Hindu Council of Australia

Teacher Authorisation Processes

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Australian Hindu Association

Teacher Authorisation Processes

Verification of WWCC Clearance

In keeping with current child protection legislation, all SRE teachers are required to apply for a WWCC and obtain a clearance number. Approved providers must keep relevant WWCC documents for five years after the employment or engagement has been completed.

Child Protection Training

It is an approved provider's responsibility to ensure that all SRE teachers have participated in an initial child protection induction and annual update. This is to ensure that SRE teachers are aware of their obligation to advise the principal or workplace manager of concerns about the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children and young people that arise during the course of their work. SRE teachers are mandatory reporters of suspected risk of significant harm and of the procedures for doing so.

Awareness of Department of Education's Code of Conduct

The Code of Conduct clarifies the standards of behaviour that is expected of all SRE teachers in the performance of their duties. It gives guidance in areas where staff need to make personal and ethical decisions.

Completion of Basic Training

SRE approved providers ensure that all SRE teachers have access to basic training standards. The basic training includes context, knowledge of authorised curriculum, classroom management and the importance of continued professional learning.

Statement in Relation to Specific Crimes

Each approved provider has given an undertaking that any SRE teacher authorised to enter NSW Government schools has not had a criminal conviction for any crime against a minor, a conviction for violence, sexual assault or for providing prohibited drugs.

Rationale: To increase public confidence and make more transparent what processes are used for the authorisation of teachers.

Code of Conduct

The Code of Conduct clarifies the standards of behaviour that is expected of all staff in the performance of their duties. It gives guidance in areas where staff need to make personal and ethical decisions.

1. Audience and applicability

The SRE Code of Conduct applies to all employees, volunteers, religious and lay people working on behalf of our organisation.

SRE teachers are to endorse the principles of current Child Protection Law and follow the Department of Education Religious Education Implementation Procedures as an essential responsibility. The SRE Code of Conduct will assist SRE teachers in understanding and fulfilling their legal and other responsibilities.

2. Context

We are committed to the highest standards of conduct in public education, training and administration. To meet this commitment, we have issued this single Code of Conduct to closely align staff conduct with the organisationalvalues and ethics that underpin our policies and procedures. This Code of Conductisto be aligned with the Department of Education's Code of Conduct: http://www.dec.nsw.gov.au/about-us/code-of-conduct

3. Legislative provisions

- Anti-Discrimination Act 1977
- Community Relations Commission and Principles of Multiculturalism Act 2000
- Crimes Act 1900
- Fair Work Act 2009
- Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009
- Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988
- Industrial Relations Act 1996
- Work Health and Safety Act 2011
- Ombudsman Act 1974
- Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998
- Public Interest Disclosures Act 1994

4. Expectations

As an employee or volunteer, you are required to be aware of all legislation, policies, procedures and work related to the role. The most relevant of these will be made available to you through induction and training. A requirement for people undertaking the role of SRE teacher is to engage in the relevant SRE training.

As a representative of our faith, you will be caring and compassionate towards the students in your class. In doing so you must set appropriate boundaries since you are in a position of authority and have a duty of care for students. There is an expectation that you will only use approved curriculum materials and age-appropriate resources for SRE lessons.

The Code touches on many significant issues relating to people working with children and young people. SRE teachers are representatives of our faith. Special Religious Education teachers who do not comply with the Code of Conduct could expect to be asked and expected to withdraw from SRE and their authorisation to teach will be revoked as well as the school and coordinator will be informed.

5. Reporting concerns about employee conduct

SRE teachers are to promote an atmosphere of respect for the classroom teacher and school personnel by their language and behaviour. All students are to be treated fairly. An interaction with a student which is discriminating, demeaning or belittling is not acceptable and constitutes a breach of the Code.

A breach in the Code of Conduct may initially be identified by a student, parent/carer, classroom teacher, SRE Coordinator or school staff who would then refer the matter to the authorising person. Our organisation must be notified of breaches of the Code and will determine the course of action that needs to be taken.

6. Respect for others

We are committed to creating a safe and friendly environment in which the children and young people in our care can grow and develop.

Behaviour, attitudes and language are an integral part of the SRE lesson. SRE teachers must not discriminate against or harass colleagues, students or members of the public on a number of grounds including gender, marital status, pregnancy, age, race, religion, culture, ethnic or national origin, physical or intellectual impairment or sexual preference or politics. Such harassment or discrimination may constitute an offence under the Anti-Discrimination Act 1977. SRE teachers need to be sensitive to gender, physical and intellectual differences and will therefore avoid language and activities which discriminate.

Respect and care: SRE teachers must always treat students with respect even when their behaviour may be difficult or challenging. There is no place for sarcasm, derogatory remarks, offensive comments or any conduct that may result in emotional distress or psychological harm to a child. Such behaviours include targeted and ongoing criticism, belittling or teasing, excessive or unreasonable demands, hostility, verbal abuse, threatening rejection or scapegoating and using inappropriate locations or social isolation.

SRE teachers need to be sensitive to the words they use, especially in the classroom, which make any assumptions about a child or young person's background, family status

and primary caregivers. The family takes many forms in today's society and SRE teachers must respect the support structures of the children and young people in their care.

Cultural awareness: SRE teachers need to be sensitive to cultures and traditions that are different from their own. They should not make statements, or behave in a way that demonstrates ignorance, bias or ridicule towards other denominations, religions or cultures.

School environment: Every school has a Discipline and Welfare Policy. SRE teachers must obtain a copy of the policy for the schools in which they work and adhere to the policy (see school website).

7. Duty of care

Duty of care is the legal obligation to provide reasonable care and not harm others. The care of children and young people begins with the attitude of SRE teachers to a variety of issues which can impact on those in our care. Duty of care includes, but is not limited to:

- Providing adequate supervision of SRE classes
- Ensuring a safe physical environment which is free from obstacles and obstructions and activities which may cause injury
- Reporting any bullying or harmful behaviour to school authorities
- Seeking assistance from trained school personnel should a medical need for a student arise
- Considering safety of self as well as that of others
- Ensuring the physical and psychological wellbeing of individuals

8. Responsibilities

As SRE teachers you have a responsibility to:

- Become familiar with and support the NSW Department of Education statement of core values, *Values in NSW Public Schools*. https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/policies/values-in-nsw-public-schools
- Apply for a Working with Children Check (WWCC) clearance number
- Inform your authorising body of your clearance number for verification
- Agree to and undertake induction, Child Protection and other relevant training
- Become familiar with Child Protection laws, reporting procedures
- Report any concern of risk of significant harm to students directly to the principal
- Report any situation of reportable conduct to the principal
- Comply with all reasonable instructions from your approved provider
- Wear a name badge identifying yourself and the approved provider
- Regularly and punctually attend SRE classes
- Notify schools in a timely manner if you are unable to attend a lesson
- Always use the authorised SRE curriculum(s) of the approved provider
- Prepare lessons according to authorised curriculum materials
- Use language, words and behaviours that are not threatening
- Dress appropriately for SRE classes
- Not let personal feelings adversely affect SRE interactions with students
- Not investigate allegations of misconduct or abuse
- Comply with all reasonable instructions from the school principal, delegate or any supervising teacher

- Become familiar with related laws and policies over time
- Become familiar with individual DoE school policies over time

9. Behaviour management

It is good work practice to make sure that you are aware of and comply with the applicable school policies, especially the Student Discipline in Government Schools Policy and Procedures in the school in which you work. Ask the SRE coordinator/principal of each school for copies of these documents. Schools have policies appropriate to learning, behaviour, privacy and safety. SRE teachers are asked to adhere to these policies.

Practise positive reinforcement and be respectful in all interactions with the students.

10. Unacceptable (Prohibited) behaviour management practices

SRE teachers under no circumstances are to:

- Use physical discipline or practise behaviours which humiliate, belittle or frighten students
- Use an object, such as a ruler, to gain a student's attention
- Hold or restrain a student other than to prevent an injury or harm to another
- Intimidate students by standing over them, making them feel alienated, ashamed, guilty or engaging in discriminating behaviour or disrespectful behaviour
- Use corporal punishment which is prohibited by law.

11. Appropriate relationships between SRE teachers and students

All students have a right to a safe physical and emotional environment. All SRE teachers are required to follow the SRE Code of Conduct. All SRE teachers are required to understand and observe current Child Protection Policies and attend training in Child Protection. Concerns about a child or young person's wellbeing, should be reported to the school principal or delegate.

SRE teachers must not engage in improper conduct that could lead to Reportable Conduct.

SRE teachers must not:

- Impose physical, verbal or psychological punishment
- Have an inappropriate relationship with any student
- Give gifts of a personal nature that encourages the student to think they have a special relationship with the SRE teacher
- Expose a student to material that contains messages and themes that are violent or inappropriate given the student's age and curriculum experience
- Invite student(s) to your home or hold conversations of an intimate nature with students
- Use sexual innuendo or inappropriate language and/or material with a student
- Have contact with a student through social media, letters, phone, etc.

12. Being alone with students

SRE teachers should avoid, as far as is reasonable, situations where they are alone with a student. When responsible for a single student, SRE teachers are advised to discuss the situation with the school authorities. If ever alone with a student be sure to locate yourself and the student in a visible area like the hallway and/or make sure classroom doors are open.

SRE teachers are reminded to become familiar with Child Protection policies and related laws:

- The law prohibiting sexual or inappropriate relations with a person under the age of consent (16 years), Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998, Crimes Act 1900
- The law prohibiting any sexual or inappropriate relations between a volunteer (employee) and student under the age of 18 (NSW Ombudsman 1974)
- The law prohibiting child pornography (NSW Ombudsman Act 1974)
- Privacy laws
- Provision of prohibited drugs
- An act of violence towards another person
- Any offence against a minor person

13. Relationships with students and their families outside school hours

A healthy student/teacher relationship is confined to the school and classroom.
SRE teachers must not give details of their email, telephone numbers or address to a child or young person.

If contact happens through family and social networks and is an existing relationship with a student's family, avoiding contact with that student and their family would be impractical and undesirable.

14. Use of alcohol, drugs and tobacco

SRE teachers are to support a safe, productive and healthy workplace. Children and young people are not to be given alcohol, tobacco or prohibited substances. Students are to be encouraged in healthy practices. SRE teachers must not enter school premises under the influence of alcohol or prohibited drugs.

15. Impartiality

SRE teachers must remain impartial and objective and this occurs when you follow your approved curriculum. It is inappropriate and improper to encourage or influence students to adopt a faith group or activity which is not the preference of their family.

16. Copyright and intellectual property

Please see the following link for guidelines and further information:
http://www.smartcopying.edu.au/information-sheets/schools/educational-licences

It should be noted that some material used for SRE will fall outside this and approved providers are responsible for retaining their own copyright.

Generally, the only material that is free for teachers and schools to use from the internet is online material that is licenced under Creative Commons.
http://www.smartcopying.edu.au/open-education/open-education-resources/cc-information-pack-for-teachers-and-students

Working with Children Check

In accordance with the Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012, the safety, welfare and well-being of children and, in particular protecting them from child abuse, is the paramount consideration in the Working with Children Check (WWCC) procedures.

The Department of Education requires that all non-employees who are permitted to teach SRE in its schools be appropriate and responsible persons. Each approved provider must give an undertaking that any SRE teacher authorised to enter NSW Government schools has not had a criminal conviction for any crime against a minor, a conviction for violence, sexual assault or for providing prohibited drugs.

In keeping with current child protection legislation, all SRE teachers are required to apply for a WWCC and obtain a clearance number. The number and date of birth must be provided for verification.

Approved providers must keep relevant WWCC documents for five years after the employment or engagement has been completed, or longer if required (for example, if the recruitment or engagement action has been the subject of legal action); and for disposing these documents thereafter in a secure manner (for example, shredding).

The following records are kept for each teacher whether the teacher is in paid or volunteer work:

1. Full name
2. Contact details
3. Date of birth
4. WWCC number
5. Verification date
6. Verification outcome
7. Expiry date

To obtain a Working with Children Check number,teachers are to log onto
https://www.service.nsw.gov.au/transaction/apply-working-children-check

Child Protection

All staff have a responsibility to report risk of harm concerns about children and young people, within their roles, and to provide support to children and young people.

It is a responsibility to ensure that all staff:

- Have participated in an initial child protection induction and an update during the past year
- Are aware of the indicators of abuse and neglect of children and young people
- Are aware of their obligation to advise the principal or workplace manager of concerns about the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children and young people that arise during the course of their work
- Are aware of their mandatory obligation to report suspected risk of significant harm and of the procedures for doing so

The Department of Education has developed Mandatory Child Protection Training via an on-line portal. The aim of the course is to increase responsive and responsible reporting of child protection concerns by schools. Following an introduction that summarises the roles and responsibilities of staff, participants go through scenarios where child abuse or neglect concerns are identified and options for responding are explored and best practice is reinforced.

Skills developed include:

- Identifying when a student might be at risk of harm
- Discussing concerns with appropriate staff
- Engaging with professional networks, parents and community members
- Gathering information within the school and externally using information exchange provisions
- Using the mandatory reporter guide to clarify concerns and assist decision making
- Depending on the decision of the mandatory reporter guide, reporting to FACS or seeking advice from the Child Wellbeing Unit and then working constructively and positively with the family and with external professionals.

Questions are included throughout each scenario to test understanding of the concepts covered. A certificate is provided after successful completion of the training.

All teachers must complete this course via the following link (unless an alternative training method has been provided):

https://education.nsw.gov.au/mypl/community-members

[Mandatory Child Protection Training]

When clicking on this link, a user name and password must be created and used every time this site is entered.

SPECIAL RELIGIOUS EDUCATION TEACHER COMPLIANCE

The Department of Education requires that all non-employees who are permitted to teach Special Religious Education (SRE) in its schools be appropriate and responsible persons. Each authorised religious persuasion must give an undertaking that any SRE teacher authorised to enter NSW Government schools has not had a criminal conviction for any crime against a minor, a conviction for violence, sexual assault or for providing prohibited drugs.

In keeping with current child protection legislation all SRE teachers are required to apply for a Working with Children Check (WWCC) and obtain a clearance number. The number and date of birth must be provided to the approved provider for verification. In response to the above requirements, all SRE teachers must sign the following declaration:

I have:

☐ Applied for a WWCC and obtained a clearance and received a WWCC number and expiry date.

☐ Provided the WWCC clearance number, expiry date and date of birth to my approved provider.

☐ Never been convicted for violence, sexual assault or any crime against a minor

☐ Never been convicted for providing prohibited drugs.

I understand that if, after signing this declaration, I am later convicted on any matters related to the above offences, I am no longer authorised to enter NSW Government schools.

WWCC clearance number: _____

WWCC Expiry Date: _____/_____/_____

Date of birth: _____/_____/_____

Surname:_____

First Name:_____

Title: ☐ Mr ☐ Mrs ☐ Ms ☐ Dr ☐ Prof☐ Other_____

Address : _____

Suburb: _____

Postcode: _____

Home phone: _____ Mobile phone: _____

Email: _____

Office Use Only

☐ Date of birth verified

☐ Date of document verified

Name of verified person: _____

Signature: _____

Signature: _____ Date:____/_____/_____

ACKNOWLEDGMENT BY THE SRE TEACHER

I [insert full name] _____ being employed or

engaged by the [approved provider] _____ in the following role

[insert position] _____

Hereby acknowledge that I have:

- received the above Teacher Authorisation Process inclusive of:
    - Code of Conduct Training
    - Working with Children Check
    - Child Protection Training
    - SRE Teacher Compliance
- read the Teacher Authorisation Processes and am obliged to comply with the Teacher Authorisation Processes, including any amendments made from time to time.

_____ _____

Signature Date

Appendix A: Letter to school principals

Australian Hindu Association

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL - NOT FOR DISTRIBUTION

LETTER TO THE PRINCIPAL - (Name of School)

AUTHORISED SPECIAL RELIGIOUS EDUCATION TEACHERS APPROVED PROVIDER OF SRE

The following [Name of approved provider] _____

SRE teachers visiting [name of school]_____

have completed the SRE Authorisation Procedure (outlined below):

1. Working with Children Check - clearance obtained and verified
2. Code of Conduct training
3. Child Protection training

NAME: DATE OF BIRTH:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

COORDINATOR'S NAME:_____PHONE:_____

APPROVED PROVIDERS WEBSITE: _____