

SPECIAL RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY and PROCEDURES

for Wesleyan Methodist Religious Education Teachers

in New South Wales

Background

Special Religious Education (SRE) is part of the holistic education of children by supporting their ethical, moral and spiritual development. This education is provided by The Wesleyan Methodist Church in New South Wales for the children of parents who express the desire that their children receive such teaching.

Section 32 of the Education Act 1990 requires that 'in every government school, time is to be allowed for the religious education of children of any religious persuasion'.

The Department of Education (DoE) oversees this provision of the Act in schools.

The New South Wales District of the Wesleyan Methodist Church (NSWD) is a registered provider of SRE.

The WMC has a National website <https://wesleyan.org.au/>. A part of this site contains the NSW District ministries including details of the SRE provision.

Policy Guidelines

In 2015, a review of SRE in NSW Government Schools was conducted. Our policy responds to those recommendations.

1. The WMC has placed on the NSW District section of the WMC National Website this document which contains a sufficiently detailed description of the processes we use to authorise our SRE teachers and the minimum requirements, qualifications and basic training we require of our SRE teachers.
2. The WMC conducts regular audits of SRE teaching and the use of approved (authorised) curriculum and reports the results of the audits and any efforts to address any identified issues.
3. The WMC participates in a combined arrangement, to:
 - a. assist with development of shared guidelines/understanding of requirements
 - b. develop common minimum standards for authorisation of teachers to increase the confidence of schools and parents that the person is known, suitable and adequately prepared.
4. The WMC has provided access to the curriculum scope and sequence in sufficient detail for parents/caregivers and schools to be able to understand what is covered in SRE lessons.
5. The role of the SRE teacher is described in the Role Description found in Appendix B.
6. Our complaints policy and procedures are available on the WMC National website.
7. The WMC supports
 - a. basic training for all SRE teachers and
 - b. more regular on-going training and greater support including mentoring and observation of individual SRE teachers' practices



8. The WMC utilises the SRE Curriculum Godspace: <https://godspace.org.au/curriculum/> and
9. SRE teachers complete an annual Authorisation Declaration form. The Declaration, see Appendix A, is scanned and submitted to sre.coordinator@wesleyan.org.au in December.

Procedural Guidelines

The submission of the annual assurance in January to the DoE includes

1. confirmation of compliance with Child Protection (Working with Children)
2. verification that SRE teachers have Working With Children Check (WWCC) current clearance
3. an annual review of SRE teaching and the implementation of the curriculum

The recruitment, training, ongoing support and management is provided by

1. the completion of the Authorisation and Renewal Declaration form found in Appendix A.
2. informing the school of the names, contact details and date of birth of SRE teachers
3. the provision of a name badge for SRE teachers that includes our denominational identification, "Wesleyan Methodist Church", and is worn at all times on the school site
4. the provision of an authorisation card that must be carried when on school property
5. an initial training program when first appointed that includes
 - a. child protection
 - b. classroom management
 - c. curriculum implementation
6. annual training that includes
 - a. People Protection and Risk Management training
 - b. Code of Conduct training
7. Mentoring that includes
 - a. the observation and provision of feedback of one lesson per year by a colleague SRE teacher or a church pastor using the observation sheet in Appendix C.

The management of curriculum and pedagogy is provided by

- a. authorising the uses of resources and appropriate pedagogy
- b. providing access to the curriculum scope and sequence
- c. providing the school with the link address <https://wesleyan.org.au/new-south-wales/> to access SRE resources
- d. responding to enquiries regarding the content of lessons

The management of complaints is supported by

- a. the flowchart listed in Appendix D
- b. the Complaint Handling Policy on the National Website



The NSWDC may enter into a combined arrangement with another approved provider with

- a. one provider authorising the SRE teacher, curriculum and pedagogy.



APPENDIX A: SRE Teacher's Authorisation and Renewal Declaration

Name (as on WWCC card):		WWCC number:	
Date of Birth:		Gender:	
Address:			
Phone No(s):		Email address:	
Home Church:		Pastor's name:	
Qualifications and relevant training:			

Undertakings:

1. I continue to be an active member of my home church as listed above.
2. I feel called to serve in this ministry.
3. I agree to undertake the role of Special Religious Education (SRE) teacher in accordance with
 - a. the constitution of the Wesleyan Methodist Church (WMC), "The Handbook",
 - b. the WMC policies, "Policies and Procedures of the Wesleyan Methodist Church" and
 - c. the Position Description, Religious Education Teacher.
4. I agree to undertake the role with respect to Department of Education (DoE) policies including
 - a. Section 32 of Education Act
 - b. Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012
5. I declare that I
 - a. am not a person prohibited from undertaking child-related employment
 - b. have no criminal conviction for a crime against a minor, violence, sexual assault or providing prohibited drugs
 - c. will immediately advise the SRE Coordinator of any allegation related to a. and b. above.

Training completed in preparation to be a SRE teacher or in-service training within the last twelve months

Topic	Course name	Provider	Date completed
Accreditation Course	Creating Safe Spaces	http://creatingsafespaces.org.au/	
CCSM prescribed training			
Child Protection and Risk Management			
Code of Conduct			
Classroom Management			
Other training			
Teaching Observation	Lesson Observation and Feedback		

I declare that the information provided is correct and that I agree to conform to the undertakings.



Signatures and date (Scan and email to sre.coordinator@wesleyan.org.au when signed by both)

SRE Teacher	Sponsoring Pastor as Witness



APPENDIX B: – SRE Teacher Role Description

Overview:

This position is an appointed position of the Special Religious Education (SRE) Coordinator and is subject to the regulations of the SRE program, “The Handbook”, the Wesleyan Methodist Church (WMC) “Policies and Procedures of the Wesleyan Methodist Church” and the SRE Policies and Procedures.

The SRE teacher:

- is a covenant member of the WMC and lives a life that will inspire children to holy living.
- is active in the life of their home church through regular attendance at church services and functions.
- is recommended by their home church pastor and is accountable as a representative of the church for this ministry in the community.
- must be committed to the safety and welfare of the children who participate in the SRE lessons.
- must recognise their role in representing their church and the WMC and act as an ambassador in the preservation and enhancement of the reputation of the WMC.
- must respect the position of trust that they have been given and respect the privacy of information and situations that they may become aware of in the undertaking of the role.

Duties of the SRE teacher:

- prepare weekly lessons using the approved curriculum
- present lesson to students within the allocated time
- restore learning space
- undertake activities in a manner that is informed by WMC policy
- maintain good governance of all children in your care
- conduct a risk assessment for activities to minimise the chance of any form of injury
- be familiar with the emergency response processes of the school

Skills, abilities and attributes required to be successful in the role:

- demonstrated mature faith and personal integrity
- capacity to monitor the participation of student and be accountable to the home church for the ministry
- capacity to lead by spiritual example
- capacity to use resources in a responsible, safe and effective manner
- capacity to develop and sustain effective and appropriate interpersonal relationships with children
- capacity to anticipate and be adaptive and responsive to the changing needs of the school
- capacity to focus activity that supports the Great Commission

Further information:

An SRE Teacher’s Authorisation and Renewal Declaration must be approved as meeting requirements before taking up duty and then every year lodged before the 31 December for approval before the start of term one.



Prescribed training must be completed before taking up duty.

A probationary period with a review after three months will be undertaken.

The appointment is always up to 31 December and is made every year after SRE Teacher's Authorisation and Renewal Declaration, the Lesson Observation – SRE Teacher Feedback, input from the home church pastor are considered by the SRE Coordinator.

The engagement of the SRE Teacher can be terminated at any time for any reason by the SRE Coordinator



APPENDIX C: Lesson Observation – SRE Teacher Feedback

The observation of a SRE Teacher’s lesson is required each year. This provides the opportunity for construction feedback from and observer and for reflection on practices. The goal is to reinforce good practice and identify areas for focussed development in the future.

SRE Teacher’s name		Date:	
Observer’s name:		School:	
		Class:	

Observation Checklist: H – highly competent M – moderately successful L - less successful

	H,M,L		H,M,L
Was the lesson well prepared?		Was the teacher appropriately dressed?	
Did the lesson content reflect the approved curriculum?		Was the lesson at an appropriate level to the developmental age of the students?	
Was the lesson introduction engaging?		Was the classroom well managed?	
Did the body of lesson flow well?		Did the teacher present the lesson confidently?	
Did the lesson conclusion round off the learning content?		Did the pedagogy promote student participation?	
Did the lesson engage the interest of most students?		Were the lesson learning objectives achieved?	

What are the teaching strengths?
What aspects are lesser strengths?

SRE teacher’s self-reflection on the lesson
SRE teacher’s developmental goal for the next twelve months.

Signatures and date (Scan and email to sre.coordinator@wesleyan.org.au when signed by both)

SRE Teacher	Lesson Observer



APPENDIX D: Complaint Handling Flow Chart

Process for resolving a concern or complaint from the school.

School Principal advises SRE Coordinator of the issue

Issue can be resolved by SRE Coordinator

SRE Coordinator discusses issue with SRE teacher to understand situation and determine appropriate action

feedback of action taken given to complainant

SRE Coordinator and SRE teacher and school principal formulate a response

Implement of response plan

complainant is satisfied that the matter is resolved

Principal to take action appropriate to their accountability



Curriculum Overview

GodSpace <https://godspace.org.au/curriculum/>

Big Questions <https://www.cepstore.com.au/IdaSearchAYW?menu=Primary+School&submenu=Big+Questions>

References

Religious Education Policy

<https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/policies/pd-2002-0074>

Special religious education procedures

<https://education.nsw.gov.au/content/dam/main-education/policy-library/associated-documents/REimplementproced.pdf>

Other activities of a religious nature in schools

<https://education.nsw.gov.au/content/dam/main-education/policy-library/associated-documents/Other-activities-of-a-religious-nature-in-schools.pdf>

Training and Development Resources

WMC <https://wesleyan.org.au/>

- Code of Conduct 1
- Code of Conduct 2
- People Protection & Risk Management – Leaders Training
- Policies and Procedures of the Wesleyan Methodist Church
- People Protection and Risk Management
- Annual Appraisal and Development – self-reflection tool

Other Providers

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