# Engaging external providers for curriculum implementation – guidelines

Guidelines to support school leaders and communities engaging an external provider to address curriculum requirements, as outlined in the [Curriculum planning and programming, assessing and reporting to parents K-12 policy.](https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/policies/pd-2005-0290)

The guidelines are designed around 2 principles.

Schools lead – and are responsible for – the delivery of teaching and learning programs in NSW public schools.

Partnerships with external providers may enhance teaching and learning programs offered by schools.

## What are external providers?

## The term ‘external provider’ refers to any person, organisation or group offering services and/or resources to support school-based education at a number of levels (individual classroom, sporting activity or whole-school level).

Note: external providers related to the provision of [Special Religious Education](https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/policies/pd-2002-0074), and [Special Education in Ethics](https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/policies/pd-2013-0436) are not included as part of these guidelines. See the:

* [Religious education policy](https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/policies/pd-2002-0074) and [Religious education implementation procedures](https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/policies/pd-2002-0074)
* [Special Education in Ethics Policy](https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/policies/pd-2013-0436) and [Special Education in Ethics implementation procedures](https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/policies/pd-2013-0436).

Special conditions also apply to [externally funded service providers](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/disability-learning-and-support/resources/external-providers).

While schools and their staff may be requested to evaluate or provide comment on particular programs and services delivered by external providers, NSW public schools should not be seen to openly endorse particular external providers, their organisations or their resources.

## Role of teachers and principals

Teachers have expertise in teaching and learning, knowledge of their students’ needs, abilities and the ways they learn. They are skilled in developing teaching and learning programs that address the needs of students within a curriculum context. Teachers have responsibility for education programs involving their students. Principals are accountable for education programs in schools.

The department’s and the principal’s ‘duty of care’ (and by extension, the duty of care of departmental officers, including school staff) cannot be transferred to external providers. Principals should be satisfied that any material to be delivered by external providers complies with the [Controversial issues in schools policy and implementation procedures](https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/policies/pd-2002-0045).

While collaboration with external agencies can be beneficial to schools, this relationship should not result in external personnel being the sole source of curriculum delivery in any key learning area.

Research indicates that one-off speakers or sessions – isolated from the context of a planned approach to education – have minimal effect in enhancing students’ knowledge and skills. Visiting speakers should be used only in situations where their visit adds value to existing teaching and learning practice.

## How to use the guidelines

Form A, the [Considerations for principals checklist](#_Form_A:_Considerations), is a support checklist for the principal or their delegate. [Form B, Information about external provider](#_Form_B:_Information), could be:

* completed by an organising teacher in consultation with a potential external provider
* provided directly to the potential external provider to complete.

## Form A: Considerations for principals

The following checklist supports decision making about use of external providers both within and beyond the school. Guiding questions assist the principal to consider what is best for the school’s curriculum programs, while supporting the values of NSW public schools.

### Educational understanding

Does the external provider offer a service that will support one or more of the following?

* Presents clear connections to relevant NSW syllabus outcomes.
* Enhances staff knowledge and understanding of relevant learning area content and/or pedagogy.
* Assists in capacity building of teachers to deliver effective education programs. For example, team teaching within a planned unit.
* Adds value to NSW syllabus implementation.
* Contributes to the planning process for developing education programs.
* Provides opportunities for feedback through curriculum program evaluations.
* Provides links between the school and other appropriate community agencies?
* Reinforces messages taught in the classroom to the wider community.

### Quality assurance

* Is the external provider offering students a learning experience that cannot be provided by the school? Comment:
* Is the learning experience appropriate for the school’s education program?
* Has the principal reviewed the bona fides and background of the potential provider?
* Do all external providers delivering the service have relevant qualifications, credentials and experience?
* Has the principal obtained evidence from the external provider that they have undertaken a [Working With Children Check](https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/policies/pd-2005-0264) for their staff who would be attending the school? (For more information, see section 3 of the Working with Children Check Procedures for Principals)
* Have relevant staff members discussed the nature of the service and the delivery of content with the external provider and briefed them regarding requirements and expectations? For example:
	+ curriculum links
	+ content consistent with the values of public education
	+ appropriate teaching and learning activities and strategies
	+ stage appropriate content
	+ support for an integrated approach rather than a one-off presentation
	+ other information as provided in Form B: Information about the external provider.
* Are relevant staff members aware of their responsibilities when engaging external providers for educational purposes as per policies and procedures?
* Are there processes for evaluation and feedback between the school and the external provider?
* Has a [risk management plan](https://app.education.nsw.gov.au/sport/Asset/File/2063) been completed?
* Are you satisfied with the information provided by the external provider and your staff? See Form B: Information about external provider.

### Policy and procedures

Have you reviewed and considered the relevant [NSW Department of Education school policy and procedures](https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library) documents?

* [Audiovisual materials in schools: Procedures for use](https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/policies/pd-2002-0045)
* [Child protection policy: responding to and reporting students at risk of harm](https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/policies/pd-2002-0067)
* [Controversial issues in schools policy](https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/policies/pd-2002-0045)
* [Curriculum planning and programming, assessing and reporting to parents K-12 policy](https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/policies/pd-2005-0290)
* [Enterprise Risk Management in the NSW Department of Education policy](https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/policies/pd-2004-0036?refid=285776)
* [NSW Department of Education Strategic plan](https://education.nsw.gov.au/about-us/strategies-and-reports/strategic-plan)
* [Student Welfare Policy](https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/policies/pd-2002-0052)
* [Working with Children Check policy and procedures](https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/policies/pd-2005-0264)
* Legislative frameworks for example, Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1988, Anti-discrimination Act 1977, Work Health and Safety Act 2011
* Educational programs policies, procedures and guidelines

### Equal opportunity and social justice

Do the external provider’s services and resources:

* focus on the areas of need within the school?
* support the whole-school ethos and education directions of the school?
* take into consideration the diversity of the school community?
* show awareness of the issues or needs of the local community?
* allow equitable access to all students? For example, is the service free of charge and/or does timetabling enable all students to attend?

School alternatives:

* Does the external provider program represent good value for money?
* Are procedures in place to ensure parents/carers will be provided with sufficient information prior to the program to allow them to consider and permit their child’s involvement in the program?
* Are alternative learning programs available for students who may be unable to access the service? Are funds or alternatives in place for students who are unable to access the service?

If yes, have these alternative learning programs been evaluated?

### Making a decision

If all items have been addressed from the checklist, then the principal will have sound evidence for collaborating with an external provider to support curriculum implementation within the context of their school. This guide and checklist (including the form [Information about the external provider](#_Form_B:_Information)) should be attached to the risk management proforma and stored as part of the school’s documentation of the program.

At all times, schools are in the best possible position to make informed decisions about the appropriateness of teaching and learning activities in their educational setting.

## Form B: Information about the external provider

A principal may request more information than outlined below.

When collaborating with NSW government schools, external providers must abide by the following conditions.

* Duty of care rests with the principal and is not transferable to the external provider.
* When working directly with students, a NSW government employed teaching staff member must actively supervise at all times.
* An external provider has an obligation to report suspected risk of significant harm and make any disclosure directly to the principal.
* An external provider must hold student welfare as paramount when interacting with children and young people and comply with all child protection requirements including employment screening.
* An external provider must be aware of the Controversial issues in schools policy and procedures and agree, in writing, to adhere to the policy, procedures, and related school-based practices.

### External provider details

Name:

ABN:

Address:

Post code:

Phone:

Email:

Contact name:

Planned dates for engagement of external provider:

I agree to adhere to the Controversial issues in schools policy and procedures, if approved to deliver my activity or program at [school].

Signature:

Name:

Date:

Please complete the sections below and provide the principal with all relevant documentation. (Additional information may also be attached to this form)

|  |
| --- |
| Briefly describe the program/service and how it will address the educational needs of the school. Attach a list of related resources and handouts. |
| Detail how the program/service supplements or complements relevant NSW Education Standards Authority syllabuses. |
| Provide evidence of Working with Children Check documentation for all staff who will be working in the school. |
| Some aspects of education are more controversial than others. Please read the Controversial Issues in Schools Policy and associated documentation. Are there any aspects of the proposed program/service/presentation/resources that might be considered controversial under this policy? If yes, please provide details. |
| Who is the intended audience of the program/service? e.g. teachers, students (please include their year levels). |
| Identify how the external provider would like to work with the school, i.e. please identify specific school personnel and proposed processes working with, e.g. meetings, training, and length of collaboration. |
| Outline the relevant qualifications and experience of all staff delivering the service. You may be asked to provide formal documentation of these to the principal. |
| Detail any communication the provider has had with school staff, e.g. request for program or service, previous partnership with the school or other Department schools. |
| Provide any other relevant details about the program or service, e.g. financial cost, expectations of participating staff, student activities, risk assessment/management plan and any resources to be used. |
| Provide details of the organisation’s bona fides where appropriate, e.g. ABN, certificate/s of registration, incorporation status, insurance, references, etc. |
| Please attach any additional details or evidence to this form and return it to the school. |