



Speech Pathology Services for students in the Diocese of Ballarat- 2021

Catholic Education Ballarat (CEB) Speech Pathologists support referred students who have communication difficulties that impact their access and participation in education. Support may include case consultation, assessment, reporting, advice regarding appropriate adjustments and programs, professional and agent training. This support may be provided in schools and/ or via telepractice.

What is Telepractice?

Telepractice is the use of telecommunication to provide speech pathology services to students. A speech pathologist typically uses videoconferencing to administer student sessions in real-time but may utilise other formats, such as email, for related communication. Telepractice is sometimes referred to as telehealth, telepractice, or telespeech.

Speech Pathology Services delivered via Telepractice

Catholic Education Ballarat Speech Pathology services can be provided on-site at schools, as well as delivered using telepractice. This involves connecting the speech pathologist, student and an 'agent' e.g. Parent/ Legal Guardian/Learning Diversity Leader/Learning Support Officer, using a computer/iPad and a webcam across a platform such as WebEx. The presence of an agent ensures that the service provided is aligned with Child Safety Standards, the Privacy Act, 1988 and relevant professional guidelines.

Assessment: Assessments completed by CEB Speech Pathologists using telepractice currently include assessment of a child's speech sound production and language skills.

Therapy: CEB Speech Pathologists provide support using an 'agent-training' approach. This means that caregivers and/or school staff are provided with information and resources needed to carry out therapy directly with the student. Agent training may include demonstrating strategies and techniques that can be used to help the student, providing recommendations about the best way(s) to help students practise outside the therapy session and how often this should happen, providing resources, either in print or electronically, to support ongoing practice outside the session and reviewing the student's progress with home/school practice set in a previous session

It may be appropriate for the speech pathologist to conduct a telepractice session with only the caregiver and/or school representative. In this case, a student may not be directly involved in the session, however the same privacy and security considerations would be applied.

What are the steps involved for beginning Telepractice?

- The CEB Speech Pathologist will discuss your child's learning with you and the school to determine if telepractice is a viable option to support your child through either assessment/therapy/review.
- If all participants are in agreement that telepractice is appropriate, the attached **'Telepractice for Speech Pathology Parent/Caregiver Consent Form'** will need to be signed prior to commencing.
- The CEB Speech Pathologist, in conjunction with the school, will organise the session via a suitable video communication platform and notify people who will need to attend
- A 'Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)' information sheet will be provided to you. This will provide further information around accessing a telepractice session, roles and responsibilities and troubleshooting advice for common technology issues.

Expectations for Telepractice Sessions

As with face-to-face sessions, telepractice requires commitment from the school, parent/caregiver and the speech pathologist. During a telepractice session participants agree to the following:

- to have access to email, a computer/laptop/full-size tablet with a camera and a stable internet connection to attend the meeting, as scheduled by the speech pathologist.
- to have a means of direct communication i.e. via telephone/email during the session, in the event that internet connection is lost, for example.
- that parents/caregivers and school staff should refrain from repeating or rephrasing questions and not provide feedback to the student if his/her responses are correct/incorrect. This is critically important as standardised tests are exams administered and scored in a standard, or consistent, manner.
- not to leave a student unsupervised at the screen at any time. If the attending adult needs to leave the session, the child must also leave.
- **Not to video or audio record the session.**
Recording is not permitted on any device by any person during the session.

What are the advantages and disadvantages of telepractice?

There is growing evidence that, when speech pathologists and participants use good practices, telepractice services can be as effective as in-person services.

Advantages of telepractice include:

- Improved access to speech pathology services across the diocese,
- Reduced need for travel
- Timely service delivery
- During COVID, decreased movement of clinicians between school communities

Risks associated with telepractice might include:

- Being negatively impacted by technical problems, such as delays due to technology failures.
- Not offering the same visual and sound quality for observations and modelling
- Not achieving everything that is required and therefore requiring another telepractice consultation or a face to face consultation.
- Including practices and procedures that are not as well understood in a telepractice setting as they are onsite
- Increasing exposure to privacy and digital security risks. (See next section.)

Will my privacy be protected?

This practice is subject to the Privacy Act 1988 and must comply with obligations related to the collection, use, and disclosure of personal information, including through telepractice. The speech pathologist must maintain confidentiality and privacy standards during sessions, and in creating, keeping and transmitting records.

While the speech pathologist is obligated to meet standards to protect your privacy and security, telecommunication, including videoconference, may increase exposure to hacking and other online risks; as with all online activities, there is no guarantee of complete privacy and security protection.

Please note that video or audio recording is not permitted on any device by any person during the session.

It is important that you are aware that with work emails your employer may be able to view the information. If you don't have access to a private email or phone, talk through options with your Speech Pathologist. It is important to have access to email at the time of the meeting with consideration that some workplaces may have limited access to certain platforms and emails coming through.

What does 'Informed Consent' mean?

There are a few important principles related to informed consent:

- **You must be given relevant information.** Ask the speech pathologist, if you have questions about telepractice and the services offered.
- **You have the right to understand the information.** Ask the speech pathologist, if you do not understand.
- **You have the right to choose.** If you do not agree to telepractice, you may refuse to participate. You may agree to or refuse specific activities and procedures.
- **You have the right to stop using telepractice anytime.** You can change your mind about telepractice or a specific activity or procedure, even in the middle of a session.
- **You can agree or refuse in writing or verbally.** You may give your consent using the form below. You may also give consent or change your mind by telling the speech pathologist. Consent and refusal that you give verbally will be documented by the CEB speech pathologist.
- **You can ask about alternatives to telepractice.** If you refuse or change your mind about telepractice services, the CEB speech pathologist will discuss any other options with you.

TELEPRACTICE FOR SPEECH PATHOLOGY

PARENT/CAREGIVER CONSENT FORM

Student Details

Student Name:	Date of Birth:
School:	Class/ Nominated Teacher:
Parent/Carer Phone:	Parent/Carer Email:

*Please note: The above email address and phone number will be used for scheduling meetings and for follow up information and resources to be provided. **It is recommended for security purposes that a private email and phone number be provided. (see above in privacy section)***

To ensure that you are fully informed of the expectations of the telepractice service, we need you to complete the following consent form, sign it and return this to the school Learning Diversity Leader and/or speech pathologist. Please ensure you keep a copy of this consent form.

Please tick the boxes (✓)

I agree for speech pathology services for my child to be provided via telepractice	
I understand that a caregiver or school representative must attend the session. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please note: a child cannot be present without an adult. If the attending adult needs to leave the session, the child must also leave. 	
I understand that regular practice at home and/or school is required to support my child's progress	
I understand that I may agree or refuse any service or part of a service at any time. I can agree or refuse in writing or verbally.	
I understand that video or audio recording is not permitted on any device by any person during a telepractice session	
I understand the requirements and privacy policy related to telepractice therapy	

Parent/ Carer Name:	Parent/Carer Signature Date:
School Representative Name: Role:	School Representative Signature: Date:
CEB Speech Pathologist Name:	Speech Pathologist Signature Date:

(If you are unable to sign electronically, please send an email to your speech pathologist and school Learning Diversity Leader, confirming that you have read and understood the consent form and agree to the requirements and privacy policy. Please send the form with the completed tick box section attached to the email.)