



Chaplaincy Program at DSHS

Our School Chaplain, Mr Matt Denholm is a valuable member of our Student Service team.

The Schools Chaplaincy Program in WA public schools operates on an 'opt-out' model, where parents are able to indicate whether or not they wish their children to be involved with the chaplain. The school principal and the chaplain's employer (YouthCARE) determine the nature of the service provided and the arrangements that govern the provision of the services through a Service Agreement (Chaplaincy Service Plan). The chaplain's activities at DSHS involve general interactions with students through his role as a photographer of school events such as sporting carnivals and award winners. He is also involved through school-coordinated events such as the Alive Festival, lunch time activities, the Shine and Strength program, breakfast clubs, camps, and assemblies as well as informal discussions with students who approach the chaplain directly in a moment of need. These do not require special arrangements. There can also be formal pastoral care contacts between a student and chaplain. When the latter occur normal informed consent requirements apply beyond initial contact.

If you would like your child to opt-out of any formal pastoral care contact with our School Chaplain please contact the Principal Mr Lillywhite or the appropriate Associate Principal (Lower School or Senior School).

Informed Consent

Chaplains should obtain valid consent prior to intervening. For consent to be valid, clients must have an appropriate understanding of the nature, implications and possible consequences of proposed interventions or procedures.

Consent may take the form of voluntary co-operation, verbal consent or written consent. Where Chaplains are doubtful or unsure that consent is being given, it should be sought in an explicit form, preferably written.

Chaplains should respect a client's right to withdraw consent. Informed consent in regards to minors is based on the child's capacity to understand the nature and consequences of the interaction. Where a client is judged to be too young or too immature to understand the implications of giving consent, such consent should be sought from the client's parent or guardian.

Informed Consent can be obtained by the School clearly communicating to the wider School Community the existence and role of the Chaplain, and providing members of the School Community an opportunity to opt out of the service.

Guiding Principles

The services of Chaplains are offered and guided by the following principles:

Independence

While Chaplains work in a school under on-site management of the Principal and as part of the team in the school that is responsible for pastoral care, they should be able to be seen as somewhat independent of the school administration system.

The student perception should be that, within certain limits, if they talk to the Chaplain about a matter, it won't become embroiled in the school's discipline system.

The services of Chaplains should be accessed voluntarily. Chaplains should not be seen as having a disciplinary role and as such should avoid being drawn into school management or disciplinary procedures.

Not a Teacher

Chaplains are not normally involved in classroom teaching. Some Chaplains are employed by schools to carry out specified duties other than Chaplaincy duties as a means of increasing their time in a school, but they will not normally be classroom-type duties.

However, Chaplains may be invited by teachers to give specifically Christian input to a particular part of the general curriculum, either in class or as a resource person, or to assist in the supervision or development of a particular student.

A Resource Person

Chaplains should make themselves available to the staff of a school as a resource person with skills that may assist teachers in their general duties where such involvement is in alignment with the Chaplain's role and Code of Conduct.

Accessibility

Chaplains ought to be readily accessible by students, staff and parents.

Chaplains generally work closely with school staff to determine appropriate policies about seeing students during class time.

Confidentiality

Chaplains should be, and be seen to be, confidants in the strongest sense. They must respect the confidentiality of information obtained in the course of professional service. Chaplains must not share confidential information without the consent of the other person, unless there are compelling moral, ethical or legal grounds.

At all times, Chaplains must abide by the Policies and Procedures set down for these matters by YouthCARE in accordance with DET policy, as well as the Chaplains' Code of Professional Conduct.

Chaplains need to inform persons of any limits on confidentiality that may apply in given situations, the purposes for which information is obtained, and the kinds of situations in which it might be used.

Representation of the Christian Perspective

Representation of the Christian Perspective Chaplains are religious workers. All that YouthCARE Chaplains do in schools is done within a Christian framework which is non-sectarian. They should also refrain from any action that might be offensive or derogatory to people from particular denominations of the Christian Church or from other faiths.

Accountability

The Chaplain is accountable to **YouthCARE**, which is the employer and has responsibility for supervision and performance management. This means that the Chaplain is subject to the policies, procedures and guidelines of YouthCARE.



Code of Conduct for YouthCARE school chaplains in Department of Education schools

Code of Conduct for YouthCARE School Chaplains in Department of Education Schools

Following is a Code of Conduct for school chaplains working in Department of Education Schools. This document is signed by the school chaplain before they commence providing any chaplaincy services in the School.

For the provision of chaplaincy.

The School Chaplain's primary relationship is with YouthCARE, the employer, but also with the Department of Education through the Service Agreement that governs the relationship between YouthCARE and the Department of Education. The requirements of other funding bodies that support the delivery of School Chaplaincy Services in Department of Education schools are subservient to and must be aligned with this Code of Conduct.

School chaplains are responsible for supporting the spiritual, social, and emotional wellbeing of their students regardless of faith or beliefs. School chaplains must also be able to provide support for a range of day to day matters affecting the school community and communicate effectively with a diverse group of people. They can become involved in a wide variety of issues including health, social and values education and emotional support.

It is expected that school chaplains will support and work with the School Principal and the school's student welfare staff and to refer students to appropriate services where required. To assist in facilitating this, school chaplains will need to develop an appropriate and suitable external network of agencies and professional groups working within the community.

In providing these services, the school chaplain must observe this Code of Conduct at all times.

The school chaplain must:

1. Adhere to all relevant Department of Education and school policy and legislation, as well as State and Commonwealth legislation concerning child safety, privacy, and confidentiality.

2. Not conduct themselves in a manner which adversely impacts on the delivery of chaplaincy services in the school. This includes conduct outside of school hours and in other capacities that might reasonably be regarded as likely to undermine the delivery of the YouthCARE Chaplaincy services.
3. Recognise, respect and affirm the authority of the School Principal and work in consultation with them.
4. Contribute to a supportive, safe, inclusive and caring learning environment within the school.
5. Respect, accept and be sensitive to other people's views, values and beliefs that may be different from his or her own, including respecting the rights of parents/guardians to ensure the moral and spiritual education of their children is in line with the family's own convictions.
6. Actively discourage any form of harassment or discrimination on the grounds of religious ideology, beliefs or sexuality.
7. Not perform professional or other services for which they are not qualified and if not qualified, refer on to an appropriate service, in accordance with school protocols.
8. Refer a student to a service or organisation which is best placed to support the student's particular needs in accordance with the student's own beliefs and values.
9. Provide accurate and impartial information about the support and services available in the broader community, including community groups and religious groups.
10. Not put him or herself, or allow him or herself, to be placed in a compromising situation, recognising that there are circumstances where confidentiality may be sought by the student.
11. Avoid unnecessary physical contact with a student, recognising however that there may be some circumstances where physical contact may be appropriate such as where the student is injured or distraught.
12. While recognising that an individual school chaplain may in good faith express views and articulate beliefs and values consistent with his or her own beliefs, a school chaplain must not take advantage of his or her privileged position to persuade others to change their beliefs, worldview or faith.