

Chaplaincy Services in Tasmanian State Schools Policy

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1. Purpose

- This Policy aligns with the Project Agreement for the National School Chaplaincy Program and provides advice to School Principals about the provision of chaplaincy services in Tasmanian State Schools.
- This Policy applies to all Department of Education (DoE) schools providing chaplaincy services regardless of whether or not a school receives funding under the National School Chaplaincy Program (NSCP).
- The Policy clarifies how section 39 of the *Education Act 2016* (the Act) and section 4 of the *Education Regulations 2017* (the Regulations) apply to the provision of chaplaincy services in school.
- The Policy is to be read together with the Chaplaincy Services in Tasmanian State Schools Procedure (the Procedure).

2. Policy Statement

- Schools may appoint a Chaplain to support the provision of pastoral care and emotional wellbeing programs after appropriate consultation with their school community.
- A program delivered by a Chaplain may in some circumstances constitute an activity to which a parent is entitled to object to their child participating in under section 4 of the Regulations.
- Under section 39 of the Act, a parent of a child or youth attending a State school may object as a matter of conscience to that child or youth participating in an activity prescribed by the regulations.
- In order to ensure compliance with the Act and Regulations, schools engaging the services of a Chaplain must:
 - » establish appropriate processes to ensure that participation in chaplaincy services and chaplaincy related activities by all students is voluntary
 - » give parents/carers the opportunity to opt their children out of participating in chaplaincy services and activities
 - » provide parents with written information about the role of the Chaplain in the school and the voluntary nature of chaplaincy services.
- Schools engaging the services of a Chaplain must further ensure the following:
 - » the services provided by the Chaplain must be consistent with their qualifications and must not extend to other service areas, in particular but not limited to, teaching or counselling. Under no circumstances can the school's duty of care for students be delegated to the Chaplain
 - » chaplaincy services must be compatible with the priorities for school improvement, codes and practices of the schools and contribute to the wellbeing of students
 - » the Chaplain is acquired through an approved chaplaincy provider
 - » Chaplains must have a current Tasmanian *Registration Working with Vulnerable People* (RWVP).
- Schools may acquire funding for school chaplaincy services through the NSCP or other sources including fundraising, donations, and/or the School Resource Package (SRP). Schools will not receive additional funding from DoE to engage Chaplains.
- For schools purchasing chaplaincy services through NSCP funding, there is no obligation on the school or School Association to fund additional chaplaincy services beyond those funded under the NSCP.

Chaplains

- Chaplains must comply with all relevant legal and policy requirements when operating in schools. This includes meeting child protection and reporting obligations, as well as complying with DoE and school policies, such as privacy, complaints and information management policies. There are minimum qualifications and requirements for employment as a Chaplain.
- For the purposes of the NSCP, a Chaplain is defined as an individual who:
 - » may be of any faith, and is recognised by the school community and the School Association as having the skills and experience to deliver school chaplaincy services to the school community
 - » is recognised through formal ordination, commissioning, recognised religious qualifications or endorsement by a recognised or accepted religious institution
 - » meets the minimum qualification requirements outlined below:
 - a Certificate IV in Youth Work or
 - a Certificate IV in Pastoral Care or
 - a Certificate IV in Chaplaincy and Pastoral Care or
 - an equivalent qualification (as determined by the State) and this Certificate or equivalent qualification must include competencies in 'mental health' and 'making appropriate referrals'.

Funding

- Funding of up to \$20 280 per school, per annum is available for schools (\$24 336 is available for remote and very remote schools).
- To obtain the maximum funding provided via the NSCP, chaplains are required to provide a minimum of 400 hours of service per year.

Cyberbullying Professional Learning Package for NSCP Chaplains

- NSCP chaplains must undertake professional learning in responding to and preventing bullying and cyberbullying training with the Office of the eSafety Commissioner (**NOTE:** this training is not available for non-NSCP funded chaplains).

3. Related policies

- [Duty of Care for Students on Departmental Educational Sites Procedure](#)
- [Grievances Guidelines for Parents and the Community](#)
- [Religious Instruction in State Schools Policy](#)

4. Related procedures

- [Chaplaincy Services in Tasmanian State Schools Procedure](#)
- [Mandatory Reporting Procedures](#)
- [Planning Off-Campus Activities Procedures](#)

5. Supporting information/tools

- [School Checklist - Chaplaincy Services in Tasmanian State Schools](#)
- [Code of Conduct and Behaviour Standards for Chaplains](#)
- [Department of Education Website – National School Chaplaincy Program](#)
- [Australian Government Website - National School Chaplaincy Program](#)

- [Project Agreement for the National School Chaplaincy Program](#)

6. Definitions

Approved Chaplaincy Provider

The approved person, corporation, other legal entity, partnership or joint venture, including any employee and agent, who has signed a Provider Agreement, and is able to provide chaplaincy services in Tasmanian State Schools.

Chaplain

The person engaged by the Approved Chaplaincy Provider who the Provider will supply to the school to provide chaplaincy services to that school. A title other than chaplain may be used, if the title is appropriate to the religious affiliation of the individual

Chaplaincy Services

Pastoral care services and strategies that support the emotional wellbeing of students and the broader school community. Chaplaincy services in Tasmanian State Schools should be provided during the school term and within school hours or at school-related activities approved by the school.

Contract for Services

The Contract for Services between the Tasmanian State School Leadership and an Approved Chaplaincy Provider for the provision of chaplaincy services in that Tasmanian State School.

Pastoral Care

Pastoral care is the practice of looking after the personal needs of students, not just their academic needs, through the provision of general spiritual and personal advice.

Provider Agreement

The Contract for Services Agreement between the State of Tasmania through the Department of Education and the Chaplaincy Provider for the provision of chaplaincy services in Tasmanian State Schools.

7. Legislation

- [Registration to Work with Vulnerable People Act 2013](#) (Tas)
- [Education Act 2016](#) (Tas)
- [Education Regulations 2017](#) (Tas)

Authorised by: Jenny Burgess – Deputy Secretary, Strategy and Performance

Contact: strategicpolicyandplanning@education.tas.gov.au

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