



National School Chaplaincy Program

Rationale

The National School Chaplaincy Program (NSCP) aims to assist school communities to provide pastoral care and general spiritual, social and emotional comfort to all students, irrespective of their faith or beliefs.

Background

The Bulahdelah Central School Community has had the services of a school chaplain since 2012, employed under a federal government initiative. The community chose to continue this program, throughout 2015, funded by the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations under the National School Chaplaincy program. This funding is administered by the Department of Education and Communities. In October 2014, the NSW government and the Commonwealth government signed a “Project Agreement for the National School Chaplaincy Program” (**Commonwealth Chaplaincy Program Agreement**)

Also, in 2014, there were some changes to the chaplaincy program, significantly the position is now faith based and no longer has a secular option. Funding provides for an addition to the staff for 9.5 hours per week.

The school chaplain works closely with the Head Teacher Welfare, Mr Warren Jones. The school chaplain is paid for 380hrs per year.

A school chaplain’s role is to support the emotional wellbeing of students by providing pastoral care services and strategies that support the emotional wellbeing of the broader school community. Pastoral care is defined in the NSCP Agreement as “the practice of looking after the personal needs of students, not just their academic needs, through the provision of general spiritual and personal advice.”

Participation in any program or service conducted by the school chaplain is voluntary. Families may opt out by contacting the Head Teacher Welfare or the relevant Deputy Principal.

Roles and Responsibilities

- Operate within and promote core values in NSW public schools (integrity, excellence, respect, responsibility, cooperation, participation, care, fairness, democracy).
- Respond to referrals from staff and school welfare team with a view to providing care and support.
- Provide comfort and appropriate referral in times of grief and other critical events.
- Support whole school student wellbeing initiatives eg School camps, assemblies.
- Support students and staff in their learning environments eg Tutorial centre, classes and sport with prior approval of the supporting teacher/s.
- Respond to student queries about spirituality, respecting their family's convictions.
- Refer students, families and staff to appropriate welfare resources in line with student wellbeing protocols.
- Attending Parents & Citizens' or equivalent parent body meetings to provide details of the program and the services that are available.
- Keep a record of all notes relating to students in a secure place. Email copy of notes to HT Welfare to be uploaded to Sentral.

What don't school chaplains do?

When delivering services in connection with the agreement, school chaplains must adhere to the NSW DEC Code of Conduct and the terms of the agreement.

Services provided during funded hours must not include:

- Attempting to convert students to a religion or set of beliefs through proselytising/evangelising.
- Initiating faith discussions with a view to coercing or manipulating students to a particular spiritual belief. A school chaplain must not take advantage of his or her privileged position to proselytise, evangelise or advocate for a particular view or spiritual belief.
- Attempting to undermine students' or parents' religious or other beliefs.
- Using other methods such as social media (eg blogs, Facebook) or newsletters and school website, to proselytise/evangelise to students within their school.
- Providing professional support services, for example, counselling or legal or medical advice, unless:
 - o Appropriately qualified to do so
 - o Doing so is consistent with relevant DEC policies and procedures.
- Providing support to students who have indicated that they do not wish to access the services of a school chaplain.

- Performing religious services/rites, without the appropriate prior consent.
- Expressing views that are discriminatory or biased on the grounds of religious ideology, beliefs or sexuality.

Qualifications & Engagement Process:

The School Chaplain will need to meet the employment qualifications as outlined by the DEC in the document: National School Chaplaincy Program (2015). Initially the appointment is for the 2015 school year. It is then anticipated that a three year funding allocation will be provided and a longer appointment can be made, if so agreed to, after consultation with the school community.

The School Chaplain will be subject to all the required checks as outline by DEC in the document: National Chaplaincy Program. Generate Ministries will be responsible for conducting those checks and providing evidence of the outcome to the school Principal.

The selection of the appropriate person for the role of School Chaplain will be a joint responsibility between the school and the approved provider. An application and interview will be part of the process.

Complaints Procedure

The School Chaplain is subject to the Code of Conduct outlined by the DEC. Any complaints about the performance of the School Chaplain will be handled according to the DEC Complaints procedure, in consultation with the provider. Initial concerns would be raised with the School Principal or Head Teacher Welfare, as the direct supervisor of the School Chaplain. This process would include consultation with the chaplaincy provider. In this way the School Chaplain is considered similarly to any staff member.

Frequently Asked Questions:

What does 'Chaplain' mean? Chaplain = someone who provides care and comfort.

What does 'spiritual comfort' mean? Spiritual comfort = care and comfort provided in a manner sensitive to the students' needs at the time of care.

How can I find out about the program at BCS? Communication about the School Chaplain and their role will appear in the school newsletter in Term 1 each year and be permanently available on the school website.