

## National School Chaplaincy Programme 2015 - 2018

### Northern Territory General Information

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## BACKGROUND

### What is the National School Chaplaincy Programme 2015-2018?

The Australian Government funded National School Chaplaincy Programme (NSCP) supports the delivery of school chaplaincy programmes in the Northern Territory (NT) through the provision of a conditional grant of financial assistance to the Department of Education. The aim of the NSCP is to support the emotional wellbeing of Australian school students.

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.

Following agreement to participate in the Project Agreement for the National School Chaplaincy Programme, administrative responsibility for the programme was transferred to the Northern Territory Government and funding of \$1.9 million is available to NT Government schools and the non-government education sector Catholic, Christian and independent schools, from 2015 - 2018. Schools can apply for grants of up to \$20,000 per year, with up to an additional \$4,000 per school per year available for remote schools.

A cross sector panel, comprised of representatives from each of the education sectors ([refer below](#)), has agreed on the application and selection process to be adopted in schools in the Northern Territory.

In the NSCP's first funding round for implementation of school chaplaincy programmes in 2015, the Panel prioritised the distribution of funding to schools looking to continue existing chaplaincy services which were formerly supplemented by the NSCSWP.

In Semester 2, 2015, all schools may apply for funding grants to implement chaplaincy programmes from 2016 - 2018.

### Objectives

The objective of the NSCP is to provide chaplaincy services in Australian Schools, to support the emotional wellbeing of students, by providing:

- pastoral care services; and
- strategies that support the emotional wellbeing of the broader school community.

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

The NSCP will allow qualified chaplains, who meet the programme criteria ([listed below](#)), to provide chaplaincy services to Catholic, NT Government, Christian and independent schools.

## General principles

The following general principles apply to the NSCP:

- participation in the NSCP by a school is voluntary
- accessing chaplaincy services by a student is voluntary, even in those schools participating in the NSCP. Schools must inform students and parents of the voluntary nature of the chaplaincy services programme and ensure that adequate permission arrangements are in place to confirm prior parental/guardian consent. Schools must ensure that all students, parents and school community members are fully advised of the appropriate consent procedures
- chaplains may be from any faith
- chaplains must:
  - not proselytise
  - respect, accept and be sensitive to other people's views, values and beliefs;
  - comply with Territory laws and policies in relation to child protection matters;
  - [meet the NSCP's minimum qualification requirements](#).

## CROSS SECTOR PANEL

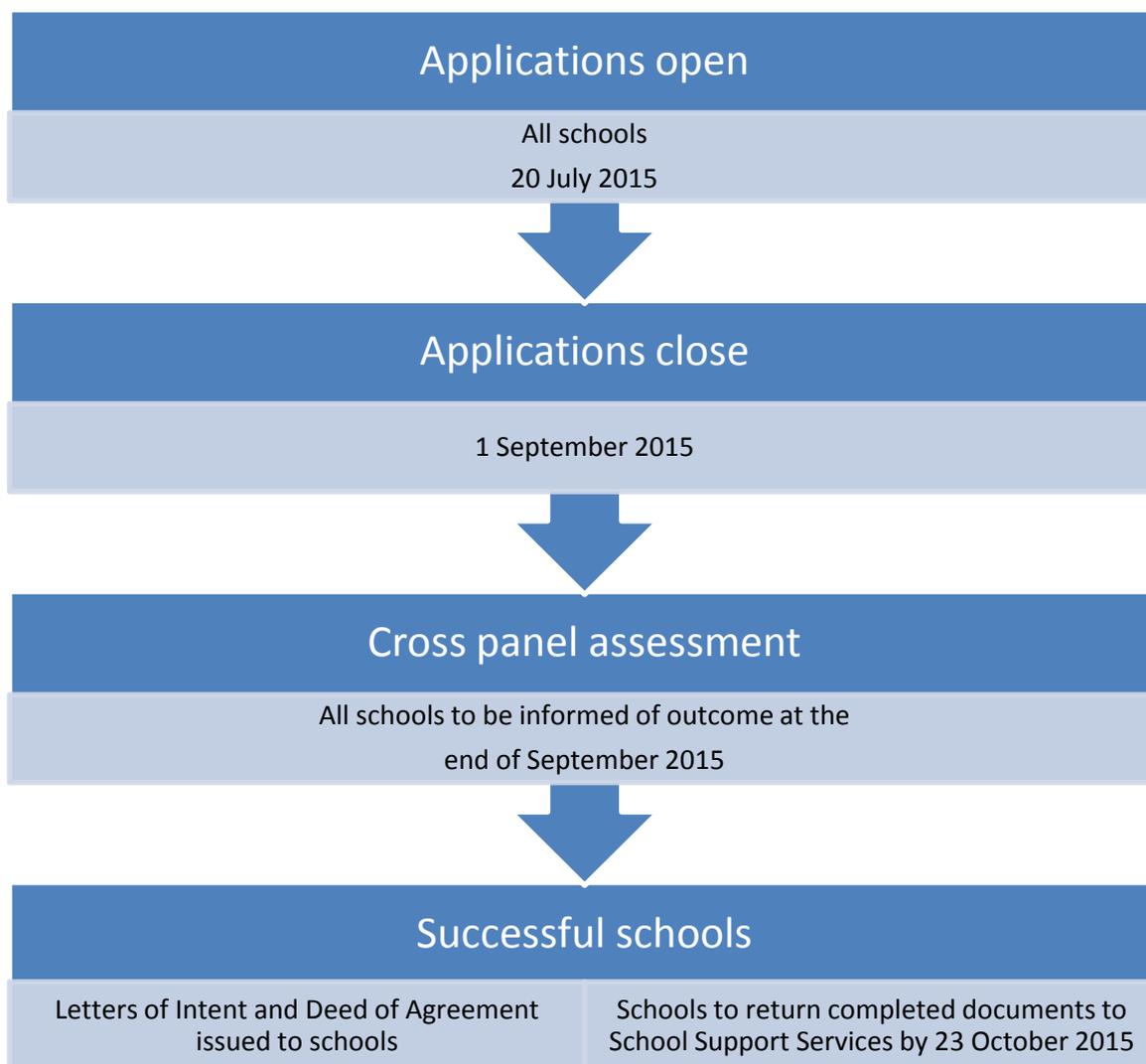
In accordance with the terms of the "Project Agreement for the National School Chaplaincy Programme", entered into between the Commonwealth and the Northern Territory through its Department of Education, the Territory has formed a cross sector panel ("the Panel") with members from the Northern Territory Government (NTG), Catholic Education Office, the Association of Independent Schools and NT Christian Schools.

The Panel operates under the Terms of Reference (Attachment B refers).

## APPLICATION PROCESS

In Semester 2, 2015, all schools will be invited to submit applications to be considered for funding to implement the chaplaincy programme during the 2016 to 2018 school years.

**Figure 1: Process overview for 2016 - 2018 funding years**



### Application opening and closing dates

**Table 1: Application opening and closing dates for the 2016 to 2018 programme**

Opening date	Closing date
Monday 20 July 2015	Tuesday 1 September 2015

Schools should use the application form provided (Attachment C refers) and read the following information to assist with the application process. Schools should only submit one application form per school.

Schools that do not lodge an application by the final due date will not be considered by the Panel for NSCP funding.

Please note that in order to avoid any delays in processing, schools should ensure they have demonstrated that consultation with the school community has occurred in order to confirm support for the NSCP. This must include compiling evidence of parent body support such as meeting notes from the parent body or school equivalent confirming support for the service.

### **How to apply**

Complete all sections of the application form.

Please ensure that all the required information to support the application is provided to enable the panel to make an assessment.

Send completed forms and supporting documentation to [policy.decs@nt.gov.au](mailto:policy.decs@nt.gov.au) by the close of business in the above table.

**Please retain a copy of your application.**

## **ASSESSMENT PROCESS**

The Panel will assess all eligible applications against the assessment criteria (Attachment D refers). Final decisions on funding for each school group will be made after the closing date and after all applications have been assessed.

### **Successful applicants**

Successful schools will be notified by email and given Letters of Intent and Deeds of Agreement to complete. Emails will be sent to the email address for the school principal provided in the application form. Schools must complete and return the Letter of Intent and Deed of Agreement to the department ([policy.decs@nt.gov.au](mailto:policy.decs@nt.gov.au)) or their sector administration, with a copy of the signed Code of Conduct for School Chaplains. On receipt of the completed documents the department will process payment of the grant to the school.

Schools cannot begin accessing services until they receive confirmation that funding has been approved.

### **Unsuccessful applicants**

Those schools which lodged a NSCP application by the closing date, but were not successful in securing funding will be advised of the outcome in writing.

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **The Australian Government**

The Australian Government will:

- provide funding for the programme to the NT Government
- evaluate programme outcomes.

## **The Northern Territory Department of Education**

The department has overall responsibility for the administration of the NSCP through:

- developing and updating programme requirements as required
- making payments in accordance with the Letter of Intent
- monitoring adherence with Deeds of Agreement
- ensuring that funding is properly acquitted and accounted for
- managing programme funds, policy and performance.

## **The Cross Sector Panel**

The Panel will:

- confirm the application, selection, implementation and reporting processes across sectors
- agree and utilise assessment criteria for the selection of schools to receive funding under the NSCP
- provide advice on provider qualification requirements
- participate in the programme evaluation process
- facilitate implementation of the NSCP in NT schools
- monitor and review progress of individual services as informed by sector representatives.

## **School chaplains**

School chaplains will:

- ensure they adhere to the requirements of these guidelines, the Code of Conduct (Attachment A refers) and the Deed of Agreement (Attachment E refers)
- be responsible for ensuring that chaplaincy services or programmes are not delivered to students who have not opted in to the programme
- maintain adequate records as required by the school, particularly in relation to one-on-one sessions with students. These must be made available to parents if required
- be responsible for ensuring that they only access relevant personal information relating to students who have parental permission to participate in the programme.

## **School principals**

School principals will:

- in consultation with the school council, consult widely and provide information to parents about the proposed chaplaincy service prior to implementation (the school council's support for the service must be formally recorded in meeting minutes)
- ensure that the services provided by the chaplain are consistent with the chaplain's qualifications, that the chaplain has a current NT Working with Children Clearance (Ochre Card) and that the chaplain abides by the Code of Conduct
- be responsible for programme reporting, maintaining records as required by the Deed of Agreement.

School principals are also required to identify potential risks with programme delivery; develop and maintain an ongoing 'Risk Management Plan' which identifies mitigating actions; and report if required to their sector's governing body. Any risk management plan must include strategies to address the possibility of the following areas as a minimum:

- resignation of school chaplain
- poor performance of school chaplain
- prolonged absence of school chaplain
- mismatch of school chaplain to school community needs
- alternate strategies/activities for students if they do not opt-in, or specifically opt-out of activities

- complaints received against the school chaplain
- concerns with the school chaplain service provider relationship and/or service delivery
- diminished school community support for the school chaplain (person and/or role)
- minority opposition for the continuation of the programme by members of the school community.

### **Service providers or employing agency**

Service providers are the employing bodies of school chaplains (not the school council).

Service providers are responsible for:

- recruitment and selection of the school chaplain in consultation with the school principal (the service provider must seek the school principal's endorsement of the school chaplain)
- ensuring adequate induction is provided for school chaplains prior to commencement within a school, including all role requirements and boundaries as per the programme requirements and the Code of Conduct
- ensuring, where applicable, that school chaplains obtain minimum qualifications and keeping evidence of these qualifications
- ensuring that school chaplains and any service provider staff who may come into contact with children, have appropriate NT Working with Children (Ochre Card) checks in place and keeping evidence of these clearances
- monitoring of the school chaplain role in consultation with the school principal
- maintenance of required insurances.

## **FEEDBACK AND COMPLAINT PROCEDURES**

### **Complaints**

All education sectors understand that effective complaints procedures can be an important mechanism for identifying where policy and administration can be strengthened. Complaints procedures are also essential to identify situations where individuals are experiencing concerns and/or problems in receiving services or engaging with the programme. As the school principal has an overall duty of care and is ultimately responsible for all students and staff within the school setting, all complaints about the school chaplain or chaplaincy service within the school should be directed to the school principal, or a complaints officer designated by the school principal, in the first instance.

### **Roles and responsibilities**

#### ***School chaplain***

In relation to complaints management, the school chaplain must:

- immediately report any complaints relating to the delivery of the programme to the school principal and the service provider
- cooperate fully with any investigation into a complaint/alleged breach of the Code of Conduct.

#### ***School principal***

In relation to complaints management, the school principal must:

- work with the service provider and/or their education sector administration to manage and resolve complaints received about the operation of the programme in that school
- ensure there is a designated complaints officer (the school principal may choose to take on this role) to manage and resolve complaints received about the operation of the

programme in that school. In appointing a complaints officer the school principal retains overall responsibility for the management of the programme in the school

- maintain a risk management plan which includes strategies to address complaints made against the school chaplain
- ensure that effective complaints handling protocols, including the maintenance of a complaints log, are in place to notify service providers of all complaints or issues that may arise
- refer all Code of Conduct matters and significant complaints to the service provider
- inform their education sector administration where a complaint arises in relation to programme delivery.

### ***Education sector administration***

Each education sector (NT Government, Catholic, Christian and Independent) in partnership with the Panel, is responsible for investigating complaints that are within the scope of these programme guidelines and according to their policy.

### ***Mandatory reporting***

Mandatory reporting laws specify those conditions under which an individual is legally required to make a report to the statutory child protection service in their jurisdiction. Further details and information about mandatory reporting can be obtained on the [department web site](#), each sector's administration and from [Territory Families](#).

## **FUNDING**

### **Introduction**

Funding is available for government and non-government schools to engage a service provider to employ a school chaplain.

Chaplaincy services funded under this programme may commence from the beginning of the school year for which funding is approved, but only following the signing of a Letter of Intent by the school principal, (which confirms the amount of annual funding allocated), a Deed of Agreement by all nominated parties and the Code of Conduct signed by the chaplain. The completed forms must be returned to [policy.decs@nt.gov.au](mailto:policy.decs@nt.gov.au) at School Support Services. The date on the Deed should be left blank and this will be completed when the Deed is signed by the Executive Director School Support Services.

Schools will not receive any funding prior to the proper execution of the Deed of Agreement by all parties and Deeds of Agreement cannot be backdated. The school cannot use funds provided under the programme for chaplaincy services that have been provided prior to the signing of an agreement.

The programme requires an annual report which confirms that the service provided during the school year met the programme requirements. An annual financial acquittal is also required (Attachment F refers).

Grant funds will be paid to schools initially following completion of the Letter of Intent and Deed of Agreement and then annually, following receipt of updated Letters of Intent, school progress reports and financial acquittals at School Support Services.

## **Funding arrangements**

The school will be paid according to details provided on their NTG Vendor Identification Number.

## **Delay in Deed of Agreement execution**

If the proper execution of a Deed of Agreement or Letter of Intent is delayed up to and including 30 June in the year of the applicable funding grant, the service provider, in consultation with the school, can determine whether it still believes it can deliver the full annual service allocation, e.g. 400 hours, over the remainder of the year, and must provide details to the Panel of how they intend to provide the service allocation in the shortened time frame. If the Panel is not satisfied that the service provider can provide the entire service allocation or a significant proportion of the service allocation within the shortened timeframe, the Panel can withdraw its offer of funding to the school.

## **Gaps in service**

If a school has had a gap in service within the calendar year due to the resignation of a school chaplain and there is a delay in sourcing a replacement, excess service hours/funds can only be utilised by:

- increasing the school chaplain's service hours, for example providing full time services for a designated period, to ensure no underspend for that calendar year and/or
- employing an additional school chaplain to provide additional service hours during the calendar year and/or
- utilising the services of an existing school chaplain in the school, who is not funded by the NSCP, to provide additional service hours that meets the programme requirements, by increasing their operational hours in addition to work they are providing under their current role.

## **Change of chaplain**

If a school chaplain is unable to complete the agreed term of chaplaincy service, the school must seek panel approval of the proposed replacement chaplain by sending evidence to [policy.decs@nt.gov.au](mailto:policy.decs@nt.gov.au) that the proposed replacement has appropriate qualifications and meets all the programme requirements.

School Support Services will issue a fresh Deed of Agreement to be signed by all parties when the replacement chaplain is approved.

## **Use of funds**

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

Funding can only be used in the calendar year for which the payment is made. Funding provided for a particular year cannot be 'rolled over' to subsequent years. Any unused entitlement must be repaid.

## **Unacceptable use of funds**

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

- any costs incurred by the school prior to 1 January 2016 and prior to the proper execution of a Deed of Agreement
- the purchase of religious education or religious training packages and the purchase of goods related to these activities
- the purchase of capital items, assets or resources including, but not limited to capital works, vehicles, computers and text books
- any existing programmes or support mechanisms that are already funded by alternate funding sources
- provision of services to other unfunded schools
- reallocation of funds between schools, that is, transference of unspent funds from one school to another, including schools that have a deficit.

## **PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT**

### **Participation/voluntary nature of the programme**

It is not compulsory for any student to participate in activities or receive services from a NSCP school chaplain.

Parents/caregivers 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.

### **Consent arrangements**

Schools must engage in meaningful consultation with the school community, through the school council, prior to implementing a chaplaincy programme.

Parental consent forms for a student's engagement with chaplaincy services must be completed annually, recorded appropriately and abided.

Schools must put in place local school procedures to ensure that school chaplains are not party to information relating to non-participating students.

### **Minimum qualifications and requirements for employment as a school chaplain**

Given the range of possible tasks that a school chaplain may be required to undertake in delivering chaplaincy services, and that they are positions of trust, it is necessary to ensure they have a minimum level of skills to provide these support services.

School chaplains also need to have a highly developed ability to identify relevant issues and conduct appropriate referrals in each circumstance where required. As they can often be the first port of call for individuals needing assistance, detailed knowledge of relevant and available services and when they should be used, as well as a keen awareness of their own professional limitations, is a fundamental part of the role.

**School chaplains must have a minimum Certificate IV in Youth Work or Pastoral Care or equivalent qualification. The minimum qualification must include mental health related and making appropriate referrals unit/s of competency.**

Schools and service providers will be required to keep evidence of school chaplains' qualifications and provide the details to their education sector administration prior to the

commencement of the chaplain in the programme. In addition to minimum qualification requirements, this process includes a signed Code of Conduct and verification of current NT Working with Children Clearance (Ochre Card).

The Panel may request to view evidence of qualifications and outcomes of assessments.

A school 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
- have a current NT Working with Children Clearance.

### **School chaplains holding other qualifications**

Where a school chaplain funded under this programme holds an equivalent or higher qualification to the Certificate IV in Youth Work or Pastoral Care, in a different but related field (e.g. education, psychology etc), the Panel will determine if that qualification is appropriate.

### **NT Working with Children Clearance (Ochre Card)**

Prior to participation in this programme, all school chaplains and service provider personnel who may come into contact with children under this programme must have a current relevant NT Working with Children Clearance (Ochre card) as required under the *Care and Protection of Children Act*.

School principals are responsible for ensuring currency of the NT Working with Children Clearance.

Where an allegation of sexual misconduct emerges, the school principal is responsible for:

- informing and seeking advice from their education sector administration
- mandatory reporting to the Department of Children and Families as required under NT legislation
- reporting and seeking advice from the Northern Territory Police.

Sexual misconduct is defined in Department of Education [policy](#) and guidelines.

### **Privacy and confidentiality**

The school is responsible for keeping a record of all reports and considerations which are part of the screening process of the chaplain. All records and information pertaining to an applicant's criminal history check are highly sensitive information and must be treated in strict confidence.

Files containing such information must be accessed by only those people who have the need to know and stored in a secure place to ensure that a reasonable level of security is maintained at all times.

### **Governance structures**

Local governance arrangements must include accountability structures to support the delivery of the programme, ensure compliance with the Deed of Agreement, and outline clear responsibilities for:

- overseeing the performance of school chaplain
- risk management

- dispute resolution processes
- financial management, including annual operational and financial planning and auditing processes
- communication management with the school and the department
- fraud prevention strategies.

## **MONITORING AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

### **Progress reports and financial acquittals**

Schools will be required to report on their achievement of the following requirements:

- participation by schools and students is voluntary
- chaplains may be from any faith
- chaplains must:
  - 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 qualification requirements.

Progress reports and financial acquittals must be completed on the template provided (Attachment F refers) and cover all calendar year service from 1 January to 31 December (or part thereof) during each school year.

In addition to the above requirements, all schools and service providers must ensure that they have complaints and grievance resolution processes in place. Schools must advise their educational sector administration about complaints that they have received relating to the funded chaplaincy service and how the issue has been resolved by the school.

### **Monitoring**

Progress monitoring of this programme is undertaken by the Panel and department's staff 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 conditions of the Deed of Agreement.

### **Visits to monitor compliance**

The Panel may be required to visit schools as a result of a complaint during the period of the Deed of Agreement. Monitoring visits provide an opportunity for the Panel to ensure that the delivery of chaplaincy in schools meets the requirements of the Deed of Agreement and Code of Conduct.

### **Desktop monitoring**

The Panel may also conduct desktop monitoring to oversee programme delivery. Schools may be requested to provide additional information throughout the funding period. This may include, but is not limited to:

- evidence of school 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.

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

### **National agreement**

The Commonwealth Project Agreement has been signed by all states and territories and is publicly available on the [Council on Federal Financial Relations website](#).

### **Freedom of Information**

All documents in the possession of the department, including those in relation to the programme, are subject to the [Freedom of Information Act 1982](#) (FOI Act). Decisions regarding requests for access will be made by an authorised freedom of information decision-maker in accordance with the requirements of the FOI Act.

### **Privacy**

The department is bound, in administering the programme, by the provisions of the [Privacy Act 1988 \(Privacy Act\)](#).

Personal information collected on the application form will be used by the Panel for the purpose of administering the NSCP. The Panel may also use this personal information for reporting and evaluation of the NSCP and use personal contact details collected on the application form in future correspondence with schools.

The department and/or the NT Minister for Education may disclose personal information collected on the application form to media organisations and post on the Minister's and department websites details of any successful schools funded under the NSCP. This may include the publication of the name of the principal and/or representative of the successful school.

The department will not otherwise use or disclose, without consent, personal information collected on this form unless authorised or required by law.

## GLOSSARY

**Applicant** is a person who applies either for a casual, temporary, or permanent school chaplaincy position.

**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 programme guidelines.

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

**Programme** refers to the National School Chaplaincy Programme.

**Opt-in** is a requirement to obtain parental permission for the student to access one-on-one and specialised programmes 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 programme, 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
  - 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 programme, 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.

## **Attachments**

- **Code of Conduct for school chaplains**
- **Cross sector panel terms of reference**
- **Programme application form**
- **Programme application assessment criteria**
- **National School Chaplaincy Programme Deed of Agreement**
- **Acquittal template**

## **Acknowledgement**

Some of the information in this document has been sourced from the Australian Government National School Chaplaincy and Student Welfare Program Guidelines July 2012.