



National School Chaplaincy Programme

Frequently Asked Questions

Fact sheet

What is the National School Chaplaincy Programme?

The National School Chaplaincy Programme (NSCP) is an Australian Government funded initiative that provides funding for the employment of chaplains in Australian schools.

The aim of the NSCP is to support the emotional wellbeing of students by providing pastoral care services and strategies that support the emotional wellbeing of the broader school community.

The Department of Education and Training administers the NSCP in Queensland.

What is meant by 'pastoral care'?

The NSCP defines 'pastoral care' as the practice of looking after the personal needs of students — not just their academic needs — through the provision of general spiritual and personal advice.

Who is a chaplain?

The NSCP defines a chaplain as an individual who:

1. is recognised by the school community and the appropriate governing authority for the school as having the skills and experience to deliver school chaplaincy to the school community
2. is recognised through formal ordination, commissioning, recognised religious qualifications or endorsement by a recognised or accepted religious institution
3. meets the NSCP's minimum qualification requirements.

What are the chaplain's minimum qualification requirements?

The minimum qualification requirement for a NSCP chaplain is either:

1. a Certificate IV in Youth Work
2. a Certificate IV in Pastoral Care
3. an [equivalent qualification](#) to the above.

The certificate or equivalent qualification must also include competencies in 'mental health' and 'making appropriate referrals'.

What funding does the Australian Government NSCP provide for schools?

The NSCP commenced in 2015 and provides up to \$17.57 million per annum to Queensland, over four years, to fund chaplains in state and non-state schools.

How much NSCP funding will each school receive?

The NSCP provides up to \$20,000, or up to \$24,000 in remote/very remote areas, per annum, to be distributed to each school prioritised for funding.

State schools will receive a funding allocation based on total enrolments. Funding allocations may differ to amounts provided to schools during 2015.

Are there conditions attached to the engagement of chaplains via the NSCP?

The NSCP states that chaplains may be from any faith. Chaplains are not permitted to proselytise and must respect, accept and be sensitive to other people's views, values and beliefs. Chaplains must comply with state legislation and policies — including, but not limited to, child protection matters — as well as meet minimum qualification requirements.

How can parents find out what the chaplain does in their child's school?

The principal should establish communication processes to provide parents at enrolment, and/or on request, information which outlines the school's chaplaincy service. This supports parents to make an informed decision regarding their child/ren's participation in chaplaincy activities and/or provide consent for ongoing one-on-one meetings. It is useful to publish this information on the school's website, in the parent handbook and/or in the school newsletter.

Can a school choose a student welfare worker instead of a chaplain?

Student welfare workers are not funded under the NSCP. Schools may wish to deliver student welfare services using other funding sources, such as community funds.

How many schools will be eligible to join the NSCP?

All Queensland state, Catholic and independent schools are eligible to submit an online application for consideration against the assessment criteria. The number of schools selected for the program is dependent on the total funding available for allocation.

Are all schools required to apply for funding?

Participation in the NSCP is voluntary — schools are not obligated to apply for funding.

Which schools will be eligible for NSCP funding?

All Queensland state, Catholic and independent schools are eligible to apply for funding under the NSCP. Applications will be considered and prioritised for funding using the following criteria:

- Evidence that the school community supports the introduction or continuation of a chaplaincy service within the school. This evidence must be held by the school and can be demonstrated by:
 - the provision of details such as the results of school surveys, meetings, newsletters or community discussions (at a minimum, consultation must have been conducted with the school's parent body or school equivalent)
 - principal endorsed minutes, or a signed letter from the head of the parent body or school equivalent, confirming support for a chaplaincy service.
- Demonstrated need for the NSCP determined through a combination of:
 - EQ Zone Group — a broad classification for Queensland schools based on a number of criteria, including the Accessibility Remoteness Index of Australia (ARIA), as in metropolitan, provincial, rural or remote

- disadvantage code for the school based on the Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage (IRSED) status
- number of full-time enrolments in the school
- proportion of full-time Indigenous students enrolled at the school
- provision of an existing chaplaincy or student welfare service, funded through the NSCP in 2015, or through the 2015 State Government funds.

Under exceptional circumstances, and at the discretion of the cross-sector panel, some state schools may be allocated an alternate allocation amount, dependent on the specific need for the a chaplaincy programme.

Decisions made by the cross-sector panel are final.

If a school withdraws from the NSCP, the cross-sector panel will oversee selection of an alternative school.

Successful schools will be required to demonstrate to the department the ongoing engagement of a chaplain and capacity to use the total allocated funding amount at the conclusion of semester one and semester two of each year of the NSCP. Schools unable to demonstrate this may risk losing their NSCP funding allocation.

Will schools that are unsuccessful in their application have an opportunity to appeal against a funding decision?

There will not be an appeals process for decisions made about funding via the NSCP. The decision of the selection panel will be final.

When will schools be notified about the outcome of their applications?

Schools will be notified regarding the outcome of their application via email by Tuesday 1 December 2015.

When do applications close?

Applications for NSCP funding will close at 5.00 pm, Tuesday 13 October 2015.

Additional information

Additional information regarding chaplaincy services in state schools is contained in the department's Chaplaincy and Student Welfare Services policy statement and supporting documents available at: <http://education.qld.gov.au/schools/healthy/chaplaincy-student-welfare.html>

Contact details

For further information, contact:

State schools — StateSchool.Feedback@dete.qld.gov.au

Independent schools — Ms Debbie Creed, dcreed@isq.qld.edu.au or 3228 1520

Catholic schools — Mr John Percy, johnp@qcec.catholic.edu.au or 3316 5840