

Peterborough Victoria Northumberland and Clarington Catholic District School Board

PROTOCOL FOR PARTNERSHIPS WITH EXTERNAL AGENCIES FOR PROVISION OF SERVICES BY REGULATED HEALTH PROFESSIONALS, REGULATED SOCIAL SERVICE PROFESSIONALS, AND PARAPROFESSIONALS

1.0 Authority

This Protocol is developed under the authority of the Ministry of Education Policy/ Program Memorandum No.149.

2.0 GUIDELINES

The PVNC Catholic District School Board supports partnerships that are consistent with Catholic gospel values and the Board's mission and guiding principles as well as complying with all Board policies and applicable collective agreements. Partnerships are recognized as mutually beneficial and supportive arrangements between a school and an external mental health or social service agency, professional or paraprofessional. The intent of these partnerships is to enhance or expand opportunities for student success by collaborating with agencies, professionals and paraprofessionals who share values, objectives, resources and responsibilities to achieve desired learning outcomes.

3.0 OBJECTIVE

To provide the Board with a framework to form partnerships with external agencies in the areas of regulated health professionals, regulated social service professionals and/or paraprofessionals.

4.0 DEFINITIONS

External Agency

An organization, not internal to the Board, that employs regulated health professionals, regulated social services professionals and paraprofessionals.

Unionized Staff

Board-employed professional student services personnel (PSSP) and/or paraprofessionals that are represented by a bargaining agent recognized under the Labour Relations Act.

Professional Student Services Personnel and Paraprofessionals

- audiologists, as defined by the Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology Act, 1991
- speech-language pathologists, as defined by the Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology Act, 1991
- occupational therapists, as defined by the Occupational Therapy Act, 1991
- physiotherapists, as defined by the Physiotherapy Act, 1991
- psychologists and psychological associates, as defined by the Psychology Act, 1991
- social workers, as defined by the Social Work and Social Service Work Act, 1998
- other regulated professionals and/or paraprofessionals who are deemed by the Board to be essential for the delivery of programs and services for students with special needs
- Any future regulated categories will also be covered by this protocol

Partnership Agreement

A formal, written document which outlines the terms and conditions of an external partnership that is signed prior to the implementation of the partnership activities. (Appendix A)

5.0 PROCESS COMPONENTS

Responsibility

The Superintendent of Special Education Services shall be responsible to oversee this protocol.

Board Level Committee

A board level committee will convene once each academic year or more often as necessary to identify potential new partners, review appropriate administrative mechanisms to complete a formal partnership agreement and review partnership agreements that were completed during the school year. This committee will be chaired by the Superintendent of Special Education Services or designate. The committee will include representatives from professional student services personnel (Psychology, Speech-Language Pathology, Social Work), the Manager of Human Resource Services or designate, one secondary school Principal or Vice-principal, one elementary school Principal or Vice Principal and one representative of CUPE Local 1453.

Partnership Expectations

All partnerships shall be expected, in general, to enhance the quality of education for students in the Board. Partnerships are expected to supplement but not replace the delivery of services of professional student support services staff and/or paraprofessional staff. Partnership agreements shall be in compliance with collective agreements.

Eligibility

Partnership agreements may be considered for approval for interventions that involve individuals, groups of students, classroom programs, school wide or board initiatives.

Individual, direct service to students may be delivered by partnership agency staff and, in general, will cover areas consistent with the agency's mandate of community support service. With the consent of parents/guardians, partnership agency staff are permitted to provide service to individual students through one on one support, observation and attendance at school meetings.

6.0 PROCEDURES FOR ESTABLISHING A PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

Partnership agreements will be most effective when developed collaboratively between school administration and community service providers. Schools are also encouraged to seek input from students and parents in the development of partnership agreements in order to provide relevant and appropriate programs for students.

In situations where a program has been previously implemented in PVNC schools, the partnership agreements should be reviewed and adjusted to meet the specific needs of the school. A single partnership agreement could involve more than one school in the Board. Upon request, relevant Special Education Services staff may provide assistance in the development of a Partnership Agreement.

Completed Partnership Agreements will be submitted for approval to the Superintendent of Special Education Services prior to implementation.

7.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

The principal, in consultation with the Superintendent of Special Education Services, shall ensure that partnership agreements are consistent with Catholic gospel values and the Board's mission and vision statements and guiding principles as well as complying with all Board policies and applicable collective agreements.

The principal is responsible for the organization and management of the school as set out in the Education Act.

Principals shall consult with the Superintendent of Special Education Services regarding issues of professional conduct, service delivery and quality assurance.

Supervision of agency staff providing service at the school shall be the responsibility of appropriate agency staff who are members of relevant regulated colleges.

External providers must agree to participate in a dispute resolution process in the event of a disagreement. A joint advisory committee, which will consist of three representatives from the PVNC Catholic District School Board and three representatives of the external provider, will be convened in the event that a disagreement or dispute between the parties must be resolved.

All staff from external agencies must agree to adhere to the Board's standards of confidentiality, equity, safe schools, suspected child abuse reporting, human rights and Catholic gospel values.

8.0 PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT- REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION

The following documentation is required as an attachment when a partnership agreement is being considered:

Description of External Agency

Provide the following information: the name, address and a brief description of the agency's mandate.

Description of Program

The following information must be included: A description of the program, program goals and expected outcomes, format of the intervention (i.e., group, classroom, or school wide), specific grades, resources required (space, materials, etc...), program timelines, and contact person.

Evidence of congruence with the Board's mission statement, vision statement and guiding principles as set out at <http://www.pvnccdsb.on.ca/board/mission.asp>

**Given the limitations of space and resources, any such needs by the external provider must be clearly articulated and approved. Space for Board staff to execute their duties will be ensured prior to offering space to external providers.

Confidentiality and Informed Consent

Procedures for obtaining informed consent and a copy of the sample letter informing the parent/legal guardian(s) or student who is of age of the services to be provided is required.

Police Reference Check - Vulnerable Sector Screening

In accordance with the Education Act, the board shall collect: 1) a criminal background check in respect of an individual before the individual first becomes a service provider at a school site of the board and an offence declaration and 2) an offence declaration from the individual by September 1 of each year in which the individual is a service provider at a school site of the board after that day.

Proof of Insurance

External providers must carry their own insurance which includes professional malpractice coverage (minimum \$2,000,000) to insure against civil litigation alleging incompetence, professional errors, omissions or charges laid by professional colleges or parents/ legal guardians. The external provider is required to provide assurances that their staff are covered while working on PVNC Board property.

Qualifications/ Supervisory Relationships

External agency staff who are members of a regulated professional college must include current qualifications as relevant to the services to be provided, current membership in the relevant regulated college, declaration of delivery of services in accordance with professional standards of practice and the name of the immediate supervisor.

External agency staff who are paraprofessionals must include evidence of work under the clinical supervision of staff from the agency holding current membership in a relevant regulated college, details of the paraprofessional's role and responsibilities as well as the name of the immediate supervisor, supervision plan with time and qualifications of the supervisor.

- Evaluation
School boards and external agencies shall collaborate on the annual review and evaluation of programs and services provided.

Finances and Resources

Statement of any fees, resources or payments is required prior to the approval of the Partnership Agreement.

- Termination of Agreement
The terms of termination should be specified in each Partnership Agreement. It will be understood that the Principal or Board may at anytime terminate access to the school premises of any individual as per the Education Act. It will also be agreed that the external agency, the school or the Board may terminate the Partnership Agreement on thirty days written notice.

- Research/ Program Evaluation
The Peterborough Victoria Northumberland and Clarington Catholic District School Board works in cooperation with institutions, agencies and individuals in the conducting of research which will be of benefit to the pupils and employees of the Board as well as the community at large. Research requests shall be made in accordance with Board Policy 702- Research Requests. The Board maintains the right to approve or deny any request to conduct research.