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# NATIONAL DISABILITY INSURANCE SCHEME IMPLEMENTATION

FOR THERAPISTS



## FACT SHEET: THERAPY IN SCHOOL SETTINGS

In December 2017, the Commonwealth and Western Australian governments announced a new bilateral agreement which will see WA join the nationally-delivered National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

From 1 July 2018, the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) will assume responsibility for the delivery of the NDIS in Western Australia.

The NDIS will continue to be implemented on a geographic basis by NDIA and will be fully rolled out across WA by 2020.

### Therapy at school

The delivery of therapy services within schools is planned and documented in partnership with the school and family or carers. In this way all partners have a clear understanding of their roles and can resolve issues collaboratively where they may arise.

The student's educational goals are developed within the school setting through an individual education plan.

Therapy services delivered in schools will link to a student's plan where therapy goals relate to educational goals. Sometimes they may form part of the broader individual planning process

which relates to outcomes across the student's life.

Therapy provided at school is to support the student's access to the curriculum. For example, augmentative or alternative communication can be implemented in consultation with the classroom teacher to support the student to engage with classroom routines and expectations to increase access to the curriculum.

It is also appropriate for therapists to work with teachers on NDIS goals that can only be implemented in the school setting. This could include support for social skills development and the implementation of toileting programs that need to be generalised to the school setting.

Contemporary practice suggests that support to students should whenever possible occur within the classroom or playground.

### What are the obligations of schools?

Schools have requirements to ensure that all students are appropriately engaged in the curriculum and participating in classroom activities. Schools need to consider the impact that therapy supports will have on the student's engagement.

Similarly, when considering a request for NDIS funded therapy to be provided to a student at school or during school hours, the principal



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should be satisfied that appropriate arrangements can be put in place to allow the NDIS funded therapist to access the school in a manner that is compatible with the school's duty of care. Any therapy supports funded by the NDIS must be delivered in accordance with the school's requirements for visitors.

The fundamental purpose of schooling is to provide students with access to educational programs during school hours. The therapy planning should be consistent and directly related to the outcomes established in the student's educational program.

The Western Australian Department of Education (including schools) have obligations – quite separate from the NDIS – under State and Federal anti-discrimination laws to make reasonable adjustments to enable their student with a disability to access education on the same basis as students without disability.

### Next steps

The following operational steps are recommended:

- The school should require the NDIS funded therapist (or their employer, as appropriate) to provide all documentation including permission to act on behalf of the parent/carer.
- The school should consider the arrangements it will require for supervision of NDIS funded therapists to ensure it can adequately discharge its duty of care to the student.
- The principal should consider that a meeting takes place between the school, the parents of the student and the NDIS funded therapist to confirm the particular arrangements for the therapist's attendance at the school.

### References

Adapted from "Students with Disability at School – Therapy and Education Relationships" by Disability Services Commission / Department of Education. Adapted with permission.

### Discover more:

W:

<http://det.wa.edu.au/studentssupport/detcms/navigation/disability-services-and-support/>

E:

[disabilityservicesandsupport.admin@education.wa.edu.au](mailto:disabilityservicesandsupport.admin@education.wa.edu.au)

