This document should be read in conjunction with the

* [Chaplaincy Services in Schools Guidelines](https://education.nt.gov.au/education/policies/chaplaincy-services-in-schools).
* [National School Chaplaincy Program Handbook (Northern Territory)](https://education.nt.gov.au/education/policies/chaplaincy-services-in-schools).
1. **POLICY**

Schools in the Northern Territory (NT) may, after appropriate consultation with their school community, appoint a chaplain to support the provision of pastoral care and emotional wellbeing programs. Other than Australian Government funding distributed by the department through the National School Chaplaincy Program (NSCP), appointment of a chaplain must be at no cost to the department.

All school chaplains must, at no cost to the school or department, be subject to a criminal history check and satisfy the departmental requirements for working with children. Qualified school chaplains must agree to adhere to the Code of Conduct for School Chaplains and, in conjunction with their Employing Agency, enter into a Deed of Agreement with the relevant school council and the department.

The school principal is responsible for the day-to-day management of the school chaplain and for the development and implementation of a risk management plan.

Chaplains may participate in general school activities. However, prior to engaging a chaplain in these activities, consideration must be given to whether their involvement could be more appropriately undertaken by a parent volunteer.

**Services offered by chaplains**

In addition to being recognised through formal ordination, commissioning, recognised religious qualifications or endorsement by a recognised or accepted religious institution and having a current NT Working with Children Clearance, school chaplains must meet the following minimum qualifications:

* Certificate IV in Youth Work, or
* Certificate IV in Pastoral Care, or
* equivalent qualification as approved by the department (equivalent qualification must include competencies in “mental health” and “making appropriate referrals”).

The services provided by school chaplains 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 school chaplains.

Student participation in any specialised programs or support services offered by school chaplains must operate as an opt-in arrangement at all times. This includes activities that may be led by other school staff with support from school chaplains.

All services offered by the chaplain must be conducted in an appropriate environment where a staff member is able to observe what occurs.

**Parental permission**

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

Parents must provide written consent for their child to participate in the chaplaincy program if students are to participate.

Parents must be provided with the opportunity to review consent for their child to participate in services offered by the chaplain annually, and when there is a change to the chaplain or their program of services.

Parental permission must be recorded on up-to-date class and whole school registers through the Student Administration Management System (SAMS) and with hard copies retained as per the department’s general disposal schedule for school records and storage procedures.

Students who have parental permission to participate in services offered by the school chaplain should be removed from class to attend the respective sessions. Schools should schedule these sessions in consideration of student educational needs.

**One-on-one services offered by chaplains**

Student safety and duty of care obligations are paramount when determining whether one-on-one chaplaincy services will be offered as part of the school chaplain’s role.

Provision of one-on-one chaplaincy services requires:

* the written approval of the principal and parent in each case
* a venue on school premises where school staff are able to observe the conduct of the session
* appropriate records of the session to be created and filed on the student’s school file.

Records of one-on-one sessions must include details of:

* who was involved in the session
* where and when the session took place
* what were the main topics of discussion and any outcomes.

If all these requirements are not able to be met, one-on-one chaplaincy services must not be offered as part of the school chaplain’s role.

1. **BUSINESS NEED**

This policy is required to ensure and support all NT Government schools to appropriately and consistently plan and implement the delivery of school chaplaincy services, including the Australian Government funded NSCP.

Chaplain services is an optional addition to a school’s wellbeing services and should complement other student support services provided by the school.

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1. **SCOPE**

This policy applies to all NT Government schools, including independent public schools.

Non-government schools accessing funding through the NSCP must agree to the conditions set out in the National School Chaplaincy Program Handbook (NT) and the corresponding Deed of Agreement.

1. **RELATED POLICY, LEGISLATION AND DOCUMENTS**

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| **Departmental**  | [Chaplaincy Services in Schools Guidelines](https://education.nt.gov.au/education/policies/chaplaincy-services-in-schools)[Permission for Student to Participate in Chaplaincy Program](https://education.nt.gov.au/education/policies/chaplaincy-services-in-schools) (form)[Code of Conduct for School Chaplains (form)](https://education.nt.gov.au/education/policies/chaplaincy-services-in-schools)[Risk Management Plan for Chaplain Program in Schools (template)](https://education.nt.gov.au/education/policies/chaplaincy-services-in-schools)[Complaints Management in Schools Policy and Guidelines](https://education.nt.gov.au/education/policies/complaints)[Working with Children Clearance Notices](https://education.nt.gov.au/education/policies/working-with-children-clearance-notices-ochre-cards) Policy and Fact Sheet[Mandatory Reporting of Harm and Exploitation of Children Guidelines](https://education.nt.gov.au/education/policies/mandatory-reporting-of-harm-and-exploitation-of-children)[National School Chaplaincy Program webpage](https://education.nt.gov.au/education/policies/chaplaincy-services-in-schools)  |
| **Northern Territory**  | [Care and Protection of Children Act 2007](https://legislation.nt.gov.au/Legislation/CARE-AND-PROTECTION-OF-CHILDREN-ACT-2007) [Information Act 2002](https://legislation.nt.gov.au/Search/~/link.aspx?_id=4D99D82B6DD84A25803F908C3258C004&amp;_z=z)[Anti-Discrimination Act 1992](https://legislation.nt.gov.au/Search/~/link.aspx?_id=CC1A6ED73BDE459085AD903F88351258&amp;_z=z) [Effective Complaints Management Fact Sheets](http://www.ombudsman.nt.gov.au/agencies/effective-complaints-management-fact-sheets) (Ombudsman NT) |
| **National** |  [National School Chaplaincy Program Project Agreement](http://www.federalfinancialrelations.gov.au/content/npa/education/project-agreement/National_School_Chaplaincy_Program-20181221.pdf) (Australian Government) |

1. **EVALUATION**

Student Wellbeing and Inclusion will, in collaboration with the regions and schools, evaluate the application and effectiveness of the policy on a two yearly basis using quantitative and qualitative data analysis (including feedback from stakeholders).

Principals and school governing bodies are responsible for ensuring policy compliance and ongoing evaluation of performance at the operational level.