SPECIAL RELIGIOUS EDUCATION HANDBOOK

AUSTRALIAN CHRISTIAN CHURCHES

NEW SOUTH WALES

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Introduction

ACC NSW considers Special Religious Education (SRE) a privilege.

ACC NSW recognises it has an obligation to meet the requirements of the Department of Education's Letter of Assurance each year in order to maintain Approved Provider Status.

ACC NSW is committed to ensuring all ACC SRE teachers are aware of their obligations and are authorised by ACC NSW to teach SRE

- ACC NSW State Executive will communicate necessary information with ACC pastors to ensure their SRE teachers are informed, trained and authorised. This is carried out via email and information on the ACC NSW website.

- ACC NSW State Executive expects that ACC Pastors will actively pursue the information they require to ensure their SRE teachers are meeting the requirements of their role.

- ACC NSW State Executive expects that ACC Pastors will communicate in a timely manner all information that SRE teachers need in order that ACC NSW can meet its obligations with the Department of Education and maintain its Approved Provider Status.

ACC NSW currently authorises the following curriculums:

Primary

GodSpace

CEP Connect

High School

Christian SRE High School Curriculum

CEP Think Faith (This is the only curriculum to be used by Generate employees)

Years 11&12

Jesus the Game Changer

ACC NSW thanks all ACC SRE teachers for representing ACC NSW in an excellent manner and for the faithfulness with which they carry out their role within the public schools of NSW. Please note that where SRE teachers are referred to in this Handbook the reference is also for SRE helpers and seminar workers; anyone who enters a school under SRE.

Code of Conduct

The Code of Conduct clarifies the standards of behaviour that are expected of all SRE teachers, helpers and seminar workers 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 ACCNSW in NSW Public Schools.

SRE teachers are to endorse the principles of current Child Protection Law and follow the Department of Education Religious Education Implementation Procedures. 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. This Code of Conduct is aligned with the Department of Education's Code of Conduct: http://www.dec.nsw.gov.au/about-us/code-of-conduct.

3. Legislative Provisions

ACC SRE teachers must comply with all relevant legislative provisions applicable to their role.

- The Department of Education's Religious Education Implementation Procedures
- The Department of Education's Code of Conduct
- The Department of Education's Audio-Visual Policy
- The Department of Education's Social Media Policy
- School Discipline and Welfare procedures
- Either the ACC Minister's Code of Conduct or ACC Volunteer's Code of Conduct
- ACC Child Protection Policy
- The authorisation expectations and requirements of ACC NSW including ongoing training.

Other relevant Legislation:

- Crimes Act 1900
- Ombudsman Act 1974
- Anti-Discrimination Act 1977
- NSW Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act, 1998
- NSW Child Protection (Working with Children) Act, 2012

- NSW Child Protection (Working with Children) regulation 2013
- Work Health and Safety Act 2011
- Privacy Act 2001
- Community Relations Commission and Principles of Multiculturalism Act 2000
- Fair Work Act 2009
- Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009
- Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988
- Industrial Relations Act 1996
- Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998
- Public Interest Disclosures Act 1994

4. Reporting

A breach in the Code of Conduct by an SRE Teacher 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. ACCNSW SRE Director must be notified of breaches of the Code of Conduct and will determine the course of action that needs to be taken in consultation with ACCNSW State Executive.

If you have any concerns it is expected that you will:

- report any concern of risk of significant harm to students directly to the principal.
- report any situation of reportable conduct to the principal.
- not investigate allegations of misconduct or abuse.

5. Expectations and Responsibilities

As an employee or volunteer, ACC expects that all SRE Teachers uphold the highest standard of conduct both within their capacity as an SRE teacher, and outside this role. SRE teachers represent themselves, their church, ACC, the church as a whole and Christians in general; **they represent Christ.**

All SRE Teachers must ensure they have read, understood and agree to comply with the ACC code of conduct (see link above), as well as the Department of Education's Code of Conduct (see link above).

If a PAID SRE position is held, ACC NSW expects the SRE Teacher to uphold the principles of the Ministerial Code of Conduct (see link above) even if they do not hold an ACC Ministerial Credential.

The Code of Conduct touches on many significant issues relating to people working with students. SRE teachers who do not comply with the Code of Conduct can expect to be

withdrawn from SRE and their authorisation to teach revoked. The school, coordinator and NSWACC SRE Director will be informed.

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. You will only use approved curriculum materials (see page 3) and age-appropriate resources for SRE lessons.

You must ensure that you:

- ✓ are respectful and compassionate towards students and staff.
- ✓ treat all students fairly.
- ✓ practise positive reinforcement and be respectful in all interactions with the students.
- ✓ maintain appropriate boundaries due to the position of trust you hold. This includes in **ALL** mediums of communication.
- ✓ use language that is courteous and encouraging.
- ✓ be careful to never discriminate against students, staff, colleagues or members of the public based on gender, age, marital status, race, religion, culture, ethnic or national origin, sexuality, sexual preferences, politics, physical or intellectual ability or pregnancy.
- ✓ maintain respectful interactions with all students including those whose behaviour may be challenging or difficult. It is never appropriate for an SRE teacher to use sarcasm, make offensive comments or derogatory remarks, tease, threaten, verbally abuse, make a scapegoat of, socially isolate, make unreasonable demands, physically harm, criticise, or in any way interact with students in ways that may cause emotional or psychological harm or distress.
- ✓ be aware of using language that is sensitive to the support and family structures of students, use language that does not belittle or ridicule the belief, culture or religion of a student or their family/primary caregivers. Do not assume the background or beliefs of students or their families/primary caregivers.
- ✓ be sensitive to cultures and traditions that are different from their own. Do not make statements, or behave in a way that demonstrates ignorance, bias or ridicule towards other denominations, religions or cultures.
- ✓ maintain a Duty of Care with students entrusted to you including:
    - ensuring adequate supervision.
    - maintaining good classroom management and seeking assistance if required.
    - undertaking hazard identification and risk assessment and management of the environment and activities.
    - following reporting procedures for any welfare concerns for students including bullying and harmful behaviour.
    - seeking appropriate medical care for students if required.
    - knowing and following school emergency procedures.
    - reporting any concerns in relation to the behaviour of staff or colleagues.

- ensuring your personal physical and mental health allow you to function as an effective SRE teacher.

✓ comply with all reasonable instructions given to you by NSWACC, your co-ordinator, school or its representative.

✓ dress appropriately for your SRE class. This includes ensuring good personal hygiene and cleanliness, choosing attire that is suitably modest and not too casual for the role you hold, and that complies with Work, Health and Safety requirements.

✓ be punctual and faithful and ensure you communicate appropriately and in a reasonable time frame anything that would prevent you attending your class.

✓ wear your ACC name badge whenever you are on school grounds.

✓ keep personal feelings from adversely affecting SRE interactions with students.

✓ handle personal information about students and/or staff with confidentiality, unless legislation would require you to report this information.

✓ maintain the highest ethical standard around copyright and intellectual property of printed material, video and/or music you use.

✓ gain approval from NSW ACC for any resources not included in the curriculum.

✓ obtain a copy of the school's Discipline and Welfare policy and adhere to this policy.

6. Unacceptable and Prohibited Behaviour

The following inappropriate behaviour may result in legal and/or disciplinary action and/or withdrawal of your authorisation and could lead to reportable conduct:

- physical, verbal or psychological punishment.
- inappropriate relationship formation including grooming behaviour, provision of prohibited substances or providing students with personal and social media contact details in order to form inappropriate relationships with the student by phone, letters, or online in any form.
- exposing students to material that contains messages or themes that are violent, sexual or inappropriate or insensitive given the students' age, or background.
- using language that includes sexual innuendo, discrimination, or is of a nature outlined previously.
- inviting students to your home or having conversations of an intimate nature.
- exposing students to or requesting students to provide material of themselves that is of a pornographic nature.
- attending SRE under the influence of prohibited drugs or alcohol.
- bullying of students, staff or colleagues.
- having personal social media that is in breach of the Code of Conduct relevant to your position and that expresses opinions or conveys information that would be inappropriate for your role as an SRE teacher, even if it is not directly related to SRE.
- 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.

Your Authorisation may also be withdrawn if your physical or mental health prevent you from being able to undertake your role as an SRE teacher effectively, safely or appropriately.

7. 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 you find yourself alone with a student be sure to locate yourself and the student immediately into a highly visible area like the hallway or playground.

8. Relationship 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 student. 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.

9. 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.

10. Copyright and Intellectual Property

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

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

Authorisation and Training Requirements
ACC NSW Primary School SRE Teachers

In light of our commitment to safe ministry and the annual assurance we give the Department of Education (DoE) regarding training for SRE, ACC NSW, in consultation with ICCOREIS (Inter Church Commission on Religious Education in Schools) members has the following requirements to authorise anyone involved in teaching SRE in a primary school.

1.1 Authorisation of employed SRE teachers

Anyone who is employed and/or receives a non-tax benefit as a 'religious practitioner' to teach SRE in a primary school must be authorised by a Department of Education (DoE) SRE approved provider. In our case, authorisation as a paid primary SRE teacher now requires:

- completion of a PAID SRE engagement application form.
- agreement to uphold the ACC Volunteer Workers or Ministerial Code of Conduct as applicable.
- attainment of certificate level SRE training either prior to, or within 12 months of employment as an SRE teacher; **(ACC authorised employed SRE teachers must have completed or be enrolled in such training).**
- using only authorised curriculum listed on our website.
- being cross-authorised and evidence of cross-authorisation submitted to the school if teaching joint-denominational SRE.

Certificate level training in Teaching and Pastoral Care

ACC people in paid SRE positions must undertake a Certificate level training in **both** teaching and pastoral care.

These units can be studied as part of Certificate or Diploma course through Alphacrucis College.

The Australian College of Theology (ACT) certificate courses delivered by Morling College and the Timothy Partnership also offer such training.

Recognised Prior Learning

Application for Recognised Prior Learning (RPL) [e.g. a teaching qualification or equivalent and pastoral care e.g. theological training with a minimum of 2 pastoral care-oriented subjects/social work/psychology or an equivalent] needs to be submitted for assessment and approval.

*Those granted RPL may still be required to complete the BASIC SRE training course.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is also required, which shows engagement with duty of care issues, awareness of teaching children with additional and/or cultural needs and ongoing classroom management.

1.2 Authorisation of volunteers involved in any SRE teaching activity in a primary school

Volunteers from an ACC congregation involved in an SRE teaching program in a primary school must:

- be authorised by ACC NSW by completing an SRE application form.
- agree to uphold the ACC Volunteer Workers Code of Conduct.
- complete basic SRE training and refresh this training every 3 years.
- only teach from an authorised curriculum listed on NSW ACC website.
- be cross-authorised and evidence of cross-authorisation submitted to the school if teaching joint-denominational SRE.

1.3 SRE teachers involved in activities other than SRE in a primary school

Any SRE teacher who participates in other school activities outside the framework of SRE, like a lunch time group, training for sport or a performance, excursion or camp must:

- have a job description that outlines the scope of their involvement and responsibilities.
- have written approval of the principal based on this job description.

Such activities are NOT covered by the authorisation given by ACC NSW and, as such, responsibility for these activities and the training required by the SRE teacher, rests with either the SRE teacher's employer and/or local church AND the school.

ACC NSW HIGHLY RECOMMENDS anyone involved in such activities completes a certificate level training in pastoral care to ensure they are aware of the boundaries of their role and when they would need to report and/or refer a young person for further professional help.

Boards, Associations and Local churches need to be aware of their responsibility to represent ACC NSW and the Church as a whole well, and to not compromise the privilege of SRE within a school by having someone untrained for the role they expect them to fulfil.

Summary of Requirements for Primary SRE teachers

In this document:

"Paid SRE Teacher" refers to anyone who receives remuneration and/or receives a non-tax benefit as a 'religious practitioner' to teach SRE.

"Volunteer SRE Teacher" refers to those who are teaching SRE in a Primary School though not receiving remuneration for that specific role. These could be members, leaders or pastors of local churches, irrespective of whether or not they are in the paid employment of those churches.

Role / Requirement		Volunteer SRE teacher	Volunteer non-SRE activities		Paid SRE teacher	Paid SRE teacher non-SRE activities
Authorisation Requirements						
Approved Provider	All ACC people must be authorised by ACC NSW even if employed by a board, association or local church.	✓			✓	
WWCC	All ACC people must meet the requirements of the WWCC and Department of Education.	✓	✓		✓	✓
SRE employer	ACC People employed by a board, association or local church must complete any authorising requirements of their employer.				✓	
Primary School Principal	ACC People involved in school activities outside of SRE must have authorisation from the school Principal to be involved in these activities.		✓			✓
Curriculum Requirements						
Authorised Curriculum	Must teach SRE from an Approved Provider authorised curriculum in an age-appropriate and sensitive way.	✓			✓	
Principal approved curriculum	Any non SRE teaching activity (e.g. lunch time group, self-esteem program), must have the content approved by the school Principal. This includes any visiting groups – speakers, musical groups etc., under the supervision of the SRE teacher. Anyone attending the school must meet the requirements of the WWCC OR school volunteers and contractor's declaration.		✓			✓

Role / Requirement		Volunteer SRE teacher	Volunteer non-SRE activities		Paid SRE teacher	Paid SRE teacher non-SRE activities
Training Requirements						
SRE Training (basic)	Must complete all the Basic SRE training prior to commencing and update as required by ACCNSW.	✓				
Safer churches	Must complete and maintain ACC Safer churches or equivalent Safe Church Training Agreement (SCTA) training and update every 3 years. Read and implement annual updates.	✓			✓	
Certificate Level SRE training	Must complete (or be enrolled in) Teacher and Pastoral care training at certificate level by the start of Term 1, 2018, OR have a record of RPL's submitted to respective Approved Provider and assessed for approval.*				✓	
Job description						
SRE Job Description approved by Board/ Church	All primary School SRE teachers (and their board/church) must have a clear understanding of what their role as a primary School SRE teacher is. See Appendix 1.	✓			✓	
Principal and Board/Church approved involvement in non-SRE activities in the school	Any primary School SRE teachers with involvement within the school that is outside the defined SRE areas of responsibilities (lunchtime groups, pastoral care conversations outside of class time, attending excursions or camps, playground duty, overseeing sporting teams etc.) must have a job description that outlines the scope of work. Although a Board/Church may define what and how this role is to be administered, it is the school Principal who must approve this job description. This includes any visiting groups – speakers, musical groups etc., under the supervision of the SRE teacher.		✓			✓

Role Description for a Primary School SRE teacher in a Combined Arrangement

Position title: Primary School SRE teacher

1. Purpose of the Position

The role of the Primary School SRE teacher is to provide education in the Christian faith on behalf of SRE providers who have agreed on a combined arrangement.

2. Type of Position

This role description is intended for those who are employed specifically to teach SRE by a board or association or local church AND whose salary package includes a non-tax benefit because they are deemed to be a religious practitioner

OR

those who serve in this position in a voluntary capacity.

3. Scope of the Position

Mission/Ethos

The SRE teacher in a combined arrangement understands the responsibilities of the position as an ambassador for the Christian faith within the school by:

- teaching age appropriate and sensitive lessons from a curriculum that has been cross authorised by those providers in the combined arrangement.
- providing a child safe environment in accordance with DoE Code of Conduct.
- teach the Christian faith in accordance with historic statements of the Christian faith and supporting the denominations/churches supporting the teacher.
- teach to agreed outcomes.

Professional Practice

ACC SRE teachers are required to:

- maintain records of class attendance and other records as required by the school.
- implement effective classroom management in line with the school's values and policies.
- plan and implement SRE lessons in accordance with an authorised curriculum.
- ensure they are under accountable ministry supervision and mentoring.

Professional Engagement

The SRE teacher fosters and develops appropriate professional relationship with school staff, the school community and, where necessary, with parents/carers, and:

- supports the DoE Code of Conduct.
- values and supports the distinctive role of parents/carers as partners in the learning and teaching process.
- engages with the wider community where appropriate, in learning and teaching programs.
- engages with students of other faiths sensitively and respectfully considering their parents/carers faith.

Professional Learning

The SRE teacher prioritises maintaining up-to-date professional knowledge and skills by:

- using the agreed belief statements of members in the combined arrangement evaluates learning and teaching practices.
- participating in gatherings of SRE teachers and/or ministry leaders that enrich their teaching and learning.
- increasing their knowledge of the topics in the authorised curriculum.
- developing and implementing understanding of relevant pedagogy.

4. Authority Limits

While at school, an SRE teacher has authority to act within the role and to enact the duties outlined above delegated by the school principal. **Any activity outside these duties is not deemed to be SRE and is outside the authorisation of the Approved Provider.**

5. Reporting and Other Relationships

While at school, the SRE teacher is responsible to the principal or nominated delegate. Significant relationships also exist with other members of the school leadership team, teachers and support staff.

When outside the school, an employed SRE teacher is responsible to whomever employs him/her.

When outside the school, a volunteer SRE teacher is responsible to their local church.

If engaged in activities within the school that are not SRE, the SRE teacher is responsible to whomever employs him/her OR his/her local church that supports this role AND the school Principal who has approved the job description for the role.

RPL may still require completion of the basic SRE training course

Authorisation and Training Requirements
ACC NSW High School SRE Teachers

In light of our commitment to safe ministry and the annual assurance we give the Department of Education (DoE) regarding training for SRE, ACC NSW, in consultation with ICCOREIS (Inter Church Commission on Religious Education in Schools) members has the following requirements to authorise anyone involved in teaching SRE in a central or high school.

1.1 Authorisation of employed SRE teachers

Anyone who is employed and/or receives a non-tax benefit as a 'religious practitioner' to teach SRE in a central or high school must be authorised by a Department of Education (DoE) SRE approved provider. In our case, authorisation as a high school SRE teacher now requires:

- completion of a PAID SRE engagement application form.
- agreement to uphold the ACC Volunteer Workers or Ministerial Code of Conduct as applicable.
- attainment of certificate level SRE training either prior to, or within 12 months of the commencement of employment as an SRE teacher; **(From Term 1 2018, ACC authorised employed SRE teachers must be enrolled in, or have attained such training.).**
- using only authorised curriculum listed on our website.
- being cross-authorised and evidence of cross-authorisation submitted to the school if teaching joint denominational SRE.

Certificate level training in Teaching and Pastoral Care

ACC people in paid SRE positions need to undertake a Certificate level training in **both** teaching and pastoral care.

These units can be studied as part of Certificate or Diploma course through Alphacrucis College.

The Australian College of Theology (ACT) certificate courses delivered by Morling College and the Timothy Partnership also offer such training.

Recognised Prior Learning:

Application for Recognised Prior Learning (RPL) [e.g. a teaching qualification or equivalent and pastoral care e.g. theological training with a minimum of 2 pastoral care oriented subjects/social work/psychology or an equivalent] needs to be submitted for assessment and approval.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is also required, which shows engagement with duty of care issues, awareness of teaching children with additional and/or cultural needs and ongoing classroom management. At a minimum, this must occur every 3 years.

1.2 Authorisation of volunteers involved in any SRE teaching activity in a central or high school

Volunteers from a congregation involved in an SRE teaching program in a central or high school must:

- be authorised by ACC NSW by completing an SRE application form.
- agree to uphold the ACC Volunteer Workers Code of Conduct.
- complete Basic SRE Training and refresh this training every 3 years.
- only teach from an authorised curriculum listed on NSW ACC website.
- be cross-authorised and evidence of cross-authorisation submitted to the school if teaching joint-denominational SRE.

1.3 SRE teachers involved in activities other than SRE in a central or high school

Any SRE teacher who participates in other school activities outside the framework of SRE, like a lunch time group, training for sport or a performance, excursion or camp must:

- have a job description that outlines the scope of their involvement and responsibilities.
- have written approval of the principal based on this job description.

Such activities are NOT covered by the authorisation given by ACC NSW and, as such, responsibility for these activities and the training required by the SRE teacher, rests with either the SRE teacher's employer and/or local church AND the school.

ACC NSW HIGHLY RECOMMENDS anyone involved in such activities completes a certificate level training in pastoral care to ensure they are aware of the boundaries of their role and when they would need to report and/or refer and young person for further professional help.

Boards, Associations and Local churches need to be aware of their responsibility to represent ACC NSW and the Church as a whole well, and to not compromise the privilege of SRE within a school by having someone untrained for the role they expect them to fulfil.

Summary of Requirements for High School SRE Teachers

In this document:

"Paid SRE Teacher" refers to anyone who receives remuneration and/or receives a non-tax benefit as a 'religious practitioner' to teach SRE in a combined arrangement.

"Volunteer SRE Teacher" refers to those who are teaching SRE in a High School though not receiving remuneration for that specific role. These could be members, leaders or pastors of local churches, irrespective of whether or not they are in the paid employment of those churches.

Role / Requirement		Volunteer SRE teacher	Volunteer non-SRE activities		Paid SRE teacher	Paid SRE teacher non-SRE activities
Authorisation Requirements						
Approved Provider	All ACC people must be authorised by ACC NSW even if employed by a board or local church.	✓			✓	
WWCC	All ACC people must meet the requirements of the WWCC and the Department of Education.	✓	✓		✓	✓
SRE employer	ACC People employed by a board, or local church must complete any authorising requirements of their employer.				✓	
High School Principal	ACC People involved in school activities outside of SRE must have authorisation from the school Principal to be involved in these activities.		✓			✓
Curriculum Requirements						
Authorised Curriculum	Must teach SRE from an Approved Provider authorised curriculum in an age-appropriate and sensitive way.	✓			✓	
Principal approved curriculum	Any non SRE teaching activity (e.g. lunch time group, self-esteem program), must have the content approved by the school Principal. This includes any visiting groups – speakers, musical groups etc., under the supervision of the SRE teacher. Anyone attending the school must meet the requirements of the WWCC OR school volunteers and contractor's declaration.		✓			✓

Role / Requirement		Volunteer SRE teacher	Volunteer non-SRE activities		Paid SRE teacher	Paid SRE teacher non-SRE activities
Training Requirements						
SRE Training (basic)	Must complete all of the Basic SRE training prior to commencing then update as required by ACCNSW.	✓				
Safer churches	Must complete and maintain ACC Safer churches or equivalent Safe Church Training Agreement (SCTA) training and update every 3 years. Read and implement annual updates.	✓			✓	
Certificate level SRE training	Must complete (or be enrolled in) Teacher and Pastoral care training at certificate level by the start of Term 1, 2018, OR have a record of RPL's submitted to respective Approved Provider and assessed for approval.*				✓	
Job description						
SRE Job Description approved by Board/Church	All High School SRE teachers (and their board/church) must have a clear understanding of what their role as a High School SRE teacher is. See Appendix 2.	✓			✓	
Principal and Board/Church approved involvement in non-SRE activities in the school	Any High School SRE teachers with involvement within the school that is outside the defined SRE areas of responsibilities (lunchtime groups, pastoral care conversations outside of class time, attending excursions or camps, playground duty, overseeing sporting teams etc.) must have a job description that outlines the scope of work. Although a Board/Church may define what and how this role is to be administered, it is the school Principal who must approve this job description. This includes any visiting groups – speakers, musical groups etc., under the supervision of the SRE teacher.		✓			✓

Role Description for a High School SRE teacher in a Combined Arrangement

Position title: High School SRE teacher

1. Purpose of the Position

The role of the High School SRE teacher is to provide education in the Christian faith on behalf of SRE providers who have agreed on a combined arrangement.

2. Type of Position

This role description is intended for those who are employed specifically to teach SRE by a board or association or local church AND whose salary package includes a non-tax benefit because they are deemed to be a religious practitioner

OR

those who serve in this position in a voluntary capacity.

3. Scope of the Position

Mission/Ethos

The SRE teacher in a combined arrangement understands the responsibilities of the position as an ambassador for the Christian faith within the school by:

- teaching age appropriate and sensitive lessons from a curriculum that has been cross authorised by those providers in the combined arrangement.
- providing a child safe environment in accordance with DoE Code of Conduct.
- teaching the Christian faith in accordance with historic statements of the Christian faith and supporting the denominations/churches supporting the teacher.
- teaching to agreed outcomes.

Professional practice

ACC SRE teachers are required to:

- maintain records of class attendance and other records as required by the school.
- implement effective classroom management in line with the school's values and policies.
- plan and implement SRE lessons in accordance with an authorised curriculum.
- ensure they are under accountable ministry supervision and mentoring.

Professional Engagement

The SRE teacher fosters and develops appropriate professional relationship with school staff, the school community and, where necessary, with parents/carers and:

- supports the DoE Code of Conduct.
- values and supports the distinctive role of parents/carers as partners in the learning and teaching process.
- engages in the wider community where appropriate, in learning and teaching programs.
- engages with students of other faiths sensitively and respectfully considering their parents/carers faith.

Professional Learning

The SRE teacher prioritises maintaining up-to-date professional knowledge and skills by:

- using the agreed belief statements of members in the combined arrangement evaluates learning and teaching practices.
- participating in gatherings of SRE teachers and/or ministry leaders that enrich their teaching and learning.
- increasing their knowledge of the topics in the authorised curriculum.
- developing and implementing understanding of relevant pedagogy.

4. Authority Limits

While at school, an SRE teacher has authority to act within the role and to enact the duties outlined above delegated by the school principal. **Any activity outside these duties is not deemed to be SRE and is outside the authorisation of the Approved Provider.**

5. Reporting and Other Relationships

While at school, the SRE teacher is responsible to the principal or nominated delegate. Significant relationships also exist with other members of the school leadership team, teachers and support staff.

When outside the school, an employed SRE teacher is responsible to whomever employs him/her.

When outside the school, a volunteer SRE teacher is responsible to their local church.

If engaged in activities within the school that are not SRE, the SRE teacher is responsible to whomever employs him/her OR his/her local church that supports this role AND the school Principal who has approved the job description for the role.

RPL may still require completion of the basic SRE training course

Basic SRE Training Workshop

The ACCNSW Basic SRE training workshop covers six teaching modules and a classroom assessment module. All SRE teachers are required to attend this workshop before commencement of teaching. After commencement of teaching, all SRE teachers are required to undergo Teacher Audit Process, attend updates and participate in ongoing training.

Training includes:

1. Working in Government schools
2. Teaching 21st Century children (Learning and Teaching)
3. Preparing and Delivering a Lesson
4. Behaviour Management (Communicating in the Classroom)
5. Biblical Foundations (Introduction to the Bible)
6. Classroom Experience/Assessment
7. Duty of Care

Please contact the ACCNSW SRE Director for a course located near you.

Teacher Audit Process

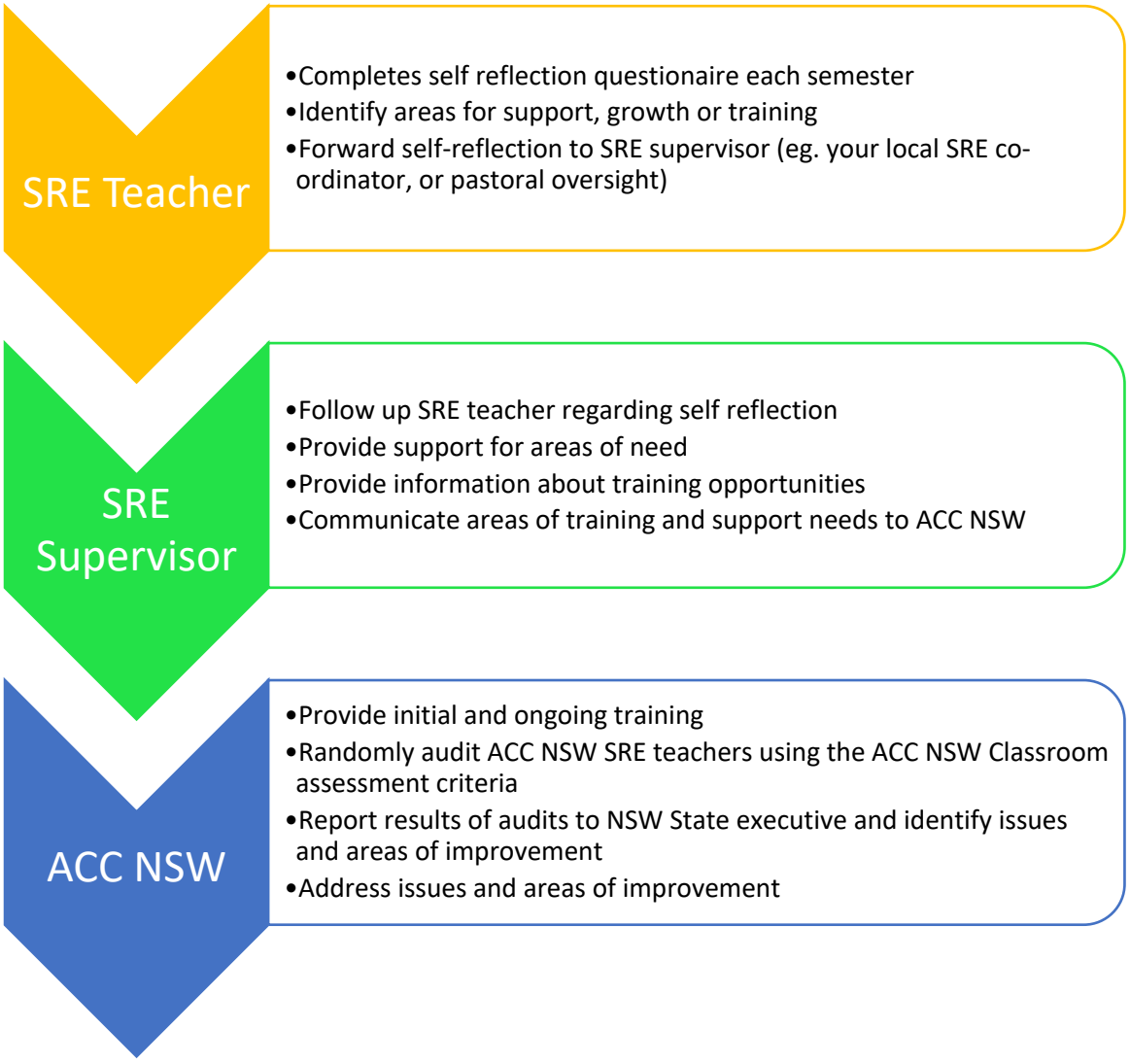
Recommendation 16 from the Review into SRE states:

16. *Providers conduct regular audits of SRE teaching and use of approved curriculum, and report the results of the audits and any efforts to address any identified issues.*

As part of this process, ACC NSW requires SRE teachers to engage in a process of self-reflection. Self-reflection is about questioning in a positive way what we do and why.

Self-reflection allows us to consider our ways of working, identify areas of strength and growth areas, consider the effectiveness of our teaching and, from this reflection, actively pursue development of our skills.

The self-reflection and audit process is outlined below:



Teacher Self Reflection Form

ACC NSW SRE Teacher's Name:				
Date of reflection:				
Curriculum:				
Preparation				
Area of Reflection	**Yes**	**No**	**N/A**	**Growth Area**
I am confident in my knowledge of the curriculum and Biblical references				
I prepared lesson notes				
I considered the developmental stage and learning styles of my students				
I use the curriculum				
I organise all other resources required				
School Interaction				
I arrive early and keep my lesson to the allocated time				
I have my authorisation and wear my name badge				
I follow sign in and sign out procedure				
I engage respectfully with School staff				
I seek permission to use or move school equipment				
I return the school space to its original condition				
I know the school emergency and evacuation procedures				
I know the Department of Education and ACC code of conduct and adhere to their principles at all times				
Classroom Management				
Area of Reflection	**Yes**	**No**	**N/A**	**Growth Area**
I gain attention of students effectively and appropriately				
I clearly communicate expectations and instructions				
I consistently implement rules and expectations				
I guide student behaviour positively				
I am aware of special needs and implement school strategies to work with these students				
My interactions with students are always respectful and encouraging				
I create a happy and engaging learning environment and interact with students in a warm and friendly manner				
Teaching and Learning				
I use a variety of learning styles appropriate to the lesson and learning space				
I use technology appropriate to the learning space				
My lesson content and activities are age appropriate and sensitive				
I use language and tone appropriate to the developmental stage of the children and context of the lesson				

I encourage students to ask questions and interact with the lesson				
I foster curiosity and allow students to make choices				
I foster spiritual development and encourage students to take on new challenges				
Students are engaged in my lessons				
The lesson aim and curriculum outcomes are met				
I seek student feedback to ensure understanding				
I show respect and understanding for the diversity of backgrounds and beliefs of students and their parents/carers				

Further Support or Training

Use this space to note any areas you require further support and/or training, or if you have any other concerns that need to be supported.

Supervisor's Signature:		**Date Received:**	

Support or training provided (if required):

Inform NSW ACC of the following area/s that need support and training:

ACC Classroom Observation

Classroom observation can be a powerful tool for growth as a teacher. Classroom observation:

- Gives teachers feedback on whether they are on track in delivering the curriculum or whether changes are required
- Provides tangible, observed evidence by the observer as a basis of discussion
- Develops teachers' self-awareness about their own teaching practice and its impact
- Guides professional learning needs at individual and provider level
- Supports the development of a common understanding of effective teaching practices that have impact
- Provides opportunities to discuss challenges and concerns with colleagues

Processes for classroom observation:
It is necessary for teachers to learn and grow from classroom observation. Classroom observation can serve to inform and enhance the quality of the teaching. However, if not handled well, it can lead to anxiety and resistance.

Ideally there should be a **pre-observation meeting** which provides the opportunity for the teacher to highlight areas where feedback is sought. It also provides the opportunity for the observer to go through aspects of the lessons that will be observed. It assists in building a rapport between the teacher and the observer.

During the observation the observer takes descriptive, not interpretive notes e.g. 'Interactions with students provided opportunities for students to asks questions ….' rather than '… did a good job, well done...'

Post observation meeting occurs as soon as possible after the observation. Both the observer and the teacher share reflections on the lesson. The observer poses questions to prompt further development

Classroom Observation Feedback Form

SRE Teacher's Name:	
Date of assessment:	
Assessor's Name:	
Assessor's Denomination or Employer:	
Assessment Outline:	SRE teacher will demonstrate a range of teaching strategies and classroom management ability in order to effectively teach an SRE lesson from an approved curriculum. They will include their lesson development notes.

Assessment Skill	Good	Developing	Assessor Comments (if any)
Preparation			
Lesson notes included			
Shows knowledge of the developmental characteristics of the children			
Shows knowledge of subject			
Uses Curriculum material			
Well organised and has required resources ready			
Classroom Management Skills			
Arranges learning space for effective learning			
Ability to gain attention effectively and appropriately			
Clear communication of appropriate rules			
Assessment Skill	**Good**	**Developing**	**Assessor Comments (if any)**
Consistent and fair implementation of rules			
Effective positive behaviour reinforcement and correction			
Respectful interaction with students			
Ensures students understand directions and reason for corrections			
Is aware of special needs and reinforces school discipline and behaviour management strategies			

Teaching Skill			
Uses respectful language and varies tone and pitch			
Utilises a variety of learning styles appropriate to the lesson aim and learning space utilised			
Uses technology appropriate to the learning space			
Uses language appropriate to the developmental age of students and context of lesson			
Allowed students opportunity to ask questions and interact with lesson			
Lesson content and activities were clear and developmentally appropriate			
Assessment Skill	**Good**	**Developing**	**Assessor Comments (if any)**
Aim of the lesson was met			
Sought student feedback to ensure understanding			
Students were engaged			
Showed respect and understanding for the diversity of backgrounds and beliefs of students and their parents/carers			
Kept the lesson to the given time.			
School Interaction			
Arrived early and kept to allocated time			
Authorisation and name badge displayed			
Followed school sign in and sign out procedure			
Respectful and friendly interaction with school staff			

Politely sought use of school resource if appropriate			
Returned school learning space to original set up if re-arranged			
Respectful and careful use of school property			
Assessment Feedback:			
Assessment Outcome: **Competent** **Further training required** **Not competent**			
Assessor Signature:			
SRE Teacher Signature:			

Social Media Policy and Procedures

Context

Use of social media is increasingly part of everyday online activities. This policy should be read and interpreted in conjunction with:

- Teacher Authorisation Processes – Code of Conduct
- Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998

Legislative Provisions

Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998
http://www.ipc.nsw.gov.au/ppip-act

Policy Statement

The Social Media Policy provides guidance and support to all staff as they engage in social media.

SRE teachers are supported in social media online applications such as social networking sites, wikis, blogs, microblogs, video and audio sharing sites and message boards that allow people to easily publish, share and discuss content. Social media provides an opportunity to:

- Engage and interact with our various audience
- Promote staff expertise

The following five standards apply to teachers work use and personal use of social media at any time. Teachers should:

- Always follow relevant organisational policies including the Teacher Authorisation Process - Code of Conduct
- Not act unlawfully (such as breaching copyright) when using social media
- Make sure that personal online activities do not interfere with the performance of the job
- Be clear that personal views do not necessarily reflect the views of this organisation
- Not disclose confidential information obtained through work

Audio Visual Extra Curriculum Material

Recommendation 28 of the review into SRE states:

28. *Providers put in place processes for approval of any materials and internet resources that are used by SRE teachers in their classes and educate SRE teachers about these approval processes.*

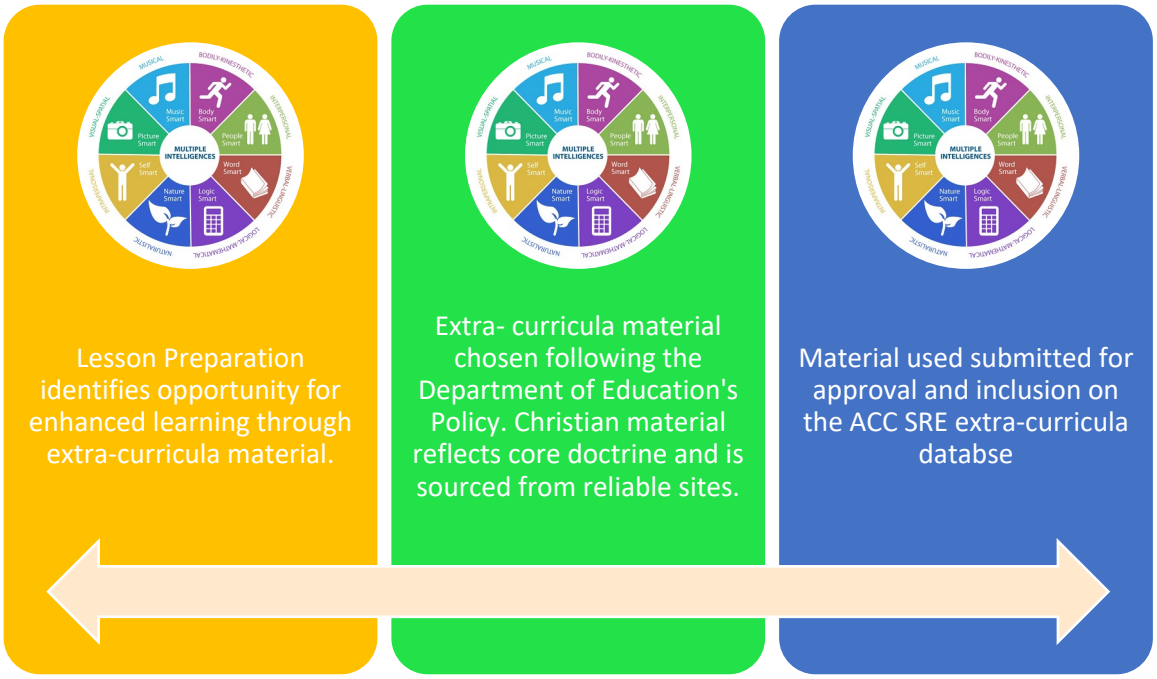
Use of extra curricula material such as YouTube or movie clips, visual aids or music can enhance the content of the curriculum and engage multiple intelligence learning styles.

It is a requirement of all NSW ACC SRE teachers to ensure they are working from the curriculum approved by ACC for the students they are teaching and they are accountable and transparent in any extra curricula material used in their lessons.

ACC NSW teachers are to abide by the Department of Education's Audio-Visual Policy in regards to any material they want to use within an SRE class. SRE teachers are advised to use wisdom in choosing material and should ensure any Biblical content comes from reliable Christian sources and that it upholds core Christian doctrine.

Additionally, ACC NSW is developing a database of approved extra-curricula material, including approved music to which Authorised SRE teachers may submit material for inclusion. Submissions may be made to: sre@nswacc.org.au

Please refer to the Appendix at the end of the Handbook for the use of Interactive SmartBoards and Digital Projectors.



Complaints Process

ACC NSW recognises that occasionally there may be conflicts or complaints that require resolution.

ACC NSW expects its teachers to always maintain the highest level of professional and Christian conduct in any conflict resolution process. This includes both the way they speak to and about a local school and how they represent ACC and the Church as a whole. ACC NSW expects its teachers to listen to the school's perspective and never assume ill intent. We expect our teachers to always try to resolve issues at a local level first, with courtesy and respectfulness. We are committed to open communication and taking ownership.

Where possible communication should be done face to face rather than via emails and notes. Face to face enables clarification and allows both parties to see body language and hear tone of voice. ACC NSW expects its teachers to always use positive body language and a calm, controlled tone of voice. A written report of the conversations that is viewed and held by both parties is also recommended where necessary.

ACC NSW, as an Approved Provider will abide by the Department of Education's Complaints Handling Policy, as well as the ACC NSW complaints procedure for SRE.

Complaints may fall into the following four categories:

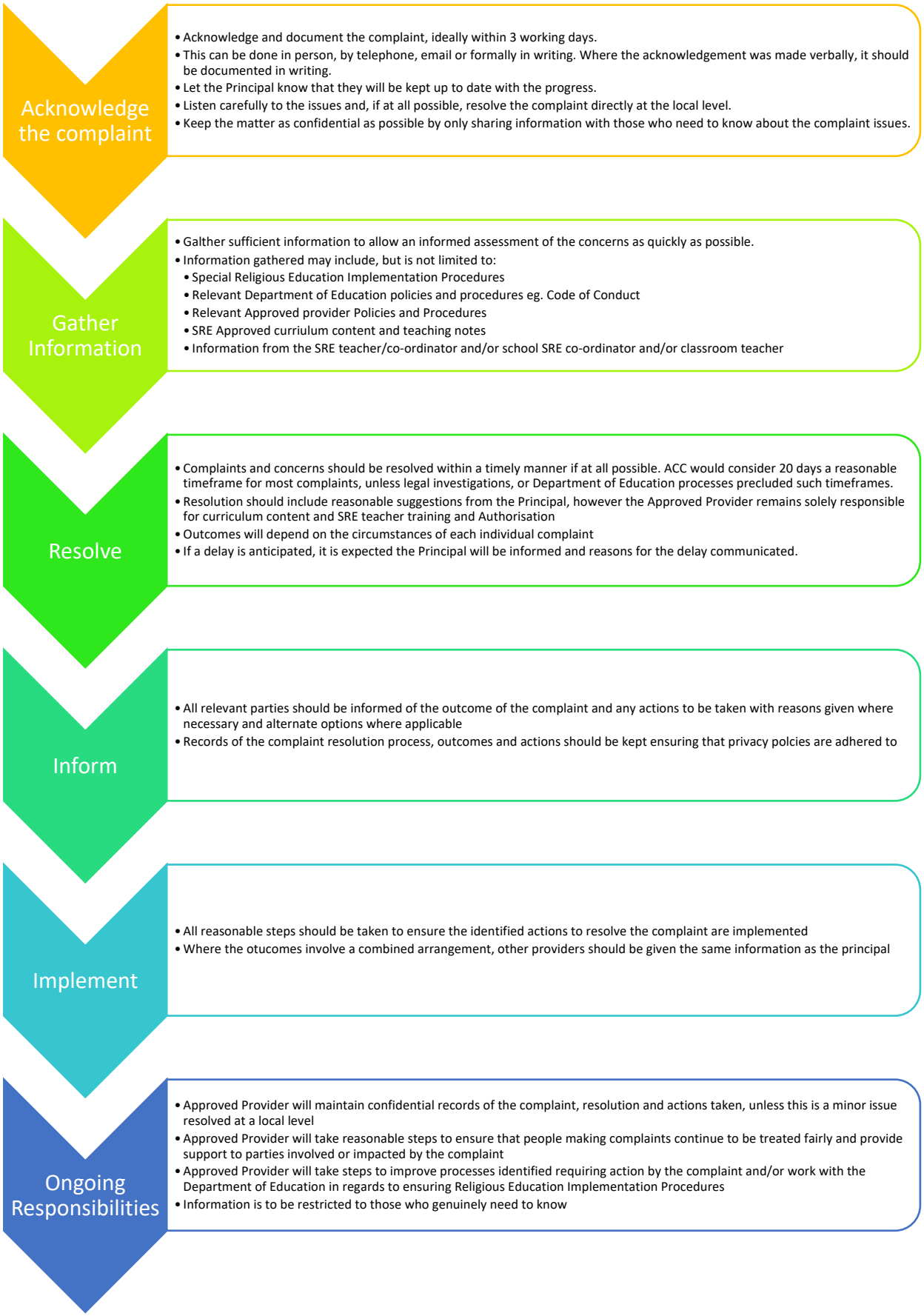
1. **Parents may have a concern about the SRE curriculum or the SRE teacher**
    a. Approved providers will fully co-operate with any concerns a parent may have in regard to reportable conduct or allegations of abuse attributed to an SRE teacher or alternatively their concerns regarding the contents of the SRE curriculum. Approved providers will follow its procedures in regards to any such matter, including reporting to relevant authorities.

2. **Schools may have concerns about the conduct of an SRE teacher**
    a. Approved providers will fully co-operate with any concerns a school may have in regards to reportable conduct or allegations of abuse attributed to an SRE teacher. It is expected that the Department of Education will follow its procedures in regards to any such matter, including reporting to relevant authorities.

3. **Approved Providers may have concerns about the conduct of a student, parent or a professional classroom teacher**
    a. It is expected that a school will fully co-operate with any concerns an approved provider may have in regards to positive behaviour for learning. We would expect the school to follow its procedures in regards to any such matter, including reporting to relevant authorities.

4. **SRE teachers may have a concern about the implementation of SRE at a local school**
    a. ACC NSW must follow the Department of Education *School Community and Consumer Complaint Procedures* https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/associated-documents/School-complaint-procedure_AC.pdf

In any situation, management of the complaint should include the following **Key Stages**:

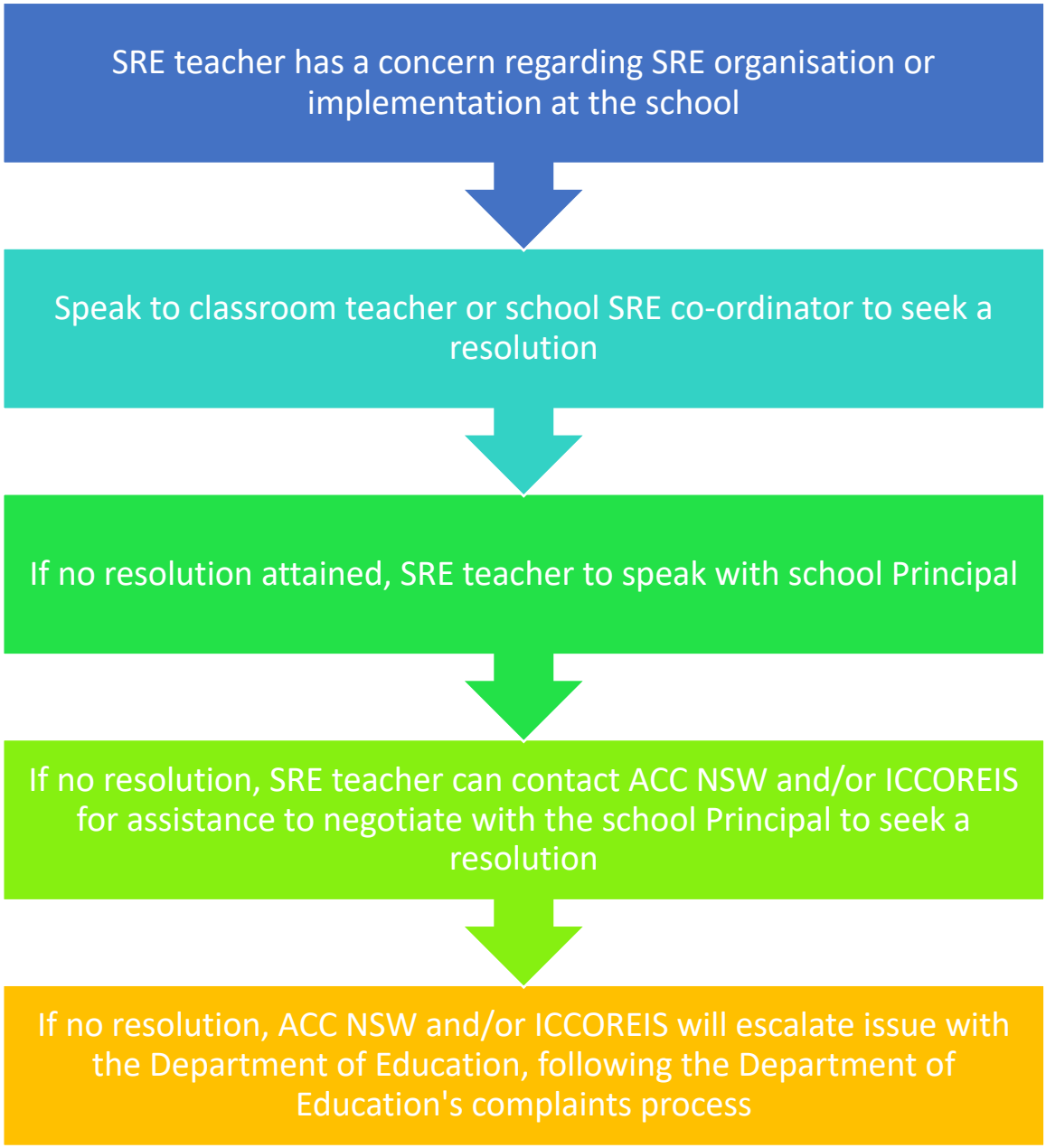


COMPLAINTS PROCESS when an SRE teacher has concerns regarding SRE Implementation at a local school:

ACC NSW expects its teachers to always try to resolve issues at a local level first, with courtesy and respectfulness, however should they continue to find that the Department of Education's Implementation procedures are not followed, the process below should be initiated.

Complaints Flow Chart

SRE teacher concerns



COMPLAINTS PROCESS when the school has a concern regarding an ACC SRE teacher:

ACC NSW recognises that occasionally a school may have concerns regarding ACC SRE teachers at a local school.

ACC NSW will fully co-operate with any concerns a school may have in regards to reportable conduct or allegations of abuse attributed to an ACC SRE teacher. ACC NSW would expect the Department of Education to follow its procedures in regards to any such matter, including reporting to relevant authorities. ACC NSW would also expect that the local school and/or Department of Education would notify ACC NSW Safer Churches of any such process to ensure ACC NSW can also follow their procedures in such matters.

ACC NSW expects that concerns regarding lesson content, classroom management or information given to students or breaches of duty of care are initially handled at a local level following the Department of Education's Code of Conduct and conflict resolution processes. If no resolution is attained, the issue can be escalated according to the process outlined below.

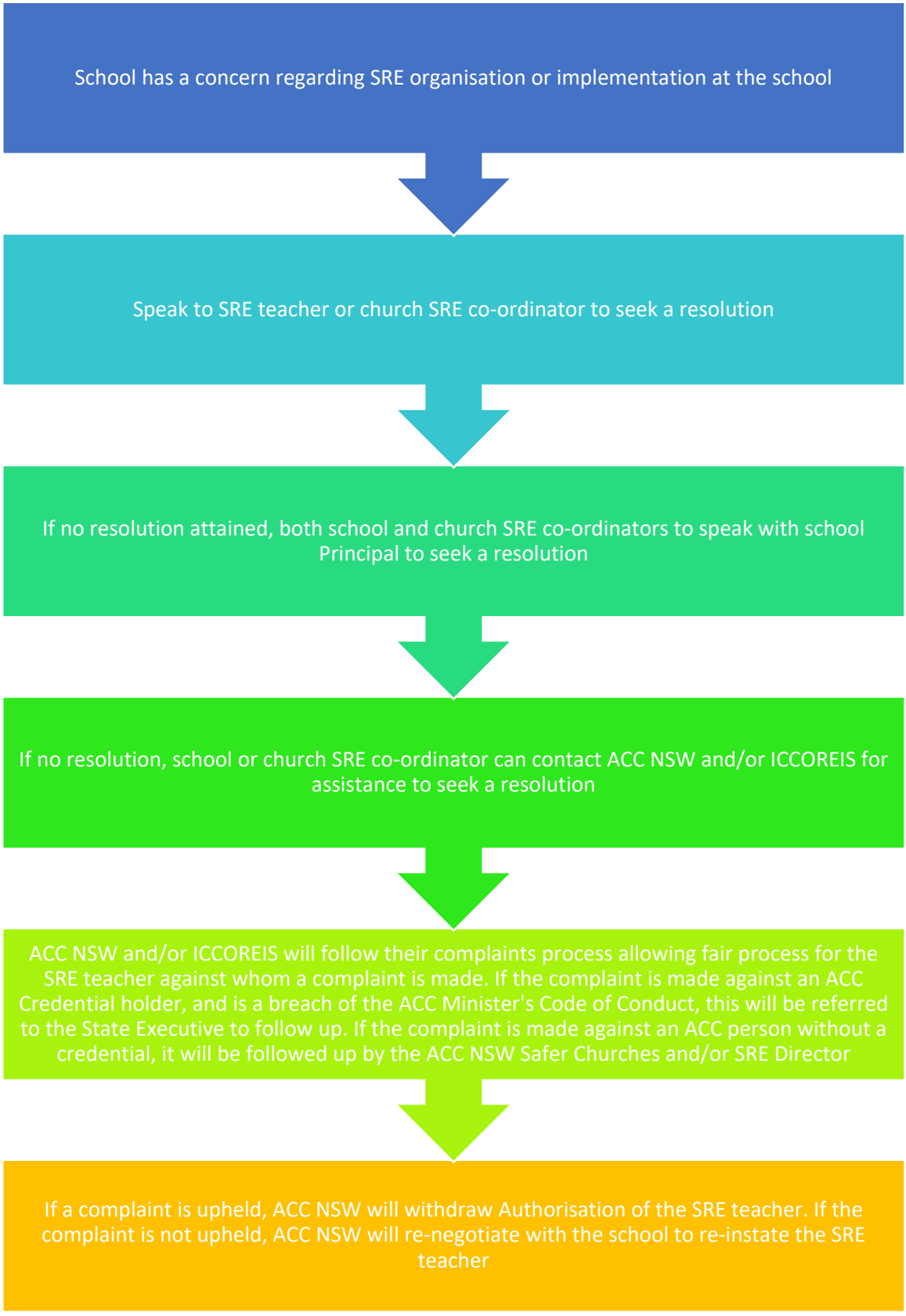
If the complaint is in regards to an activity the SRE teacher is involved in within the school, that is **NOT SRE**, then this should be resolved within the school with the school Principal (who should have signed and approved a job description for any activity the SRE teacher has been invited to do) **AND** with the local church or SRE teacher's employer for that role.

ACC NSW would only be involved in such instances, should there be a **breach of the Minister's Code of Conduct and the person against whom the complaint was made, held an ACC credential.**

Child protection concern involving an ACC NSW SRE teacher	•Follow Department of Education reporting requirements •Contact ACC NSW to ensure ACC Child Protection Policy can be followed in regards to an ACC person
SRE organisation or Implementation concern involving an ACC SRE teacher	•Attempt resolution at a local level •Follow complaints flow chart (following page)
Duty of Care or Code of Conduct concerns involving an ACC SRE teacher involved in a NON SRE activity within the school	•Compliants process with school Principal and/or local church or SRE teacher's employer for the role the complaint involves •Ministerial Code of Conduct breach by an ACC credential holder- contact ACC NSW State Executive for follow up

Complaints Flow Chart

School concerns



COMPLAINTS PROCESS when a parent has a concern about SRE Curriculum or SRE teacher:

ACC NSW recognises that occasionally a parent may have questions or concerns about the SRE curriculum content and/or how the curriculum content is taught and/or the behaviour of an SRE teacher.

ACC NSW expects its teachers to always maintain the highest level of professional and Christian conduct in any conflict resolution process. This includes both the way they speak to and about a local school, a parent or student and how they represent ACC and the Church as a whole. ACC NSW expects its teachers to listen to the parent's perspective and never assume ill intent.

ACC NSW has links to the scope and sequence of all its Approved Curriculum listed on its website. SRE teachers are obliged to inform the school of the curriculum they are using and should have the curriculum and teacher notes readily available for a parent to see, should a concern arise around content.

If a parent has a complaint in regards to an ACC SRE teacher the following process should be implemented: (*note: any Child Protection or Reportable Conduct concerns will follow the process outlined previously using both the Department of Education's reporting Policy and the ACC Child Protection Policy)*

Parent has an SRE complaint involving an ACC SRE teacher

Contact the School SRE Co-ordinator and/or download the complaint form available on the NSW ACC website and return it to NSW ACC SRE

Child Protection Concerns are to follow the Department of Education Reporting Policy. Principal to inform ACC NSW of complaint to ensure the ACC NSW Child Protection Policy is also implemented and the complaint is handled using Key Stages outlined previously

Complaint regards to SRE curriculum content or delivery is referred to the local church SRE-Co-ordinator for follow up initially with the local teacher and/or the Approved Provider using the Key stages of complaints handling

Complaint regards to SRE teacher behaviour that does not involve Child Protection issues or Reportable Conduct is referred to the local church SRE Co-ordinator for follow up initially with the local teacher and/or the Approved Provider, ACC NSW, using the Key Stages of complaints handling

COMPLAINTS PROCESS when an Approved Provider has a concern regarding a parent, student or professional classroom teacher:

ACC NSW recognises that occasionally, a parent, student or professional classroom teacher may act in ways that cause concern for the local SRE teacher and/or ACC NSW.

ACC NSW expects its teachers to always maintain the highest level of professional and Christian conduct in any conflict resolution process. This includes both the way they speak to and about a local school, a parent or student and how they represent ACC and the Church as a whole. ACC NSW expects its teachers to listen to the parent, student or teacher's perspective and never assume ill intent.

If a concern is in regards to the welfare of a student or parent, ACC NSW will follow legal reporting guidelines and/or the school discipline and welfare procedures.

ACC SRE teachers may inform the school of local welfare support available to parents or students that can enhance the support provided by the school itself.

ACC NSW expects its SRE teachers to refer students to appropriate professional support when necessary.

If a local ACC NSW SRE teacher, or ACC NSW, as the Approved Provider, has concerns in regards to the behaviour of a professional classroom teacher, they will report their concerns to the school SRE Co-ordinator for minor issues for local resolution, or the Principal for concerns regarding breaches of the Department of Education's Code of Conduct using the Department of Education's Complaints handling policy. ACC NSW advises SRE teachers to inform their Approved Provider they have made a complaint without disclosing any unnecessary confidential details to ensure they receive ongoing support and assistance.

If a local ACC NSW SRE teacher, or ACC NSW, As the Approved Provider, has concerns in regards to the behaviour of another SRE teacher, they will report their concerns to the school SRE Co-ordinator for minor issues for local resolution or the reponsible Approved Provider for concerns regarding breaches of the Department of Education's Code of Conduct. Any concerns that require a legal response will be reported following appropriate reorting policy. ACC NSW advises SRE teachers to inform their Approved Provider they have made a complaint without disclosing any unnecessary confidential details to ensure they receive ongoing support and assistance.

ACC NSW Complaint Form

If you have a complaint or concern about any aspect of SRE involving an ACC SRE teacher, please complete this form and return it to ACC NSW SRE:
30 Raymond Street GILGANDRA NSW 2827 or sre@nswacc.org.au

Please Print Clearly:

1. General Information:					
Please select from the following. This is a:					
Complaint ☐		Suggestion ☐			
Please select from the following. I am a/an:					
Parent	Student	Member of the Public	DoE employee		SRE teacher
2. Personal Information:					
Title:	Mr	Mrs	Ms	Miss	Other:
Surname:					
Given Name/s:					
3. Contact Information:					
Residential Address					
				Postcode	
Mailing address					
				Postcode	
Mobile number					
Home number					
Email					
Your preferred contact method	Mobile	Home Phone	Email		Letter
4. Details of Complaint:					
Have you lodged a complaint about this issue previously?	Yes		No		
	If yes, when:				
	With Whom:				
	Outcome:				

5. Complaint Summary:	
Date and Time of Complaint	
Where it happened	
Who was involved (please include full names and, contact details if you have them)	
What happened (please include only exact details of complaint, not personal opinion)	
What would you like to happen to resolve your complaint?	
Please attach any documents to supoort your complaint.	

6. Acknowledgement:			
All information provided by me in this form is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.			
Signature:		Date:	
7. Privacy Notice:			
This information will only be used to resolve your complaint and access will only be provided to authorised personnel involved in resolving this issue. This information will be securely stored by ACC NSW once this complaint has been resolved.			
8. Office Use Only:			
Person receiving Complaint:			
Position:			
Date Complaint received:			
Complaint Lodged by:	Phone	In person	In writing
Please attach all documentation pertaining to the resolution of this complaint			

SRE Cross-Authorisation

SRE may be taught denominationally (ie just one denomination represented in the class) or joint-denominationally (eg joint Protestant SRE). When denominations decide to teach together, this is considered a Combined Arrangement and there are requirements that need to be met by SRE teachers in this situation:

- All teachers must meet the Authorisation requirements of their Approved Provider
- SRE teachers must teach from an Approved curriculum agreed to by at least one of the Approved Providers involved in the Combined Arrangement
- A cross-authorisation form must be completed and provided to the school prior to the commencement of SRE

ALL ACC teachers **must** now use the Christian SRE Cross Authorisation Form. If your co-ordinator asks you to sign a form with a different letterhead, please let them know that you only have permission to sign the Christian SRE Cross Authorisation Form.

Because we participate in joint denominational teaching, ACC teachers must **not** sign a Cross Authorisation form with a letterhead of any specific denomination.

If you have any issues please contact: sre@nswacc.org.au

The Cross Authorisation Form must be submitted to each school where joint denominational SRE is taught PRIOR to SRE commencing for each year and can be downloaded from NSW ACC Website.

SRE Special Assemblies

Easter, Christmas and Education Week offer opportunities for churches to work together in preparing a celebration. The success of an assembly depends on good preparation and clear communication.

Guidelines for Working Together

It is advisable to nominate a small committee, communicate via groups email or hold a meeting with representatives of all those religious persuasions teaching SRE in the school to ensure that the activity is inclusive. All participating churches should be invited to be involved in the planning regardless of whether Special Religious Education is taught denominationally or joint-denominationally.

The assembly content must respect the views of the participating churches and parents and participating churches must agree to the suitability of the content and anyone presenting the assembly, particularly if they are a visiting presenter.

An assembly or joint activity follows the same Religious Education Implementation guidelines as a normal SRE class. The school will need to be advised of the general content and organisation of the assembly. The Assembly Outline should be publicly available, as with all SRE Curriculum.

Making it Appropriate

The combined assembly must be a genuine educational activity and is not to be used as an opportunity for an evangelistic appeal. It may be advisable to have separate assemblies for students of different ages, or those with special needs.

Planning guide for the committee

1. **Determine the purpose of the assembly**

The aim of the assembly must be clear and agreed to by all participating churches.

2. Content of the Assembly (script, songs, audio, visuals, props)

- All participating churches must be informed of and agree to the content of the assembly.
- The content must be educationally sound using appropriate teaching techniques.
- Consideration must be given to developmental stages, understanding and learning styles of the students.
- The assembly must be considered in context e.g. Do the students have the background to enable them to make sense of the content?
- Any video material must carry the “G” rating for primary schools. High school assemblies may have a PG rating, if participating churches and school agree.
- A copy of the content should be given to the school for reference.

3. Assemblies involving visiting groups/speakers

Any visiting presenter should be approved by the committee, including any cost to have them come, and how payment will be made.

Presenters must be authorised by an Approved Provider and have a WWCC clearance number or sign the Department's Volunteer/Contractor declaration.

The committee should brief the presenter on:

- The aim of the assembly
- The denominational representative nature of SRE and any sensitivities to other beliefs and understandings of both students and other leaders.
- The cultural and social backgrounds of the students and any special needs.
- The age range of the audience.
- The use of age appropriate language and positive religious concepts.
- Duty of Care around sensitive issues.

Visiting presenters must provide the content of their presentation to the organising committee in good time prior to the assembly, so it can be agreed upon by all participating churches and the school is aware of the content.

4. Promotional flyers and leaflets

Where there is agreement that local events like Easter/Christmas services will be advertised, promotional material must be agreed to by the committee members and the school principal of every school the material may be given to students.

5. Evaluation of assembly

An evaluation can be in the form of a questionnaire or discussion (via email or at a meeting). Local churches, SRE teachers, school staff and/or students could be involved in the evaluation of the assembly.

You may seek feedback from the school.

The committee is responsible for following up on evaluations.

SRE Assembly Template	
School and team details	
School	Name of the school where the assembly will be held
Address	Address of the school
Date and time	Date and time of the assembly (include set up/ pack down time if required)
SRE Committee Co-ordinator and Contact details	Include the name and contact details of the person responsible for organising the assembly
School SRE contact	Include the name of the School SRE co-ordinator
Presenter	Include details of anyone involved in the assembly presentation
Authorised by	Include the Approved Provider who has authorised this person
Department of Education Clearance	Visiting presenters must sign the DoE volunteer/contractor declaration
Assembly Details	
Theme	Include the overall theme of the assembly
Curriculum Connection	How does this Assembly relate to the SRE curriculum?
Aim	Include the aim of the assembly
Outcomes	Include the teaching and learning outcomes
Bible Passage	Include the Bible passage/s the teaching content is drawn from
Teaching Outline	Include the basic points of the teaching that will be included
Foundational Scripture (Memory Verse)	Include any foundational scripture or memory verse you want students to learn
Bible readings	Include any bible reading/s you wish to include
Song/s	Include links to song/s for people to listen to, along with lyrics
Multi Media	Include any links to multi-media to be used
Visual Aids/ props	Include visual aids/ props to be used
Assembly Outline	Include the format of the program and in what order the content will be included. Attach a risk assessment for the assembly, with any games or activities involving students specifically addressed.
Equipment provided by school	Include who will be responsible for accessing and running any school equipment
Equipment provided by presenter	Include what the presenter will be bringing
Equipment provided by organiser	Include equipment you need to provide

Template is to be used in conjunction with SRE Assembly Guidelines

SRE Special Seminars

High School SRE provides occasional opportunities for the Churches to work together in preparing a seminar that benefits the welfare of students. The success of any seminar depends on planning, clear communication and ensuring the Religious Education Implementation procedures are followed.

Working Together

It is advisable to nominate a small committee, communicate via group email or hold a meeting with representatives of all those religious persuasions teaching SRE in the school to ensure that the activity is inclusive. All participating churches should be invited to be involved in the planning regardless of whether Special Religious Education is taught denominationally or joint- denominationally.

The assembly content must respect the views of the participating churches and parents and participating churches must agree to the suitability of the content and anyone presenting the assembly, particularly if they are a visiting presenter.

A seminar or joint activity follows the same Religious Education implementation guidelines as a normal SRE class. The school will need to be advised of the general content and organisation of the assembly. The Assembly Outline should be publicly available, as with all SRE Curriculum.

A seminar that is NOT SRE but comes under student welfare and must follow the duty of care and welfare requirements of the school.

Making it Appropriate

The combined seminar must be a genuine educational/welfare activity and is not to be used as an opportunity for an evangelistic appeal. It may be advisable to have separate assemblies for students of different ages, or those with special needs.

Planning guide for the committee

1. **Determine the purpose of the assembly**

The aim of the assembly must be clear and agreed to by all participating churches.

2. Content of the Assembly (script, songs, audio, visuals, props)

- All participating churches must be informed of and agree to the content of the assembly.
- The content must be educationally sound using appropriate teaching techniques.
- Consideration must be given to developmental stages, understanding and learning styles of the students.
- The assembly must be considered in context e.g. do the students have the

background to enable them to make sense of the content?

- High School assemblies may have a multi-media presentation with a "PG" rating, if participating churches and school agree. Presenters MUST be aware of media permissions set by the school.
- A copy of the content should be given to the school for reference.

3. Seminars involving visiting groups/speakers

Any visiting presenter should be approved by the committee, including any cost to have them come, and how payment will be made.

Presenters must be authorised by an Approved Provider and have a WWCC clearance number or sign the department's Volunteer/Contractors declaration.

The committee should brief the presenter on:

- The aim of the seminar.
- The denominational representative nature of SRE and any sensitivities to other beliefs and understandings of both students and other leaders.
- The cultural and social backgrounds of the students and any special needs.
- The age range of the audience.
- The use of age appropriate language and positive religious concepts.
- Duty of Care around sensitive issues.

Visiting presenters must provide the content of their presentation to the oganising committee in good time prior to the seminar, so it can be agreed upon by all participating churches and to ensure the school is aware of the content.

4. Promotional flyers and leaflets

Where there is agreement, promotional material must be agreed to by the committee members and the school principal in every school the material may be given to students.

5. Evaluation of seminar

An evaluation can be in the form of a questionnaire or discussion (via email or at a meeting). Local churches, SRE teachers, school staff and/or students could be involved in the evaluation of the assembly.

You may seek feedback from the school.

The committee is responsible for following up on evaluations.

SRE Seminar Template	
School and team details	
School	Name of the school where the seminar will be held
Address	Address of the school
Date and time	Date and time of the seminar (include set up/pack down time if required)
SRE Committee Co-ordinator and Contact details	Include the Name and contact details of the person responsible for organising the seminar
School SRE contact	Include the name of the School SRE co-ordinator
Presenter	Include details of anyone involved in the seminar presentation
Authorised by	Include the Approved Provider who has authorised this person
Department of Education Clearance	All visiting presenters must sign the DoE Volunteer and contractor declaration
Seminar Details	
Theme	Include the overall theme of the seminar
Connection to Curriculum	How does this seminar connect to the curriculum?
Aim	Include the aim of the seminar
Outcomes	Include the teaching and learning outcomes
Bible Passage	Include the Bible passage/s the teaching content is drawn from if applicable
Teaching Outline	Include the basic points of the teaching that will be included
Song/s	Include links to song/s for people to listen to, along with lyrics
Multi Media	Include any links to multi-media to be used
Visual Aids/ props	Include visual aids/ props to be used
Seminar Outline	Include the format of the program and in what order the content will be included Attach a risk assessment for the seminar, with any games or activities involving students specifically addressed.
Equipment provided by school	Include who will be responsible for accessing and running any school equipment
Equipment provided by presenter	Include what the presenter will be bringing
Equipment provided by organiser	Include equipment you need to provide

Template is to be used in conjunction with SRE Seminar guidelines

Appendix

1. Interactive WhiteBoards and Digital Projectors

Interactive Whiteboards

Interactive whiteboards (**IWB**) use touch detection for user access in the same way as a mouse/scroll pad is used for computer input. The digital screen of the IWB allows images from a computer to be displayed on the board. Users can use finger touch or a supplied pen (stylus). The IWB allows teachers to run a lesson from one large, visible focal point.

Most teachers understand the "why" but struggle with the "how". Here are some ideas on how you can use IWB.

- Use it as a tool for note-taking. Students can come and write important points on the board. Alternately, teachers can appoint a student to type out notes on the computer while they talk, so that the other students can view and take them down.
- Teachers can brainstorm ideas with their students in the classroom. They can put together text/ideas as well as images, diagrams or videos.
- Classroom games can be played on the board. Board games in particular can be played on the board itself.
- All forms of media– videos, photographs, graphs, maps, illustrations, games, etc. – can be used on the board, making it dynamic in nature. This expands the range of content that teachers can use for presenting new information.

SMART is a brand of interactive whiteboard but there are a number of different companies offering a similar technology and experience. The videos below take you through the basic steps of using a SMART brand board. The details and the connectors may vary depending on the brand and the model used.

Please ensure that schools have provided permission before using the interactive whiteboard. It is recommended that the classroom teacher provides a brief tutorial before using the IWB.

How to use the Smart Board

What is a Smart Board:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ei0yiZq-EEg

Complete Smart Board Tutorial:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0U05WeXPGlk

Digital Projector

A digital projector is an electronic device that is capable of connecting to a computer or other device and projecting the video output onto a screen or wall. Digital projectors can be either fixed onto the ceiling, placed on a stand or can even be portable. Digital projectors are used in classroom teaching.

How to use the Digital Projector

How to connect a laptop to a projector:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QmBDoBkvTuQ

How to use a LCD Projector with a laptop:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PzHtZW5Z6XA&t=58s

2. Better Balanced Futures HANDBOOK

SRE in schools

The NSW Government, through legislation and related policy, recognises the diversity of Australian society and supports parental choice in educating children about their faith. The delivery of Special Religious Education (SRE) is managed by religious persuasions, which are approved as SRE providers by the Department of Education.

SRE is mandated by the Education Act (1990) and gives parents the choice to have children formed in the faith of their family. Section 32 of the Education Act says that
'In every government school, time is to be allowed for the religious education of children of any religious persuasion.'

The provision of SRE is not funded by government.

The Departments Special Religious Education Procedures are available online for the school community and other interested members of the public. The procedures provide guidelines for the delivery of SRE in government schools.

SRE providers are approved to access schools, determine teachers and the curriculum.

Legislative Provisions
Education Act 1990, Sections 26, 30, 31, 32 and 33 and 33A

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.

The Code of Conduct is located in the Teacher Authorisation Processes policy. It is the responsibility of all SRE teachers that this policy is read and acknowledged.

Role of the SRE teacher

All SRE teachers contribute to the delivery of religious education in public schools in NSW. An SRE teacher's role is vital to ensure that the message of all faiths is properly disseminated to the students who attend SRE classes. In 2015 there were over 11,000 SRE teachers delivering SRE lessons.

It is important that SRE teachers are familiar with the policies and procedures to ensure quality education. All approved providers have documentation that supports SRE and it is the SRE teacher's role to ensure that these have been read and acknowledged. Among others, these are:

- Teacher Authorisation Processes: Code of Conduct, WWCC and Child Protection.
- Teacher Review Process: Self-reflection questionnaire, self-evaluation and classroom observation.
- Complaints Policies and Procedures: Types, management, flowchart, complaints and compliments form.
- Social Media Policy & Audio-visual Material in Schools: Classification and directions for use.
- Interactive Whiteboards and Digital Projectors.

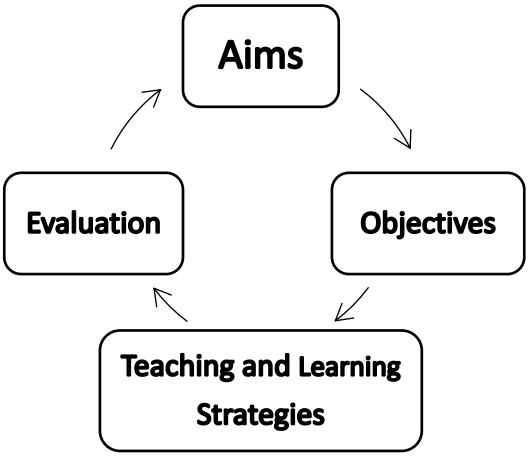
SRE teachers are to only use their authorised curriculum. The scope and sequence provide the outcomes or aims for each lesson or unit taught. This must be accessible and visible on the approved providers website as it informs parents of what their child is learning in SRE classes.

A detailed list of an SRE teacher's responsibilities can be found in the **Teacher Authorisation Processes** under the heading *Responsibilities*.

SRE curriculum

Approved providers provide each teacher with an SRE curriculum.

A curriculum sets out what students should be taught and achieve. It should always be cyclical as follows:



The SRE curriculum should answer these four questions:

1. What is being taught?
2. What are the outcomes or aims?
3. What are the effective teaching methods to engage the diverse range of students?
4. How can the SRE teacher evaluate his/her own teaching?

Each step is important to develop a comprehensive and age/stage appropriate curriculum and outcomes.

An SRE curriculum should include the following:

- Scope and sequence
- Unit or module outline
- Lesson plan
- Lesson aim
- Teaching strategies
- Resources required for the lesson

SRE lesson preparation

Lesson preparation is an important skill in effective teaching. Lesson plans provide the SRE teacher with a framework to support delivery of an effective lesson.

What are lesson plans and why should we have them?

- **Clarity:** Lesson plans clarify what is to be taught. Teachers are required to make decisions about the strategies and resources they will use to achieve the lesson aims and objectives
- **Framework:** Lesson plans give teachers an outline
- **Reminder:** Lesson plans remind teachers where the lesson is up to at any point of time
- **Commitment:** Lesson plans reflect a level of professionalism and real commitment.
- Lesson plans have a **positive impact** on both the teacher and the student.

For the SRE teacher, lessons plans:

- Support SRE teachers in delivering with confidence what is expected of them from the approved provider
- Provide clear procedures to follow
- Build on previous teaching to enhance deeper learning

For the student, lesson plans:

- Demonstrate that the teacher cares for their learning
- Provide structure so that it is easy to follow and participate in
- Reflect a well organised teacher.

SRE resources

Students are more likely to achieve their goals if SRE teachers draw on a variety of resources. This means that SRE resources supplement, and occasionally replace, the most traditional forms of information.

Resources can include posters, photos, music, worksheets and workbooks, interactive activities, IT, videos and on-line learning etc.

If teachers are planning on using multi-media in the classroom, the **Social Media and Audio-Visual Materials in School policy** must be read and followed.

Student engagement and participation

When a student is positively engaged, they are more inclined to stay on task and have increased attention spans. Their thinking skills improve as well as their understanding of concepts.

The following information provides some guidelines of what is typical and appropriate at different age levels. This will assist SRE teachers with student engagement. The list is not exhaustive. It is important that SRE teachers get to know the students in their classes as every child is unique and there is a diverse range within any class.

Children aged 5-6 years

- Physical Development
  - physical activity is an outlet
  - sitting is difficult
- Cognitive development
  - like to paint and draw
  - practice skills in order to become better
  - understand concept of numbers
  - know right and left hands
  - can copy complex shapes, such as a diamond
  - can understand commands with three separate instructions
  - can explain objects and their use
  - like to play board games
- Social development
  - prefer small groups
  - identifies with others
  - individual friendships and loyalties are important
  - concerned for others
  - models adult behaviour
  - friendly and affectionate
  - begin to understand and appreciate humour
  - enjoys tricks and jokes
  - difficult to laugh at themselves
  - cooperate and share
- Emotional development
  - enjoy responsibilities and privileges that they can handle
  - easily discouraged and has difficulty accepting criticism
  - seek praise and encouragement
  - respond readily to affection, warmth and a sense of humour
  - difficult to accept losing and prefer games that are non-competitive
  - tend to dawdle and become upset if hurried
  - shy, need encouragement to participate and protection from aggressive children
  - sense of safety and belonging is important
  - fearful of imaginary creatures

Children aged 7-9 years

- Physical development
  - enthusiastic about games
  - begin to play team sports
  - fine motor skills are increasing
- Cognitive development
  - can count backwards and know the date
  - read more and enjoy reading
  - understand concept of space
  - enjoy collecting objects
- Social development
  - form close friendships
  - tend to become cliquish with 3 to 8 members
  - shift in/out of groups on again/off again friendships

- sensitive to what other children and adults think of them
- want to please
- enjoy helping with chores
- like cleaning
- play in a socialised manner
- adhere to game rules rigidly
- able to solve arguments with peers
- Like competition and games

➢ Emotional development
- struggle to become competent and productive members of society
- react poorly to being teased and ridiculed
- difficulty accepting criticism
- more argumentative and spirited
- eager and capable of participating in rule-making
- enjoy competitive games, but keep at reasonable limits with simple rules
- requires support to self-regulate behaviour

Children aged 10-12 years

➢ Physical development
- introduce varied and complicated movement i.e., jumping rope
- can become self-conscious with their body image

➢ Cognitive development
- Like to write letters
- Read well

➢ Social development
- desperately want to "fit in"
- increasing need for peer recognition and approval
- shift from dependency on parents to dependency on peers
- friendships are important. On again/off again relationships are common
- develop loyalty, standing up for each other
- can be insensitive or cruel to others. Need strong adult models of kindness and compassion
- like to discuss social problems
- interested in working on community projects

➢ Emotional development
- adult support is crucial during this period
- seeking independence
- increasing questioning of issues
- need to develop strategies to maintain self-control
- need adults to respect their ability to make sound judgements

Thinking Skills – Keeping it Real

Although, during middle childhood (6 years to 12 years of age), children's ability to think becomes more flexible, their understanding is still tied to what is real and what they experience.

In order to learn, they still need learning situations to be very concrete with concrete or real materials. New learning situations should be connected to their own past experiences or what they have seen themselves.

Children in middle childhood still find it difficult to think about abstract ideas. For example, the concept of world economy or working in a particular occupation for a living would be very difficult for school-aged children to understand, as these types of things are beyond their experience and not real to them.

The ability to use logic and strategies to play a game develops gradually. For example, a six-year old will play a very different game of chess or monopoly or card games to that played by a twelve-year old.

Self-concept and self-esteem

The development of self-concept is a significant milestone of the children aged 6 to 12 years. **Self-concept** is the picture that we have of ourselves in terms of our skills, qualities and abilities. **Self-esteem** is the value we place on our skills, qualities and abilities and how we believe others value us in terms of our skills and abilities.

During middle childhood, children need to learn skills and to be involved in tasks where they feel a sense of achievement and responsibility. They need to feel important to other people and valued by other people.

It is important to measure success in terms of effort, not only in terms of achievement. Coming first, winning awards or being the best are some ways of being successful. Children need to learn that success can be looked at in different ways. The amount of effort or playing fairly or sticking at a task are all ways children (or adults) can be successful.

From about six-years old children move from the enjoyment of playing to producing something real.

For children to feel successful and competent, their *efforts* and *achievements* are to be praised, respected and encouraged. Children will feel a failure and incompetent if their efforts and achievements are laughed at, criticised or ignored.

Communicating with students

Good communication makes learning easier, helps students achieve their goals, strengthens the connection between the student and the SRE teacher and creates a positive learning environment.

It is important that SRE teachers create a happy, engaging atmosphere and interact with their students in a warm and positive way. SRE teachers must initiate and maintain communication with their students in ways that are respectful and promote equity.

Warm and respectful communication with students involves:

- Maintaining eye contact
- Giving students full attention
- Using a courteous tone of voice
- Allowing wait time for students to think
- Listening to their answers
- Asking appropriate and open-ended questions such as Who, What, Why, When and How
- Knowing student's names and using them

It is recommended that SRE teachers:

Listen: demonstrate active listening skills through maintaining eye contact, asking questions and seeking confirmation.

Empathise: say words such as "I can see that you are feeling very excited" and "if you are feeling worried…"

Be assertive: encourage thoughts such as "That's it, what else can you think of? You have so many great ideas."

Be supportive: offer support when things are going well and provide alternate ideas.

Increase students' self-esteem: every student must feel they have been successful. Praise the action not the person e.g. 'thank you Samuel for that interesting idea' (rather than 'good boy, Samuel'.)

Classroom management

Classroom management is about creating an environment so that all students can learn. Management implies finding solutions, anticipating situations and working with the environment and the diversity of student responses. To manage is better than to react.

The best discipline is one that nobody notices, not even the student being disciplined.

Practice Positivity

Students perform better when they feel better not worse. All of us like to be given attention and recognition. However, for some students they have found that negative attention in the form of reprimands and shouting is better than no attention at all.

It is important that SRE teachers accentuate the positive and eliminate the negative.

The following are examples of changing the negative phrases to positive phrases for primary school students. Remember comment on the student's action rather than on the student him/herself:

Negative	**Positive**
Don't run inside	Remember to walk inside
Don't shout	I like your quiet voices in the classroom
How many times have I told you to sit down	Let's see who is sitting quietly

The empowerment of choice

By offering students choice, SRE teachers enable students to have ownership, independence and a sense of empowerment. Examples of choice can be: "who would like to read this passage?" OR "we have this activity to complete or this one, which one do you choose?" Teaching students about choice-response thinking may be one of the most valuable thinking patterns SRE teachers can provide.

Encourage reflection

Reflection is simply the act of thinking about our relationships, desires and our behaviours. The purpose of reflection is to stimulate our internal motivation. Controlling others is counterproductive to what teachers want to achieve. It is far more important to have students *want* to change. Therefore, asking effective questions and encouraging a reflection process is more successful in changing a student's behaviour. Remember that when you tell, the teacher does the thinking. When you ask, the students do the thinking

Changing behaviour	Getting on task
What do you want? *This question stimulates thinking and leads to reflection*	Does what you are doing help you get your work done? *i.e. what's the problem*
What are you choosing to do? *This question leads to evaluation on one's behaviour*	If you would like to get your work done, what would be your first step *i.e. what's your problem*
If what you are choosing is not getting what you want, then what is your *plan*? *This question encourages the making of a plan. It must be the student's plan not the teacher's*	What do you like to do that you can apply to this task? *i.e. why are you doing this?*
What are your *procedures* to implement this plan/ what steps will you take to make this plan work? *This question leads to mental imaging and specific steps that will be required to carry out the plan*	Do you need help with this task? *(solution focused. Student makes a choice regarding the solution)*

Questions for students to reflect on are:

- What **did** I do? (acknowledgment)
- What **can** I do to prevent it from happening again? (choice)
- What **will** I do? (commitment)

The following management tips can assist SRE teachers:

Use a normal, natural voice: Raising our voice to obtain students behaviour is not the best approach and causes stress. Student will mirror the SRE teachers voice so avoid using that semi-shouting voice.

Speak only when students are quiet and ready: It can be tempting to start but eventually students will cue each other to quieten down.

Get to know the students: Learn students names, likes and dislikes and what they like to do in your class. Then progress to a student seating plan so that students who tend to misbehave sit close to the front.

Use hand signals and other non-verbal communication: Holding one hand in the air and making eye contact is a great way to get students attention. Many schools use a sequence of claps as a tool for students to listen. If in doubt, ask the classroom teacher for tips that the school uses.

Ensure you can see everyone: If you cannot see a student that means they cannot see you so ensure you always sit or stand in order to see the entire room.

Address behaviour issues quickly and wisely: Ensure confidentiality when dealing with a student. Don't embarrass anyone so a quiet word away from ear shot of other students is appropriate. Use 'I' words when speaking e.g. "How can I help you?" "I can see that something is troubling you today"

Nurture the 'I don't care' student: Give him/her time to cool down before talking. Help the student save face by not scolding and shaming him/her.

Always have a well-designed, engaging lesson: Stick to the lesson plan and stay on task.

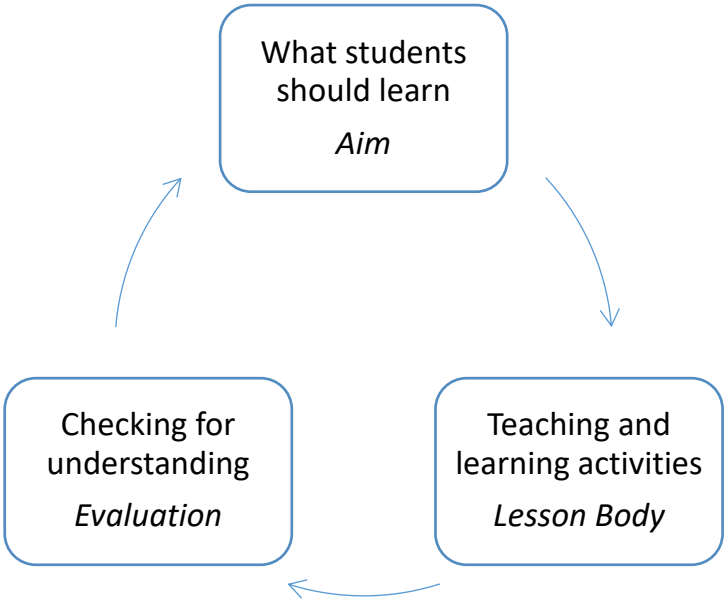
Know the rules: Three simple rules to start every lesson can be:

(a) We respect ourselves (b) We respect others (c) We respect property

Remember to ask the classroom teacher what the school/class rules are and refer to them to ensure consistency.

SRE lesson plans

A lesson plan is the teacher's road map of what students need to learn and how it will be done effectively during the class time. A successful lesson plan addresses and integrates these three key components:



What students should learn

This can be referred to as aims or objectives. In order to decide what these are, questions to think about are:

a) What is the main point of the lesson?
b) What will the students accomplish during the lesson?
c) What are the most important concepts, ideas, or skills students need to be able to understand?

School principals offer a range of patterns to organise SRE in schools. Students can either be in streamed classes (students in the same grade) or composite classes (mixed age groups). It is important that SRE teachers adapt to their class and any special circumstances. Most lesson plans commence with an **introduction** to creatively stimulate interest and encourage thinking. A variety of approaches can be used to engage students (e.g., personal anecdote, historical event, real-world example, short video clip, probing question, etc.)

Teaching and learning activities

The body of the lesson should enable the SRE teacher to use several ways of explain the aims or objectives. These can include real-life examples, reference to historical information and visuals to appeal to different learning styles. **Teaching resources** are vital to keep the students stimulated and engaged.

Lessons are planned with an **estimation** of time required for each activity. Ensure there is time for extended explanations or discussions but be also prepared to move on quickly to ensure that the objectives are met for each lesson. The average amount of time per SRE lesson is 30 minutes, which can fly by.
The questions below will assist with the lesson plans:

- What is required to explain the topic?
- How will the students be engaged in the lesson?
- What do the students need to further understand the lesson?
- Will the resources add or detract from the lesson?

Checking for understanding

How will teachers know when students have understood their lessons?

Checking for understanding is vital to ensure that the content of the lesson is pitched at the student's level. In a composite class this is more difficult as the range of students can be from year K to year 6 in the same classroom. It is advisable that teachers ask themselves the following:

- What questions need to be asked in order to check for understanding?
- What activity do students need to complete to check that the aims/objectives have been met?

Effective conclusions must be part of the lesson plan because it ties together the principles and important points that have been discussed. The following is a list of suggested conclusions:

- Give students the opportunity to describe the key points of the lesson (this can be via direct question and answer or visually illustrating their thoughts)
- Ask students when they can use the new information learnt
- Encourage students to predict what the next lesson will be
- Students can create a quick quiz for their peers
- Allow students to make a short jingle that summaries the lesson

A **scope and sequence** is an important step in the design of effective teaching and learning programs for SRE. It summarises what is to be taught and the sequence in which it will be taught. A scope and sequence show the order of the units within a year or stage, and the syllabus outcomes that each unit addresses. Generally, a subject scope and sequence plan for a year should include:

- Title of each topic/unit of work
- Duration of each topic/unit of work
- Syllabus outcomes for each stage/age

Lesson adaption

SRE teachers are faced with the challenge of teaching all students, regardless of their academic, social, and developmental levels. Any SRE classroom will contain a mix of students with various ability levels and educational needs. For this reason, teachers must adapt their lesson plans to meet the needs of all students, and provide all students with the opportunity to learn and grow.

All students deserve individualised attention that helps them achieve the best possible learning. Teachers know how the personalities, challenges, and strengths of their students can fundamentally change the flow of a classroom. Adapting to this diverse body of learners is both challenging and rewarding. Slight modifications to lessons can work to help all learners in the classroom, but it's important not to make the changes and adaptations so large that advanced learners are left on their own and the main aims or objectives of the lesson are lost.

The following are some tips to reach the needs of all learners:

- Know your students
- Identify what you want all students to learn
- Use activities effectively to allow the teacher to focus on the student's needs

- Have a back-up plan for students to receive assistance if they finish their work early or require extra assistance
- Deliver instructions clearly

It is easy to run out of time and not cover all of the many points teachers had planned to cover. Lesson plans are often required to be adjusted during the class depending on what the students need. Having additional examples or alternative activities will also allow teachers to be flexible. A **realistic timeline** will reflect flexibility and readiness to adapt to the specific classroom environment. Here are some strategies for creating a realistic timeline:

- Estimate how much time each of the activities will take, then plan some extra time for each.
- Plan a few minutes at the end of class to answer any remaining questions and to sum up key points.
- Plan an extra activity or discussion question in case there is time left.
- Be flexible – be ready to adjust the lesson plan to students' needs and focus on what seems to be more productive rather than sticking to the original plan.

Teaching the lesson

Lesson preparation ahead of time allows for flexibility. Experienced SRE teachers can testify that by preparing well ahead of time, they have been able to reflect and think and have their lessons run well.

Tips and Tricks

Be prepared for the lesson and other contingencies by using a dedicated bag or box for SRE that contains everything you are likely to need in teaching. Then you only have to grab the bag/box as you go out the door.

A good attitude is important. Teachers should reflect if teaching SRE classes is an obligation or an opportunity? If teachers are serious about the opportunity SRE presents, they should be evaluating their priorities in order to focus on this opportunity.

Generally, the time available is about 30 minutes. The school timetable is outside the SRE teachers control, so after marking the roll and settling the students sometimes the time available will be even less. Teachers should try and be very sure of what they aim to do and make just one point. Its then easy to build or scaffold upon that one point in the next lesson.

Use appropriate language. Classroom language should not be too technical or abstract.

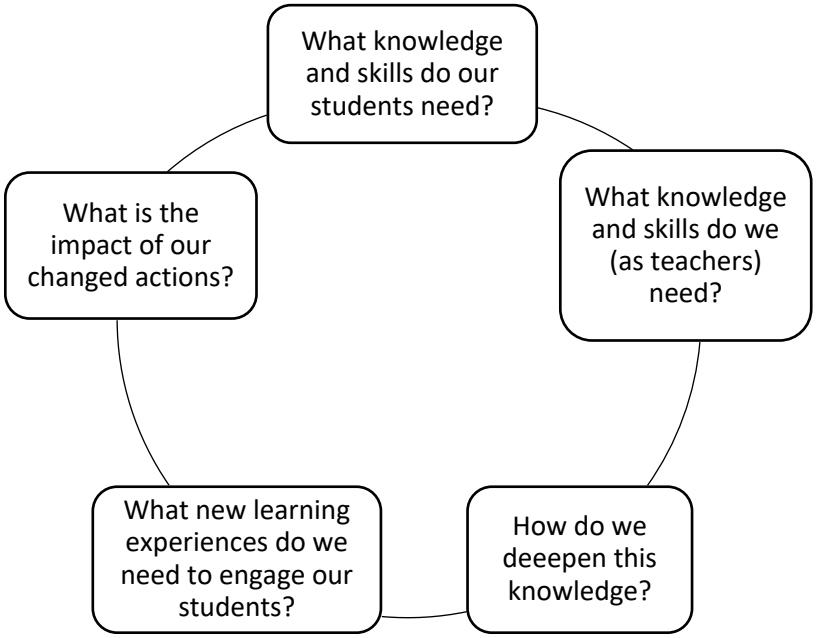
Check if the students understand. Remember students in SRE classes come from various cultural backgrounds and sometimes from other faiths. Don't assume too much prior knowledge on the topic being taught so teach in bite-sized chucks.

Remember to refer to the class rules to assist with behaviour management.

Support structures

Professional learning comprises of activities and experiences which guide development and improve performance. It is the formal and informal learning experiences undertaken by SRE teachers that improve their individual professional practice and the approved providers collective effectiveness. One can measure this success by improved student engagement and learning outcomes.

Effective teaching is the most powerful influence on a student's achievement and effective professional learning focusses on developing the core attributes of an SRE teacher. This means that when SRE teachers engage in effective professional development, their enhanced knowledge and skill improves their teaching and their improved teaching then enhances their students' outcomes. An example of questions to ask ourselves is below:



Where to go for support?

Your approved provider will ensure that you have the tools necessary to conduct your first lesson and they will arm you with appropriate information.

One way to obtain knowledge and skills is via peer-to-peer learning. SRE teachers are encouraged to observe one-another's teaching methods in order to learn from each other. SRE teachers will then have the opportunity to give and receive feedback about teaching practice and develop awareness about their own teaching.

Participating in the regular team curriculum planning activities will provide teachers with the necessary educational support. Both formal and informal professional learning opportunities should be provided in response to the feedback.

Feedback

SRE teachers can obtain feedback from a number of sources:

1. Their supervisor: By completing the **SRE Teacher Audit Process** teachers will have the opportunity to speak to their supervisor about ways to improve their teaching. At this time, it is advisable to discuss further professional learning ideas and topics.

2. Other teachers: Peer feedback is when SRE teachers offer advice to one another. This is an opportunity to discuss what has worked in SRE classes, what still needs to be achieved and advice of how to achieve that improvement.

3. Their students: Students offer valuable insights into the teacher and the curriculum. No matter what age or stage the student is, their thoughts are critical to the ongoing success of a lesson. Ways to obtain this are:

a) Give students exit slips saying *"what I like is…..? I would like more information on…."*
b) Provide students with checklists to complete such as, *"rate the lesson today"*
c) Have a class discussion "*what activities do you like to do?" "what would you like to learn next week?"*

Self-reflection

SRE teachers are encouraged to reflect on their teaching.

Reflective teachers are those who give time to analysing both teaching and learning experiences in order to make decisions about their teaching in the future. While it is possible to dwell only on negative feedback, reflection is actually a hopeful activity in the sense that it focuses on improvements for the future. Sometimes, lessons that go badly give rise to excellent lessons following reflection.

For the new SRE teacher, reflection involves developing a habit of self-evaluation, trialling new strategies, and asking questions. It is often the case that skilled, experienced SRE teachers know intuitively what the right action to take is. This is due in part to experience and reflection. Often their actions are connected with experiences on which they have reflected and thereby learnt from.

Some helpful questions teachers might ask as they reflect on their teaching experiences include:

- What worked well in the lesson?
- Why did these features work well?
- What have they learned about their teaching from these points?
- What aspects of the lesson could be improved?
- Why have these aspects been identified?
- How can teachers capitalise on their strengths and improve on their weaknesses?

Using the **SRE Teacher Audit Process** will enable SRE teachers to assess themselves and their way of working.