



Ashbury Public School

# Special Religious Education and Special Education in Ethics (SRE & SEE) Policy and Procedures

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Policy:

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Distribution: - School Council members – Website - Ashbury Staff

## Rationale

The purpose of this document is to provide for the orderly operation of SRE and SEE at Ashbury Public School, including transparency on the process and seamless transition of students from year to year.

This document should be read in conjunction with Department of Education policies that can be found at: <http://www.curriculumsupport.education.nsw.gov.au/policies/religion/>

Special Religious Education (SRE) is education in the beliefs and practices of an approved religious persuasion by authorised representatives of that persuasion.

Special Education in Ethics (SEE) is education in ethical decision making, action and reflection within a secular framework, based on a branch of philosophy.

General religious education is education about the world's major religions, what people believe and how that belief affects their lives. It is taught mainly through the school curriculum.

## The Rights of Parents and Caregivers

### The Right of Choice

Where authorised teachers are available, parents/caregivers in public schools have the right to have their children receive instruction in their religious persuasion, an alternative religious persuasion, or attend special education in ethics classes.

Parents/caregivers also have the right to choose not to have their children attend SRE or SEE and for them to be provided with meaningful activities.

### The Right to Information

Parents/caregivers have the right to know how SRE & SEE will be organised each year and which approved providers will deliver it.

This information is provided through enrolment information, the school website and the school newsletter. SRE & SEE providers can assist the school in this regard by providing information about their programs.

## **Responsibilities for Special Religious Education and Special Education in Ethics**

### **Responsibilities of Schools**

#### ***Provision of Special Religious Education and Special Education in Ethics***

- Principals allow time for SRE & SEE where authorised representatives of approved providers are available.
- SRE & SEE is an integral part of school activities, taking place in school hours and under the jurisdiction of the school.
- Principals support SRE & SEE by ensuring that no academic instruction or formal school activities occur during time set aside for SRE & SEE. Such activities create conflict of choice for some parents and students attending SRE & SEE.
- Principals also support SRE & SEE by making adequate facilities available for the provision of SRE & SEE, including timetable provisions and classrooms.

#### ***Teaching Special Religious Education and Special Education in Ethics***

SRE & SEE are delivered by providers that have the approval of the Minister for Education for that purpose. A list of approved providers is available at

<http://www.curriculumsupport.education.nsw.gov.au/policies/religion/index.htm>

While on duty, members of a school's staff do not teach SRE or SEE.

#### ***Timing of Special Religious Education***

At Ashbury Public School, SRE & SEE will generally be taught on Tuesdays from 11:00 to 11:40 beginning early in early to mid-Term 1.

These times will be negotiated and agreed between the Principal and the approved SRE & SEE providers. The Principal will be sensitive to the voluntary nature of SRE & SEE and the fact that many SRE & SEE teachers have commitments in more than one school.

#### ***Information for Parents/Caregivers***

At enrolment at Ashbury Public School, parents and carers will be advised:

- of SRE & SEE options at the school, including the religious persuasions providing SRE and of the availability of SRE & SEE for particular classes or year groups
- of arrangements made for students whose parents and carers indicate that they are not to attend SRE or SEE
- that they may nominate an alternative persuasion, where SRE is not offered for students of a particular religious persuasion, or for other reasons.

Where a religious persuasion was nominated on enrolment, the student is enrolled in an SRE class of the religious persuasion identified on the student's enrolment record.

Where a religious persuasion was not nominated on enrolment or the nominated religious persuasion is not available as a SRE program at the school, parents and carers are asked to complete a preference form which outlines all SRE & SEE options available at the school. Parents/caregivers have the right to choose any of the SRE or SEE options available or to choose non-SRE/SEE.

Students will continue in the same arrangement as the previous year, unless a parent or carer has requested a change in writing. For orderly operation of the service this should be done at the start of the school year.

When changes to the number of SRE & SEE teachers occurs and classes are created or removed, the school will provide notice to the parents of the changed arrangements.

### ***Students Not Attending Special Religious Education or Special Education in Ethics***

In the times set aside for SRE & SEE, students at Ashbury Public School who are not attending are located in a separate physical space from SRE & SEE classes.

Ashbury Public School staff will provide meaningful activities with appropriate care and supervision. These activities will not compete with SRE & SEE. They will also not be lessons in the curriculum. Suitable activities can include reading and private study.

When insufficient teachers or accommodation are available, the school's policy on minimal supervision operates.

### ***Communication***

Ashbury Public School will inform the parents and carers and the wider community of the SRE & SEE arrangements of the school. This will be done in the school newsletter at the beginning of every year or when changes are made to the number of classes.

During Term 4 Ashbury Public School will inform the SRE & SEE coordinators of the estimated numbers for SRE & SEE classes for the following year. This is done to assist in recruiting teachers.

SRE & SEE teachers are also informed of the timetable arrangements for the following year.

The school will inform SRE & SEE teachers of any school arrangements that will cause a change to the regular timetable. This will be done as soon as possible.

### ***Information About Lesson Content***

The Principal of Ashbury Public School is not responsible for, and does not disseminate details of, lesson content for SRE & SEE, but on request will provide the name and contact details of the approved provider or their local representative. General information is available from the above link to the Department of Education.

### ***Student Behaviour Management***

Principals and teachers retain duty of care for students and intervene in cases where it is necessary to maintain good order and conduct.

At Ashbury Public School class teachers are required to remain in their classrooms during SRE & SEE to assist with behaviour management.

### ***Complaints***

The Principal of Ashbury Public School will report and discuss all complaints concerning alleged teaching inefficiency or inappropriate lesson content with the approved provider of that authorised the SRE & SEE teacher.

Allegations of improper behaviour or other complaints of a serious nature in regard to SRE & SEE will be managed in accordance with the Department of Education's policies and procedures. The

Principal will refer all allegations of a child protection nature to the Child Wellbeing Unit and the Department's Employee Performance and Conduct Directorate.

### ***School Special Religious Education and Special Education in Ethics Coordinator***

At Ashbury Public School a member of the teaching staff is appointed as the school's SRE & SEE coordinator with responsibility for managing the implementation of SRE & SEE. Questions from parents are to be directed to the Principal.

### **Responsibilities of Providers**

#### ***Approval to Deliver Special Religious Education or Special Education in Ethics***

Approval of the Minister for Education is required for providers to deliver SRE & SEE.

#### ***Authorisation to Teach Special Religious Education***

The authorisation of personnel to teach SRE & SEE is the sole responsibility of each individual approved provider.

All SRE & SEE teachers must sign a prohibited employment declaration which must be provided to the school along with details of their *NSW Working with Children Check*.

Volunteers providing SRE or SEE in NSW public schools under the age of 18 must complete a declaration that they are not a person prohibited from undertaking child-related employment.

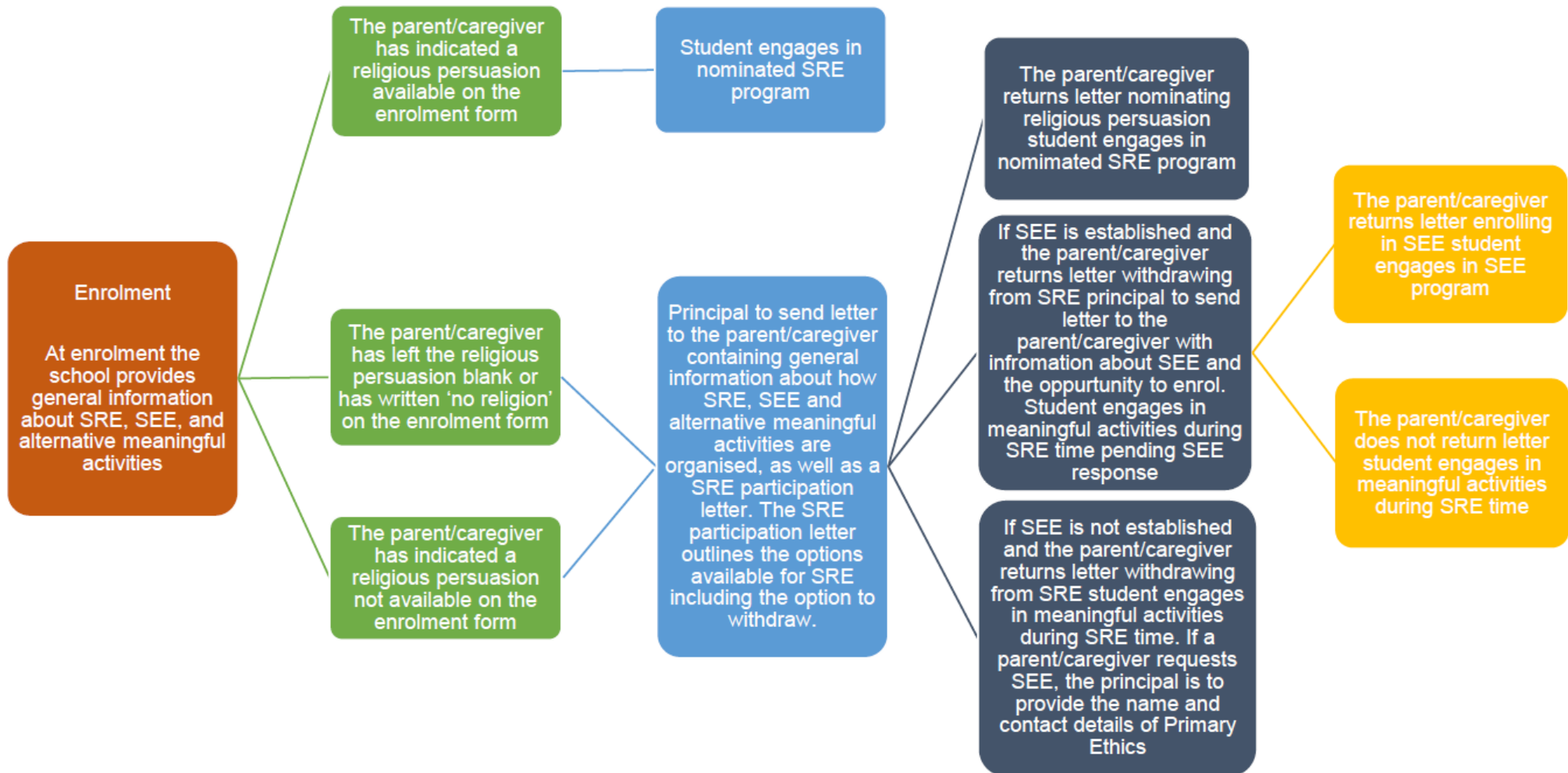
#### ***Lesson content***

It is the responsibility of an approved provider to:

- authorise the materials and pedagogy used by SRE & SEE teachers.
- provide an annual assurance to the NSW Department of Education that authorised teachers are only using materials and pedagogy authorised by the provider.
- make lesson content accessible on a website or at least provide a program outline and curriculum scope and sequence documents.
- provide information about the content of lessons when requested by parents and carers or the Principal.

<http://www.curriculumsupport.education.nsw.gov.au/policies/religion/>

# Implementing Special Religious Education (SRE) & Special Education in Ethics (SEE) in NSW Government schools



**Please Note:**

- Parents/caregivers may at any time notify the school in writing that they do not wish their child to attend SRE
- Students are to continue in the same arrangements each year, unless a parent/caregiver has requested a change