



## Niagara Catholic District School Board

### **Protocol for AGREEMENTS WITH EXTERNAL AGENCIES FOR PROVISION OF SERVICES BY REGULATED HEALTH PROFESSIONALS, REGULATED SOCIAL SERVICE PROFESSIONALS AND PARAPROFESSIONALS**

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Revised:

Authorization: Ministry of Education Policy/Program Memorandum 149

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The Niagara Catholic District School Board provides quality Catholic education within the Niagara Peninsula in collaboration with parents, agencies and the community at large. The mission of the Niagara Catholic District School Board as a Catholic community of learners is to ensure that all learners develop the knowledge, skills and values to reach their full potential, with Christ as the Way, the Truth and the Light.

This protocol provides the Niagara Catholic District School Board with a framework for creating and implementing agreements with external agencies for provision of services by regulated professionals or paraprofessionals. The agreement with a community service provider may augment or enhance (but not duplicate) the work of Board professional staff while respecting the rights, responsibilities and interests of both students and staff.

#### **Definitions**

*Local Protocol* – A written document that enables school boards to form agreements with external agencies in the areas of regulated health professionals, regulated social services professionals and paraprofessionals.

*External Agency* – An organization, not internal to a school board, that employs regulated health professionals, regulated social services professionals and paraprofessionals.

*Unionized Staff* – School 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 (PSSP) 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, as defined by the Psychology Act, 1991

- 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 school 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.

### **Terms of Reference**

A written, signed agreement between the parties will help clarify expectations, roles and responsibilities, timelines, procedures, accountability, service quality, compliance with professional standards, integration/coordination, and a dispute resolution process. The establishment of an agreement will be facilitated by the appropriate member(s) of Senior Staff.

The agreement will address:

- Evidence of congruence with the Board's mission and vision (available at [www.niagaracatholic.ca](http://www.niagaracatholic.ca))
- The need for programs/services identified by the school/Board;
- The specific programs/service offered by the external agency/agent to address the identified need, including scope and any limitations;
- The qualifications/credentials/identification of the external agency specific to each location;
- Testimonials from other employers about the external agency, where appropriate;
- Criminal Background Checks including vulnerable sector screening;
- The role/responsibility of the school/Board;
- Supervision, reporting and accountability;
- Ensure that external agency is informed of relevant Board policies and procedures, protocols, Child Protection requirements, Safe Schools Act, Access to School Premises, etc.;
- Agreement to adhere to the Board's standards of conflict of interest, confidentiality, equity and human rights.
- Records management related to the services delivered (FOI, OSR regulations, access, retention, storage location, security, etc.);
- Consent, when required, to facilitate the sharing of information the appropriate consent forms shall be secured;
- A review/evaluation process with timelines;
- A dispute resolution process.

## **Responsibilities**

- The principal is responsible for the organization and management of the school, per the *Education Act*.
- Supervision of paraprofessionals from external agencies is to be provided by staff from the external agencies, who are members in the relevant regulated college.
- The Board, external agencies and PSSP and paraprofessionals must collaborate on the evaluation of programs and services provided for yearly review.
- The Board will maintain a joint advisory committee, which will consist of representatives from the Board and representatives of the external agency, to resolve disagreements or disputes that may arise.

## **Required Documentation**

The Board will collect the following information necessary to develop and support the implementation of agreements.

Agreement eligibility documentation for external agencies/agent must include:

- Description of service/program/external agency;
- Validation of external agency status;
- Names of representatives of the external agency;
- Anticipated outcomes of programs and services provided;
- Qualifications/Supervisory relationships for external agency staff providing service.

Agreement eligibility documentation for external agency staff who are members of a regulated professional college (PSSP) 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 the professional standards of practice.

Agreement eligibility documentation for external agency staff who are paraprofessionals must include:

- Evidence of work under the clinical supervision of staff from the external agency who currently holds membership in the relevant regulated college;
- Details of the paraprofessional's role, responsibilities, name of immediate supervisor, supervision plan with time and supervisor's qualifications.

Liability/insurance coverage:

- 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 board property.

Termination of Agreement:

- Terms of termination developed by the Board with input from the external agency staff.

Statement of Fees:

- Any fees or payment, if applicable, to external agencies must be documented in the agreement.

Requests for Space/Material(s) by External Agencies:

- Requests by external agencies to utilize Board space/material(s) must be articulated and must complement the needs of the Board staff and not compromise the Board's staff ability to execute their duties.

This protocol will be reviewed as required.