand the activity and the environment in which it will be conducted. This teacher must confer with the designated instructor about the supervisory role and establish areas of responsibility. If the teacher is not the designated instructor he/she is to act on the advice of the designated instructor on technical safety issues.

## IMPLEMENTATION

### General Guidelines;

Before an external provider is selected to assist with the delivery of a program, a thorough check should be completed by the school to ensure that they are appropriate for the program. Prior to commencement of a program the school should ensure that the external provider has:

- discussed with the school who has responsibilities for first aid, emergency communications and other specialised equipment
- demonstrated that staff have the correct qualifications and/or experience for their specific role/s
- a documented system in place to ensure that students are supervised by either a registered teacher or an approved staff member with a current Working with Children Check. In addition to a Working with Children Check, we require that a member of staff from Saltwater College must be supervising students AT ALL TIMES when utilising external providers who are not VIT registered, unless approval has been granted by the Principal.
- discussed with the school who will be responsible for emergency procedures, and that these are well understood prior to the excursion taking place.
- read the relevant sections of the Department's Safety Guidelines for Education Outdoors and understood their obligations under these guidelines.
- a current public liability insurance certificate (minimum \$10 million) provided by an APRA approved insurer.

**Approval;**

The school may access outside services to provide support for students and staff. Approval for these services will be given by the Principal or the Assistant Principal. These services may include (but are not limited to):

- Psychologists, Speech Therapists, Social Workers, etc
- Visiting Teachers

All other external providers must be approved by the Principal.

School Council approval is required for School Camps or ongoing external partnerships. E.g. OSHC. Principal and School Council approval for Camps will be granted following the successful completion of paperwork and protocols as outlined in the Camps Protocol & Procedure Checklist.

Principal approval for Incursions or Excursions will be granted following the successful completion of paperwork and protocols as outlined in the Incursions/Excursions Protocol & Procedure Checklist. Ongoing management and liaison between the school and an incursion/excursion external provider, is the responsibility of the staff member in charge of the event. They must ensure that;

- all external providers meet all regulatory requirements including a Working with Children Check.
- sign-in and sign-out procedures are in place.
- all relevant policies will be distributed to the provider prior to the activity/program.
- students will attend programs offered by external providers only with prior written consent of their parents/guardians.
- students who do not attend an activity provided by an external provider during school hours will be provided with suitable alternative activities.
- professional indemnity, public liability, building and contents and any other necessary insurance to cover the needs of programs offered by external providers is met by the provider if offered off site.
- socioeconomic, cultural and/or religious issues have been considered.

**Facility Hirers and Service Providers**

Where school facilities are hired by an individual or external organisation, they fall outside the scope of this External Provider's Policy. These organisations are not affiliated with the school and families should investigate suitability of their staff and the programs offered.

**FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES**

[www.education.vic.gov.au/sensecyouth/purchasing.htm](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/sensecyouth/purchasing.htm)  
Appendix A: DET Guidelines for Working with External Provider

**REVIEW CYCLE**

This policy was last updated in August 2018 and is scheduled for review in August 2020.

**APPENDIX A**

## **DEECD Guidelines for Working with External Providers**

The following guidelines and checklists are to be considered by all staff when utilising external providers.

External providers assist with drug education and intervention, including the provision of parent information, learning and development opportunities for staff, classroom support for teachers, and referral of and counselling for students. The following checklists and guidelines are provided to help schools get maximum benefit from the input of external providers.

### **Support agencies approved/accepted by the School must:**

- Be qualified or trained
- Evaluate their programs or presentations
- Be cost effective
- Enhance the role of the teacher not replace it
- Be consistent with School drug education policy
- Align with current practice, principles and research
- Consider socioeconomic, cultural and/or religious issues

### **Teacher checklist:**

- Planning session with the presenter been conducted?
- Can people within the school provide a similar service?
- Do you have the support of the principal, the staff and the relevant committees?
- Have parents been consulted?
- Does the support agency teach drug education in the context of the Health and Physical Education curriculum?
- Have the age and developmental level of the students, the content and the resources been considered?
- Will feedback be given to the presenter?
- Has the support agency been given a copy of the school's drug education statement and the classroom program?
- What are the costs?

**It is a requirement for a teacher to be present with students at all times.**

### **Qualified or Trained External Providers:**

- Have formal qualifications or relevant experience
- Are recognised by other professional groups in drug education
- Are successfully engaged in health/drug education programs in other schools
- Provide a range of support options
- Use performance indicators to evaluate the effectiveness of their programs
- Have a good knowledge of appropriate resources
- Are adept in working with/through relevant School committees

### **External Providers who have an understanding of current practice, approaches and research:**

- Avoid using drug related testimonials
- Avoid using scare tactics
- Avoid using an 'information only' approach
- Understand what constitutes an effective drug education program
- Link learning with educational outcomes as outlined in the school program

- Provide ongoing support rather than the one-off session
- Engage in planning with the teacher
- Enhance the central role of the teacher
- Have knowledge of the Years 1-10 Health and Physical Education and other curriculum areas related to drug education
- Include a component on personal skill development

**External Providers are to consider socioeconomic, cultural and religious issues:**

- Become familiar with aspects of the School highlighted in the situational analysis
- Use information about student cultural experiences to create an atmosphere respectful of cultural diversity
- Ask questions about the impact of religious beliefs on the implementation of drug education programs
- Use strategies proven to be effective in dealing with drug related issues pertinent to students from a variety of socioeconomic backgrounds
- Have well-established and acceptable positions on particular issues which are consistent with the values promoted by the school

**REVIEW CYCLE**

This policy was last updated on May 2021 and is scheduled for review in May 2024.