

## **Chaplaincy Program Frequently Asked Questions**

### **What is a chaplain?**

A chaplain funded under this Programme is an individual who is recognised:

- i. by the school community and the appropriate governing authority for the school (where applicable) as having the skills and experience to deliver school chaplaincy to the school community, and
- ii. through formal ordination, commissioning, recognised religious qualifications or endorsement by a recognised or accepted religious institution.

A chaplain may be from any faith, and a title other than 'chaplain' may be used where the title is appropriate to the religious affiliation of the individual.

Endorsement of a chaplain by a recognised religious institution can be undertaken at a local level (eg. a local church that is part of a larger entity), where appropriate.

### **What is the role of the school chaplain?**

School chaplains 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 agreement with the Commonwealth 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.

### **What are the minimum requirements for a school chaplain?**

In addition to satisfying the above definition of a chaplain, the chaplain must:

- not proselytise
- respect, accept and be sensitive to other people's views, values and beliefs
- comply with NSW laws and policies in relation to child protection matters
- meet minimum qualification requirements (either a Certificate IV in Youth Work or Pastoral Care, or an equivalent qualification. The qualification must include competencies (or equivalent) in 'mental health' and 'making appropriate referrals').

Schools should sight written evidence that a prospective chaplain complies with these requirements prior to appointment.

Also refer to the section, *Arrangements for Engaging Chaplains for 2016 – 2018*.

### **What is meant by 'equivalent qualification' in relation to the minimum qualification requirements for chaplains?**

For acceptance into the role of school chaplain in NSW under the NSCP, the minimum qualification is a Certificate IV in Youth Work or Certificate IV in Pastoral Care (or equivalent).

A person who holds a higher level qualification, such as a diploma or bachelor degree, in a relevant field of education may also be considered. A qualification must include competencies (or equivalent) in mental health and making appropriate referrals. Not all relevant qualifications involve the completion of 'competencies' (eg. bachelor degrees). In these cases, a school should take into account any completed units/subjects relevant to the areas of 'mental health' and 'making appropriate referrals'.

**Can my school receive funding for a secular student welfare worker instead of, or as well as, a chaplain under the NSCP?**

No. The NSCP will only provide funding for chaplains.

**Is participation in the NSCP compulsory?**

No. Participation in the NSCP is voluntary for schools and for students.

**Do I need to consult with parents before appointing a chaplain?**

Yes. Schools need to consult with their school community about possible plans for engaging a chaplain.

Schools recommended for participation in the NSCP will need to hold evidence that the school community has been consulted and will need to provide it to AISNSW if and when requested.

**For how many years will funding be available for a school chaplain?**

The next application round will be for the 2016 – 2018 calendar years. Successful schools will be funded for the three years. There will be no further application rounds during the term of the current funding agreement with the Commonwealth.

**How will schools be selected to participate in the NSCP?**

Schools will be assessed by their sector authority against the common conditions and core criteria that apply to all schools, as well as against sector-specific criteria (see section *Criteria for the Selection of Schools for 2016 – 2018*).

**How much will my school receive under the NSCP?**

- Participating schools may receive up to \$20,000 per year (\$24,000 for remote schools).
- The level of individual school funding will be determined by the relevant sector authority, and will be a pro-rata amount based on the hours of chaplaincy services provided.
- Funding allocations may be scaled back if demand from schools exceeds the available funding.
- Schools receiving maximum funding will be expected to provide the maximum 400 hours of chaplaincy services per annum.

**For how many hours a year will a school chaplain be funded?**

To receive the highest level of funding available a school must provide a chaplain for at least 400 hours. Schools may apply for a chaplain for fewer hours, but a smaller funding allocation will then apply.

**Will annual funding in the 2016-2018 round be the same as for 2015?**

Not necessarily. School funding allocations will be determined by sector authorities based on the number of chaplaincy hours and overall funding available.

**How many chaplains is my school entitled to?**

Funding under the NSCP will only be available for one chaplain per school.

**My school is part of a multi-campus college. How many chaplains is the college entitled to?**

A multi-campus college can receive funding for a maximum of three chaplains (\$60,000 per annum, or \$72,000 in remote locations) across all the campuses. However:

- the number of funded chaplains must not exceed the number of campuses
- each campus must be geographically separated and have a separate Commonwealth campus number.

Each campus will be required to submit its own application and each application will be separately assessed by the sector authority.

**Can my school enter into a cluster arrangement to share a chaplain?**

Yes. However, the maximum funding available to a cluster is \$20,000 per year (\$24,000 for remote schools), and the maximum number of annual hours of chaplaincy that will be funded across the cluster is 400 hours.

**When will my school know if its application for a chaplain is successful?**

Schools will be advised in Term 4 if they are being recommended by the Minister for Education to participate in the NSCP for 2016 – 2018. Participation cannot be confirmed until the Commonwealth has endorsed the Minister's list of recommended schools (this is anticipated to take place in late 2015 or early 2016).

**When will my school receive its funding?**

This will depend on when the Commonwealth provides funding to NSW to administer the NSCP. It is anticipated that funding will be provided to participating schools early in the school year.

Funding will be provided directly to schools by the sector authorities, regardless of whether the school directly engages a chaplain or sources a chaplain through a provider. Schools will be responsible for making payments to chaplains/providers.

**Does a school need to use a chaplain provider or can it directly employ a chaplain?**

A school can choose their own chaplain or can use a chaplain provider.

**Does a chaplain provider have to be on an Approved Provider List**

No. A NSW independent school will have the flexibility to select a provider that best meets its needs, subject to the chaplain meeting the conditions/criteria for engaging chaplains (see section *Arrangements for Engaging Chaplains for 2016 – 2018*).

**Will schools selected for 2015 automatically be included in the NSCP for 2016-2018?**

No. All schools seeking funding for a chaplain in 2016-2018 will need to submit a new application in this current round.

**What happens if the school chaplain is no longer available?**

It is the school's responsibility to replace chaplaincy services in a timely manner to ensure that you meet the requirement to provide the minimum of number of hours per annum you propose to engage a chaplain as indicated in the application. Schools can either seek an alternative chaplain or use a chaplain provider for a replacement.

**Can a school change its chaplain at any time?**

Yes. Funding to schools is tied to the provision of chaplaincy services, not to an individual chaplain.

**What happens if a school chooses to discontinue its participation in the NSCP?**

A school discontinuing its participation in the NSCP may be required to refund some or all of funding paid to the school. This will be determined by AISNSW when formal advice of discontinuance is received.

**How does a school deal with a complaint about a chaplain?**

The school's complaints/grievance handling processes will apply.

**What reporting requirements do participating schools need to meet?**

Participating schools will be asked to provide reports and participate in evaluations, as required, through their sector authority. While efforts will be made to minimise reporting burdens, it is important that accountability requirements are in place to minimise the risks associated with the NSCP. A minimum requirement will be for schools to:

- confirm that a chaplain is attached to each participating school
- provide a report on the number of funded Programme hours received over the course of the year
- provide to AISNSW financial accountability statements as requested. These are required to be completed by a Qualified Accountant who is not an employee of the school.