



# Chaplaincy — Fact Sheet

Korus Connect is the largest provider of school chaplaincy services to Victorian government schools, under the current and previous funding rounds of the National School Chaplaincy Program.

Korus Connect has been providing chaplains to schools since 1955 and currently serves in more than 240 schools, as a value-adding wellbeing service to schools.

## ABOUT CHAPLAINCY

Chaplains contribute to the wellbeing of many sectors in our communities, including schools. As a role that grew out of the Christian faith, it is not surprising that the majority of chaplains in Australia come from the Christian faith, even when the opportunity is open to all faiths, and in some situations, to people of no faith.

## WHAT IS THE NATIONAL SCHOOL CHAPLAINCY PROGRAM?

The National School Chaplaincy Program (NSCP) was initiated by the Federal Government in 2006 to provide greater pastoral care as well as spiritual wellbeing support; an adjunct to existing pastoral and wellbeing supports provided by schools; unique because it provides school communities with a person who has lived experience in the area of spiritual wellbeing.

Any school is eligible to apply for funding for a chaplain through the NSCP; in 2022, this is \$20,280 for regional and metropolitan schools and \$24,336 for remote or very remote schools.

## HOW ARE CHAPLAINS EMPLOYED?

Chaplains are employed via the services of a chaplaincy provider which recruits, provides relevant professional development and oversees the chaplain. The chaplaincy provider recommends vetted candidates to the school. Vetted candidates are interviewed by a panel which includes representatives from both the school and Korus Connect. The school chooses their preferred candidate.

This employment model enables any staff member, student or parent to speak with the chaplain, knowing that they understand the context, but hold a neutral, non-disciplinary role. This provides a safe place for all, from the principal to the youngest student to seek one-off help, to find a listening ear or to seek someone with whom they can journey through the ups and downs of life over a more extended period.

The role of chaplain provides the perfect mix of familiarity and objectivity, a key to the effectiveness and attributed value of the role, and service provided by a chaplaincy provider.

## WHAT DO CHAPLAINS DO?

The role of chaplain is to provide overall wellbeing support to students and to provide pastoral care to the school community: students, staff and families. Pastoral care is the provision of personal and general spiritual advice. Chaplains support student engagement and connectedness, contribute to a respectful, safe and inclusive learning environment and work in partnership with community service providers and other school staff to help meet the wellbeing needs of the school community.

Chaplains work impartially with all, irrespective of their social or cultural background, or the worldview they hold.

The role is both preventative and responsive; chaplains work with individuals and groups, through both planned and incidental conversations, and through planned individual and group programs and activities. These programs and activities help to equip students with the skills they need to support their emotional, social and intellectual development.

## WHAT GUIDELINES DO CHAPLAINS FOLLOW?

Chaplains work under provider and government codes of conduct which include these requirements:

- To refer students to a service or organisation which is best placed to support the student's particular needs in accordance with the beliefs and values of the student or their family
- To contribute to a supportive, safe, inclusive and caring learning environment within the school
- To respect students, families and staff for their beliefs and not seek to impose their own beliefs or persuade students towards a particular set of beliefs (proselytise)
- A commitment to their organisation's and school's Child Safe requirements
- Not to perform professional or religious services for which they are not qualified.

Chaplains work as part of the school, under the direction of the principal or other designated school leader, and are reviewed annually.

## ARE CHAPLAINS QUALIFIED?

All Korus Connect chaplains must possess a completed relevant qualification to a minimum Certificate IV level and this can include, but is not limited to, areas of study such as Youth Work, Youth Ministry, Pastoral Care, Chaplaincy, Counselling, Community Services, Theology, Education, Social Sciences, Psychology, Nursing or other equivalent qualifications.

All applicants MUST also have competency in CHCCS016 'Respond to Client Needs' and CHCMHS001 'Work with People with Mental Health Issues' or equivalent units.

The majority (88%) of Korus Connect chaplains hold higher than Certificate IV qualifications in relevant fields.

## IS CHAPLAINCY EFFECTIVE?

Research commissioned by the government as well as that commissioned by the National School Chaplaincy Association (NSCA) found that chaplaincy is effective in supporting the wellbeing of students. The areas of wellbeing that chaplains support span the six areas of wellbeing identified by the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Young People (ARACY): valued, loved and safe; material basics; healthy; learning; participating; and positive sense of identity and culture.

Chaplains provide holistic support for the wellbeing of students and school communities. This includes supporting students' spiritual development, in line with the Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration. They provide this support as part of their school's wellbeing team.