

CHILD SAFE: STANDARD 4 EXTERNAL PROVIDERS POLICY



*Charles La Trobe College takes a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse and is fully committed to ensuring that its strategies, policies, procedures and practices meet all **Child Safety Standards as specified in Ministerial Order No. 870 (2015)***

DEFINITION

External Provider: an accredited professional or an organisation, independent of Charles La Trobe College, which provides a service/s to children and young people attending the College.

RATIONALE

Charles La Trobe College recognises the valuable contribution made by external providers in supporting the wellbeing and learning of children and young people. They deliver specific educational programs and counselling as well as outdoor/adventure activities and incursions which are a valuable addition to the school's curriculum. They enhance student engagement by offering additional expertise and resources which the school may otherwise be unable to provide. This policy aims to ensure that the professional standards of external providers are consistent with the College's Child Safe Standards – including the Child Safe Code of Conduct.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure the safety and well-being of students supported by an external provider. Charles La Trobe College recognises the obligation to:

- enable students to further their learning by complementing classroom programs with experts and resources from outside the immediate school community through special programs
- provide a safe and secure environment for students and staff within the framework of programs offered by Charles La Trobe College and in those offered by external providers.
- establish protocols and procedures to effectively plan for, monitor and manage the use of external providers
- ensure that policies and procedures are in place to monitor attendance of students participating in courses provided by another senior secondary course provider
- ensure that policies and procedures are in place re supervision arrangements for students outside scheduled classes.

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Legal Requirements

Legislation including OHS and Child Safe Standards requires schools to be responsible for:

- maintaining a Compliance Register of approved external providers and making the register available to all relevant school employees
- reviewing and documenting workers compensation and public liability insurances of external providers prior to working at the school
- ensuring VIT registration or Working with Children Checks are provided as required
- reviewing and documenting relevant licences, permits, accreditations, qualifications, etc of external providers prior to working at the school
- providing external providers with induction information, requirements and behavioural expectations while at the school
- acting on any identified non-compliance of external providers.

Where external providers have been engaged to deliver specific activities or programs for students, or provide other services, the school retains responsibility for its students.

Duty of Care obligations of school staff to students cannot be delegated to a third party.

External Providers

External Providers visit the school to work with students individually or in small groups e.g. visiting teachers, undergraduates, social workers, speech therapists, educational psychologists, occupational therapists, careers counsellors and workshop providers.

From time to time the College will engage external providers to support students and/or College personnel. The College recognises that from time to time external providers are engaged by families to support children. Utilisation of services from external providers, as well as the incorporation of recommendations from assessments and/or reports are an important part of developing Student Support Group meetings to develop Individual Learning Plans (ILPs). The practice of working inclusively with external providers reflects the College's commitment to a strong multi-disciplinary approach.

Under Ministerial Order 199, Part 11, Division 2 (Duties 11.2.2) the Principal is responsible for the determination of the curriculum programs within the College. While parent consultation is an obligation, neither parents nor external providers have responsibility for determining curriculum programs or developing educational programs. Program development and implementation are the responsibility of the class teacher.

Parents/Carers

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When parents/carers choose to engage external providers, it is not always possible to accommodate the various programs and procedures recommended by such providers within the educational programs provided by the school. Schools are education providers not therapy providers. Private therapy or other specialised services arranged by parents are generally provided outside school hours and not on school premises, as there are risk factors associated with external providers working on school premises including public liability, confidentiality, educational implications, space requirements and supervision/Duty of Care - refer **Child Safe Standards/Ministerial Order No. 870 (2015)**.

Parents seeking to arrange for external providers to visit the school are required to discuss the purpose of the visit with the principal and to obtain principal approval. In regard to external providers visiting or working in schools, the following procedures are required.

Prior to any visit parents/carers must arrange for their nominated External Provider to:

- contact the principal for permission to visit and detail the specific purpose of the visit
- provide identification and evidence of agency authorisation
- provide a copy of current [VIT Registration or Working with Children Check](#)
- provide evidence of parent/carer permission to discuss and/or visit a student at the school
- arrange specific dates and times with the principal well ahead of the intended visit
- disclose if small group work is intended and outline the plan to obtain permission of other parents beforehand for each student involved
- arrange a pre-visit and/or post-visit time convenient to the class teacher as teachers are generally not in a position to discuss a student's needs or progress during class time.

If visits are approved:

The External Provider will attend a meeting with key school staff and will:

- provide a written outline of the purpose and intended outcome/s including a schedule of visits, dates and times
- establish communication and reporting processes and confirm key contact person at the school
- confirm that parent/carer permission has been obtained
- when reporting back to parents, external providers must refer only to the child for whom permission has been given to visit, and not provide information about, or refer to, teaching staff or other students
- all observations, information and documentation pertaining to school visits are treated as confidential and the school, with permission of parents, should be provided with a copy of the report from the external provider.

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If the purpose of the visit is to provide input into a students' Individual Learning Plan this must be discussed with, and approved by, the principal. In such cases the external provider must agree to provide a report and/or attend a follow-up Student Support Group meeting.

If the purpose of the visit is to provide professional learning and support to teaching staff this must be discussed with, and approved by, the principal.

Risk Management:

- External providers are **not permitted to work alone 1:1 with a student** without the supervision of school personnel in accordance with Child Safe Standards/Ministerial Order 870 (2015)
- There must be **a clear line of sight** to school staff when working with a child or young person in a one-to-one situation i.e. window blinds up and/or doors open. The child or young person should face into the room if possible, in order to achieve some level of privacy and to reduce distractions
- There is a documented system in place to ensure that students are supervised at all times by either a registered teacher or an approved staff member

Compliance Register

Before external providers are approved and included on the Compliance Register, a thorough check will be completed by the school to ensure:

- current [VIT registration](#), [Working with Children's Check](#) or equivalent documentation
- provision of appropriate induction including Access Information (see below)
- agreement in writing to comply with the school's Code of Conduct in relation to Child Safety Standards as specified in Ministerial Order No 870 (2015)
- verification that external providers' personnel have the correct qualifications and/or experience and/or professional registration for their specific role/s
- proof, where applicable, of current Public Liability insurance with a reputable insurer for the minimum sum per occurrence of \$10 million.

The school is responsible for sighting and keeping on file copies of the above documentation.

School Visit/s

If principal permission is provided for the visit/s and times and dates have been agreed, external providers are required to:

- advise the front office of their arrival in the school, sign the visitors' register prior to going to a classroom, sign the Child Safe Code of Conduct, wear visitor identification throughout the visit

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- be escorted/directed by a staff member to classroom or designated area
- remain as unobtrusive as possible within the classroom or designated area so as not to disturb teaching and learning programs in progress
- be escorted/directed by a staff member to the office to sign out and return visitor identification prior to leaving the school premises

Access Information for external providers

- COMPLIANCE REGISTER – all external providers must be approved and included on the Charles La Trobe College Compliance Register
- RELEVANT POLICIES to be provided including:
 - Child Safe Code of Conduct
 - Emergency Response Procedures
 - Anaphylaxis Policy and Procedures
- SIGNING IN AND OUT – all external providers must report to the office and sign in prior to commencing work and prior to leaving the school premises
- VISITOR IDENTIFICATION - will be issued to be worn throughout the visit and returned to the office when signing out prior to leaving the school
- FIRST AID – is available from the office
- EMERGENCY EVACUATION - in the event of an emergency, such as a fire or lockdown situation, external consultants are deemed to be visitors to the school. If there is an emergency evacuation signal the external provider must report to the school liaison person at the designated emergency area – see site plan
- SITE PLAN - available to assist external consultants to orientate themselves around school grounds and provide details of relevant amenities and essential services
- PARKING – is not permitted in school drop off/pick up zones; street parking signs must be observed
- SMOKING - (including tobacco and electronic cigarettes) is banned by legislation on school property and for an additional 5 metres beyond the boundary of school property
- TOILETS - use of student toilets is prohibited. Staff toilets to be used - see site plan

Summary

The following expectations apply to all situations where external providers are providing one-to-one support to children and young people at Charles La Trobe College. All programs and activities should:

- i. Be Open
 - Take place in as visible, public and central a location as possible.

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- Utilise only the school's authorised ICT systems - personal email, phones, social media, apps or websites should **not** be used to communicate with children and young people.

- ii. Be Authorised
 - Parents/carers of participating students must provide signed, informed consent where there is an external provide.
 - Programs must be authorised by the school.
 - Programs must be a legitimate part of the external provider's role.

- iii. Be Timely
 - As far as possible, programs should be provided within normal school hours.
 - Sessions should be concise and not unnecessarily prolonged.

- iv. Be Purposeful
 - Programs should address or be linked to an identified wellbeing and/or learning need of the child or young person.

Charles La Trobe College retains overall responsibility for all programs and activities involving students working with external providers.

EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed as part of the School Review cycle or in response to an incident.

RATIFICATION

This policy was ratified by the College School Council on August 23rd 2016.

This policy was re-ratified 12th December, 2017.

Re-endorsed at school council meeting 15th February 2018.

This policy was re-ratified on 15th August 2019.

References:

Commission for Children and Young People Website

<http://www.cyp.vic.gov.au/>

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DET Website

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/regulation/Pages/chilsafestandards.aspx>

VRQA Website <http://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/chilsafe/Pages/default.html>