National School Chaplaincy Program 2019 - 2022

Northern Territory General Information Handbook
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The Northern Territory Department of Education respectfully acknowledges the Aboriginal people as the traditional owners of the land now known as the Northern Territory. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are advised that this material may contain images or names of people who have since died.
ABOUT THE HANDBOOK

The National School Chaplaincy Program (NSCP) 2019-2022: Northern Territory General Information Handbook has been designed to assist schools, service providers and chaplains to participate in and meet the requirements of the NSCP Project Agreement 2019-2022.

These guidelines should be read in conjunction with the Chaplaincy Services in Schools Policy and Guidelines.

REVIEW DATE

The handbook will be reviewed and updated as required by the Department of Education. Schools will be informed of updates.

The handbook was updated in August 2019 to align with the National School Chaplaincy Program Project Agreement 2019-2022 and further updated in January 2020 to include reference to the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009-2020 as required by the Commonwealth Government.

CONTACT

For information relating to the delivery of chaplaincy services or a chaplain, please contact the relevant school principal in the first instance.

For information relating to the delivery of the program in the Northern Territory, please contact Student Wellbeing and Inclusion, Department of Education on 08 8944 9257 or email sesupport.det@nt.gov.au.
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1 INTRODUCTION

The Australian Government funded National School Chaplaincy Program (NSCP) supports the delivery of school chaplaincy services in the Northern Territory (NT) through the provision of a conditional grant of financial assistance, which is administered by the Department of Education (the department).

The NSCP commenced on 1 January 2015 and replaces the former Australian Government funded National School Chaplaincy and Student Welfare Program (NSCSWP), which ceased at the end of 2014 and was funded directly to schools.

1.1 Program objectives

The aim of the NSCP is to support the emotional wellbeing of Australian school students through:

- pastoral services and strategies
- strategies developed in consultation with the relevant school staff and school principal that support the wellbeing of the broader school community, e.g. coordinating volunteer activities and support, breakfast clubs, lunch time activities, excursions, and parent workshops.

The NSCP assists school communities to support the general spiritual, social and emotional comfort to students, irrespective of their faith or beliefs. This can include support and guidance about ethics, values, relationships, spiritual issues, as well as the provision of student welfare and enhancement of engagement with the broader community.

The NSCP allows qualified chaplains, who meet the program criteria, to provide chaplaincy services to all schools.

1.2 National School Chaplaincy Program Project Agreement 2019-2022

The parameters, role and responsibilities associated with the NSCP are set out in the NSCP Project Agreement 2019-2022, which has been signed by the Commonwealth, states and territories.

It is recommended that schools participating in the program, read the NSCP Project Agreement.

1.3 Chaplaincy Services in Schools Policy and Guidelines

Schools participating in the NSCP must adhere to the requirements of the department’s Chaplaincy Services in Schools Policy and Guidelines.
2 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Roles and responsibilities, listed below, are specific to the NSCP and are in addition to the roles and responsibilities outlined in the Chaplaincy Services in Schools Policy and Guidelines.

The role of the Commonwealth, state and territory governments are outlined in the NSCP Project Agreement 2019-2022.

2.1 Cross Sector Panel (consists of government and non-government school representatives)

The Panel:

- Provides advice to the department on the implementation of the program
- Facilitates the implementation of the program in their sector
- Provides advice on the suitability of the qualifications of chaplains selected by schools
- Assesses applications in accordance to the program selection criteria
- Monitors and reviews progress of individual services as informed by the department and Panel members
- Investigates complaints that are within the scope of the project agreement and Chaplaincy Services in Schools Policy and Guidelines
- Participates in the program evaluation process.

2.2 School principal

The school principal:

- Ensures the services provided by the chaplain are consistent with the Chaplain Services in Schools Policy and Guidelines, the Deed of Agreement and this handbook
- Ensures an appropriate induction, which covers pertinent information relating to the program and the school, is provided to the chaplain prior to commencement
- Ensures the chaplain has a current NT Working with Children Clearance (Ochre Card) and abides by the Code of Conduct for School Chaplains
- Identifies potential risks associated with the delivery of chaplaincy services in the school, and develops and maintains a Risk Management Plan
- Reports identified risks associated with the delivery of chaplaincy services in the school and mitigating actions to the school’s governing body and the department as appropriate
2.3 Service provider or employing agency

The service provider or employing agency:

- Recruits and selects the chaplain in consultation with the school principal
- Checks the chaplain has the minimum qualifications required and retains a copy of the evidence of qualifications
- Checks the chaplain and other service provider staff who may come into contact with students have a current NT Working with Children Clearance (Ochre Card) and retains a copy
- Ensures the chaplain completes professional learning in responding to and preventing bullying and cyberbullying training with the Office of the eSafety Commissioner
- Works with the school principal to ensure an appropriate induction, which covers pertinent information relating to the program and the school, is provided to the chaplain prior to commencement
- Monitors the role of the chaplain in consultation with the school principal
- Maintains the required insurances.
- Is the body that employs the chaplains (not the school council).

3 APPLICATION PROCESS

Due to the late signing of the NSCP Project Agreement 2019-2022, schools participating in the program in 2018 were automatically accepted for 2019.

Expressions of interest to participate in the NSCP from 2020 to 2022 will be sought by the department from all schools in the NT in Semester 2, 2019.

Schools interested in participating must complete the NSCP funding application form and submit the completed form with all the required supporting documentation to the department by the due date.

As part of the application process, schools are required to demonstrate they have consulted with the school community and there is support for the delivery of chaplaincy services at the school.

3.1 Choosing a service provider

Schools will be required to select a service provider to deliver the program.

The department can provide information on available service providers on request.
4 ASSESSMENT PROCESS

The Panel will assess applications after the application period has closed.

4.1 Successful applicants

Successful schools will be notified in writing and provided with a Letter of Intent, Deed of Agreement and Code of Conduct for School Chaplains. These documents are to be completed and returned to the department.

4.2 Unsuccessful applicants

Unsuccessful schools will be notified in writing.

5 ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

The Panel will assess applications as follows.

- School community support for the chaplaincy service within the school (pass/fail criteria). Supporting documentation includes:
  - Provision of information such as the results of school surveys, meetings, newsletters, community discussions etc. At a minimum, consultation must have been conducted with the school's parent body or equivalent.
  - Provision of evidence of school community consultation. At a minimum, this must include meeting minutes from the school's parent body or equivalent confirming support for the program.
  - Provision of the school community consultation plan, including how the school will review community support throughout the life of the program.

- Demonstrated need for the chaplaincy service (weighted criteria). This is determined through:
  - Location of the school (weighting of 15 per cent) based on the Accessibility Remoteness Index of Australia (ARIA) score against the school post code.
  - Disadvantage code for the school (weighting of 40 per cent) based on the Index of Community Socio-Education Advantage (ICSEA).
  - Number of full-time enrolments in the school (weighting of 15 per cent).
  - Proportion of full-time enrolments in the school of Aboriginal students (weighting of 10 per cent).
  - Number of existing student wellbeing services in the school indicated by the school (weighting of 10 per cent).
  - Statement of need by the school, including appropriate evidence (weighting of 10 per cent).
- Demonstrated commitment to implement appropriate processes (pass/fail criteria) to ensure that:
  - participation by schools and students is voluntary
  - chaplains may be from any faith
  - chaplains:
    - do not proselytise
    - respect, accept and be sensitive to other people's views, values and beliefs
    - comply with NT laws and policies in relation to child protection matters
    - meet the NSCP's minimum qualifications and requirements.

6  COMPLAINTS PROCESS

The school must have an appropriate process for managing and resolving concerns or complaints relating to the chaplain, service provider and service delivery.

In the first instance, all concerns or complaints are to be directed to the school principal or a complaints officer designated by the school principal.

Complaints in NT Government schools are to be managed and resolved to in accordance with the Complaints Management in Schools Policy.

Mandatory reporting laws specify the conditions under which an individual is legally required to make a report to the statutory child protection service in their jurisdiction. For further information refer to the department's Mandatory Reporting of Harm and Exploitation of Children Guidelines or the relevant sector's administration.

7  PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

7.1  Voluntary participation

Participation by schools and students is voluntary.

Parents must be provided with information about the availability of chaplaincy services in their school which emphasises the voluntary nature of the NSCP and explains that members of the school community do not have to participate in this service.

7.2  School community consultation

Schools are to engage in appropriate consultation with the school community, through the school's parent body or equivalent, prior to delivering chaplaincy services in the school.
7.3 Parental permission

Parents must be provided with written information about the role of the chaplain in the school and the opt-in chaplaincy program.

Students must have written consent from their parents to participate in the chaplaincy program. Refer to permission for student to participate in chaplain program form.

Schools must have procedures in place to ensure that chaplains do not have access to information relating to non-participating students.

For further information, refer to the Chaplaincy Services in Schools Policy and Guidelines.

7.4 Chaplain minimum qualifications and requirements

The chaplain must have the following qualification:

- Certificate IV in Youth Work, or
- Certificate IV in Pastoral Care, or
- Certificate IV in Chaplaincy and Pastoral Care, or
- an equivalent qualification (as determined by the department), which must include competencies in 'mental health' and 'making appropriate referrals'.

The chaplain must also meet the following requirements:

- is recognised by the school community and the appropriate governing authority for the school as having the skills and experience to deliver school chaplaincy to the school community
- is recognised through formal ordination, commissioning, recognised religious qualifications or endorsement by a recognised or accepted religious institution
- has a current NT Working with Children Clearance (Ochre Card)
- has completed the professional learning in responding to and preventing bullying and cyberbullying training with the Office of the eSafety Commissioner
- undertakes mandatory reporting training as per the department's Mandatory Reporting of Harm and Exploitation of Children Guidelines or the relevant sector administration's requirements
- is familiar with the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009-2020, and the relevant State and Territory responses to the recommendations from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Abuse (Volume 6 - Making institutions child safe, Volume 10 - Children with harmful sexual behaviours and Volume 13 - Schools).
Schools and service providers are required to provide detailed evidence to the department that confirms the chaplain can meet the minimum qualifications and requirements.

Where the chaplain does not have the specified qualification, the school and service provider are required to provide detailed evidence that demonstrates that the qualification is equivalent (e.g. the majority of the core components are the same or similar) and contains competencies in 'mental health' and 'making appropriate referrals'.

If the department, in consultation with the Panel, is not satisfied that the chaplain's qualification is an equivalent qualification, the chaplain cannot be employed under the NSCP.

### 7.5 Monitoring

Progress monitoring of the NSCP is undertaken by the Panel and the department within a risk management framework. The department may conduct a range of monitoring activities to verify that chaplaincy services are delivered in accordance with the requirements of the Deed of Agreement and Code of Conduct.

Schools may be requested to provide additional information throughout the funding period. This may include, but is not limited to:

- evidence of chaplain qualifications
- evidence of NT Working With Children Clearance (Ochre Card)
- evidence of parental consent processes
- copies of complaints registers
- follow up on resolution of complaints on a regular basis
- evidence of continued school community support, including meeting notes and/or other information as required
- copies of school community consultation plans
- progress towards provision of service and annual hours
- satisfaction with service provision
- verification of details that have been provided in progress and acquittal reports.

The Panel and/or the department may visit schools as a result of a complaint.

### 7.6 Privacy and confidentiality

Schools are responsible for keeping a record of all documentation and reports relating to the program, including the suitability of chaplains, in accordance with their policies and processes.

The department is bound, in administering the program, by the provisions of the *Privacy Act 1988* (Privacy Act).
Personal information collected on the funding application will be used by the Panel for the purpose of administering the NSCP.

The department may disclose information collected on the funding application to promote the NSCP.

8 FUNDING

The program provides funding for government and non-government schools to engage a service provider to employ a chaplain to support the emotional wellbeing of Australian school students.

Chaplaincy services funded under the NSCP can commence from the beginning of the school year for which funding is approved.

At the commencement of the funding period, payment will be made to schools once the following are completed, signed and returned to the department:

- Letter of Intent
- Deed of Agreement
- Code of Conduct.

In the following years within the funding agreement, payment will be made once the following are completed signed and returned to the department:

- Letter of Intent
- Deed of Agreement
- annual progress report and financial acquittal.

Alternative arrangements may be approved by the department from time to time.

8.1 Progress report and financial acquittal

Schools are required to submit an annual progress report and financial acquittal, which confirm that the service provided during the school year met the program requirements.

The annual progress report and financial acquittal is due at the end of the school year, usually within two weeks after term 4 concludes.

As part of the annual progress reports, schools will be required to confirm they have met the following requirements:

- voluntary participation by the school and students in the program
- chaplains:
  - are of any faith
  - have not proselytised
  - have been respectful, accepted and sensitive to the views, values and beliefs of others
8.2 Payment arrangements

Schools will be paid according to details provided on their NTG Vendor Identification Number. The payment amount provided by the department is exclusive of GST.

8.3 Delay in securing a chaplain

If a school has not secured a chaplain by the end of Semester 1, the school must consider whether it can deliver the full annual service allocation, e.g. 400 hours, over the remainder of the year and advise the department.

If the school believes it can provide the service allocation within the shortened timeframe, the school must provide details of their intended course of action to the department.

If the department, in consultation with the Panel, is not satisfied that the school can provide the entire service allocation or a significant proportion of the service allocation within the shortened timeframe, the department can withdraw its offer of funding to the school.

8.4 Gaps in Service

Schools are to notify the department of any gaps in chaplaincy services. If there is a gap in the delivery of chaplaincy services within the school year due to the resignation of a chaplain and there is a delay in appointing a replacement, excess service hours/funds can only be utilised by:

- increasing the chaplain’s service hours, e.g. providing full time services for a designated period, to ensure no underspend for that calendar year
- employing an additional approved chaplain to provide additional service hours for that calendar year
- utilising the services of an existing chaplain in the school, who is not funded by the NSCP, to provide additional service hours for that calendar year. The chaplain must meet the minimum qualification requirements of the program.

8.5 Exiting schools

If a school determines that it will no longer participate in the program, it can exit at any time. To exit the program, the school will:

- notify the department of its intention in writing, including the reason and date of exit
• provide the department with evidence that the school community has been consulted and supports the decision to exit the program, and the service provider has been notified
• submit a final progress report and financial acquittal to the department as soon as possible and before the end of the calendar year
• return unspent funds to the department as soon as possible and before the end of the calendar year.

8.6 School Closures

If a school closes, the funding also ceases. The funds cannot be transferred to neighbouring schools.

In planning for the school closure, the principal is to follow the requirements for an exiting school.

8.7 Change of chaplain

The school must seek approval from the Panel for a proposed chaplain if the existing chaplain is unable to complete the agreed term of service. The proposed chaplain must meet the program requirements.

The department will issue a new Deed of Agreement to be signed by all parties when the proposed chaplain is approved.

8.8 Use of funds

NSCP funding is to be used to provide chaplaincy services within the approved school. School communities may engage the services of more than one chaplain or may negotiate with another school to engage the same chaplain. The amount of funding available to a school will not increase because there is more than one chaplain engaged under this program.

8.9 Underspend of funds

At the time of financial acquittal each year schools who demonstrate any underspend amount can request to roll-over the funds if they have a legitimate reason and can demonstrate that they will spend the money the following calendar year. Otherwise they will be invoiced by the department and required to return funds by the invoice date. Overspend amounts will be absorbed by the schools.

At the conclusion of the project agreement all underspends must be returned to the department.

8.10 Unacceptable use of funds

Activities and the purchase of services and goods which are inconsistent with the program objectives will not be funded. This includes:

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• costs incurred by the school outside of the period stipulated in the Deed of Agreement
• purchase of religious education or training packages, and related goods
• purchase of capital items, assets or resources including, but not limited to capital works, vehicles, computers and text books
• existing programs or support mechanisms that are funded by other sources
• provision of services to other schools
• employment cost for a chaplain who does not meet the program’s minimum qualifications.

9 KEY DEFINITIONS

Conflict of interest is a situation where a person’s own interests, or a duty towards someone else, may affect the way they carry out a duty towards others, such that an independent observer might reasonably question whether the professional actions or decisions of that person are influenced by their own interests.

Consultation is multilateral, open communications designed to obtain ongoing agreement and continued support for chaplaincy services.

Contact is any form of physical contact, oral communication (whether face-to-face or by other means) or any form of written communication.

Department of Education (the department) is the Northern Territory Government Department of Education.

Employing agency / service provider is the organisation with whom the chaplain’s contract of employment is made. For example: religious representative bodies (such as Northern Territory Council of Churches etc), non-government service providers (such as Salvation Army, Scripture Union NT etc), other religious organisations (mosques, temples etc). This should not be the school council and must be a legal entity capable of entering into a Deed of Agreement with the school.

Financial acquittal is a formal statement by the funding recipient (school) of income and expenditure in accordance with the Deed of Agreement and program guidelines.

Funding recipient is a school (or governing body for Catholic, independent and Christian schools) that receives National School Chaplaincy Program funding.

General school activities support duties that could normally be expected of support personnel in schools (such as attendance at assemblies and school events, safety interventions, support to school management and staff).

Minister is the Northern Territory Minister for Education.

Parent(s) inclusive of those with parental responsibility and caregivers.
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.

Proselytise is the attempt to convert someone to another opinion and/or belief, particularly a religion.

Program refers to the National School Chaplaincy Program.

Opt-in is a requirement to obtain parental permission for the student to access one-on-one and specialised programs or support services offered by the chaplain.

Recognised religious institution is as defined by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. Remote schools are determined, for the purposes of this program, by the Accessibility/Remoteness Index of Australia (ARIA) classification system. Schools within the ARIA remoteness categories 4 or 5 are considered remote for the purposes of the additional 20 per cent funding. Further information regarding the Accessibility/Remoteness Index of Australia (ARIA) is available at the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

School chaplain is an individual who:

- is recognised by the school community and the appropriate governing authority for the school as having the skills and experience to deliver school chaplaincy to the school community
- is recognised through formal ordination, commissioning, recognised religious qualifications or endorsement by a recognised or accepted religious institution
- has a current NT Working with Children Clearance (Ochre card)
- meets the NSCP’s minimum qualification requirements of:
  - 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 approved by the Panel); and this Certificate or equivalent qualification must include competencies in "mental health" and "making appropriate referrals".

School chaplaincy service aims to assist schools through the provision of pastoral care, general spiritual advice and comfort to students, staff and members of the school community.

School community is for the purposes of this program, a school that is recognised by the Northern Territory Government as being a school, having permanently enrolled students and that has its own school community comprising parents, teachers, friends, former students, counsellors/social workers and other people who are connected with the school.

Student welfare encompasses all that a school community does to meet the social, personal, spiritual or emotional wellbeing of students.
10 APPENDICES

Attachment A - Code of conduct for school chaplains

Attachment B – NSCP - Cross Sector Panel Terms of Reference 2019-2022

Attachment C – NSCP funding application form 2019-2022

Attachment D – NSCP deed of agreement

Attachment E – NSCP progress report and financial acquittal