

**THE ANGLICAN DIOCESE OF GRAFTON
DIOCESAN POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

SUBJECT: COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE – SPECIAL RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SRE)		PROCEDURE REFERENCE NUMBER SRE-001
DATE APPROVED 31 October 2018 by Bishop-in-Council		REVISION NUMBER Original
POLICY IMPLEMENTATION DATE 1 November 2018	REVIEW DATE AND FREQUENCY 3 Yearly	RESPONSIBLE FOR REVIEW Bishop-in-Council

1.0 PURPOSE

To provide guidance in instances where there is a complaint concerning the delivery of SRE in a NSW public school or concerning the actions of a teacher of SRE where either the delivery or the teacher is connected with the Anglican Diocese of Grafton.

2.0 SCOPE

This policy applies to the SRE activities of the Anglican Diocese of Grafton.

This policy is not applicable to any other area of mission, ministry, employment or administration of the Anglican Diocese of Grafton including the Anglican schools of the Diocese.

This policy is not applicable to SRE teachers who are authorised by an authorised provider other than the Anglican Diocese of Grafton.

3.0 BACKGROUND

Under the Education Act 1990, public schools in NSW provide two kinds of religious education

- General religious education – taught by teaching staff at the school and part of the normal curriculum
- Special religious education (SRE) – taught by people who represent their faith, are authorised, trained and may be voluntary or paid.

In NSW the most commonly taught SRE is Christianity, taught by members of approved Christian churches. The Anglican Diocese of Grafton participates in the teaching of SRE in public schools within the Diocese as a member of Inter-Church Commission on Religious Education in Schools (NSW) Inc. (ICCOREIS).

ICCOREIS represents many churches that provide religious education in public schools in NSW and encourages consultation and cooperation between members with the goal of supporting, promoting and developing quality religious education in public schools.

This policy is adapted from an ICCOREIS template policy.

4.0 POLICY STATEMENT

As an approved provider of SRE it is expected that the SRE teachers with the authorisation of the Anglican Diocese of Grafton always maintain the highest level of professionalism in any

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conflict resolution process. This includes both the way they speak to and about a local school and how they represent themselves and the Diocese. We expect our 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. This policy refers to the way that as an approved provider of SRE, SRE complaints will be resolved.

5.0 TYPES OF COMPLAINTS

Complaints have been categorised into the following four types:

5.1 Parent concerns about the SRE curriculum or the SRE teacher

The Anglican Diocese of Grafton as an approved provider 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 authorised by the Diocese or alternatively their concerns regarding the contents of the SRE curriculum as delivered by a teacher authorised by the Diocese. The Diocese will follow its procedures in regards to any such matter, including reporting to relevant authorities.

5.2 School concerns about the conduct of an SRE teacher.

The Anglican Diocese of Grafton as an approved provider 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 authorised by the Diocese. It is expected that the Department of Education will follow its procedures in regards to any such matter, including reporting to relevant authorities.

5.3 Approved provider concerns about the conduct of a student or a parent or a professional classroom teacher.

It is expected that a school will fully co-operate with any concerns raised by the Anglican Diocese of Grafton as an approved provider may have in regards to positive behaviour for learning. It is expected that the school will follow its procedures in regards to any such matter, including reporting to relevant authorities.

5.4 SRE teacher concerns about the implementation of SRE at a local school.

The Anglican Diocese of Grafton as an approved provider will 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

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6.0 MAKING A COMPLAINT

Complaints relating to a SRE teacher authorised by the Diocese (e.g. as per 5.1 or 5.2), should be made to a SRE Coordinator of the Anglican Diocese of Grafton (Schedule 1) who will handle the complaint.

Where the complaint involves a conflict of interest or needs to be reported to another authority, the SRE Coordinator will refer the complaint to the Diocesan Archdeacon.

Complainants are encouraged to use the Complaints Form that is Schedule 3 of this procedure however failure to use the prescribed form does not disqualify the complaint.

7.0 MANAGING COMPLAINTS

The following are the key stages in managing complaints in compliance with this procedure.

The flowchart that is Schedule 2 of this procedure should be used to guide the handling of a complaint.

7.1 Acknowledge complaint

Acknowledge a complaint from a principal as soon as possible, ideally within 3 working days. This can be done in person, by telephone, email or formally in writing. Where the acknowledgement was made verbally, it should be documented in writing.

Let the principal know that they will be kept up to date with the progress.

Keep the matter as confidential as possible by only sharing information with those who need to know about the complaint issues.

Listen carefully to the issues and, if at all possible, resolve the complaint directly at the local level.

7.2 Gather information

Gather enough information to allow a proper assessment of concerns as quickly as possible. The information to be gathered could include:

- Special Religious Education Procedures
- Relevant Department of Education policies and procedures e.g. Code of Conduct
- SRE curriculum teacher's manual

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- Information from the Diocese' SRE manager/coordinator

7.3 Resolve

Complaints should be finalised as soon as possible and no later than 20 working days. Keep the principal updated on the progress of the complaint. If a delay is anticipated, inform the principal and provide reasons for the delay.

Consider any reasonable outcomes suggested by the principal. However, ultimately the local provider representative determines how a complaint is to be resolved.

Outcomes will depend on the circumstances of each complaint and take into account the role of SRE teachers as volunteers in a school and subject to the Department's policies and procedures and the principal as its appointed site manager.

7.4 Inform

The Diocese as approved provider undertakes to provide information about the outcome to the principal and where necessary to the local providers' SRE coordinator and other providers in the case of a combined arrangement. The outcome information will include, as appropriate:

- The outcome of the complaint and any action to be taken, by whom and when
- The reasons for the decision
- Any internal or external options for review

In any case, the complaint outcome will be confirmed in writing to the principal. Email is acceptable. Complex complaints may require additional record keeping e.g. notes of contentious meetings. While it is good practice to provide as much information as you can about outcomes, it is also important to keep confidential specific personal details.

If an SRE teacher is the subject of a complaint, he/she should be provided with information about the outcome.

7.5 Implement action

Take all reasonable steps to implement and monitor the outcomes of the complaint. Where the outcomes involve a combined arrangement, other providers should be given the same information as the principal.

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7.6 Record outcome

The Diocese, as approved provider, will document:

- Contacts with the principal
- Management of the complaint
- The outcome of the complaint, including how and whether any concerns were substantiated and actions taken in response
- The steps taken to follow up the outcome actions

7.7 Ongoing responsibilities

The Diocese as an approved provider has ongoing responsibilities to:

- Respond to and manage a complaint from a principal so that the complaints process is accessible to all providers' representatives
- Take reasonable steps to prevent people making complaints being treated unfairly because a complaint has been made by them or on their behalf
- Keep confidentiality about complaints at all times, including after a satisfactory resolution. This requires everyone, including the complainant, to ensure that information is restricted to those who genuinely need to know. People should only be told as much as they need to know and no more.
- Support those involved. To the extent possible the approved provider should monitor the well-being of all parties involved in or impacted by the complaint and arrange support where available.

8.0 REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

Department of Education School Community and Consumer Complaint Procedures
https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/associated-documents/School-complaint-procedure_AC.pdf

Anglican Diocese of Grafton SRE Complaint Form

SCHEDULE 1 - SRE COORDINATORS – ANGLICAN DIOCESE OF GRATON

The Reverend Zoe Everingham
02 6655 1475 z.everingham@bigpond.com

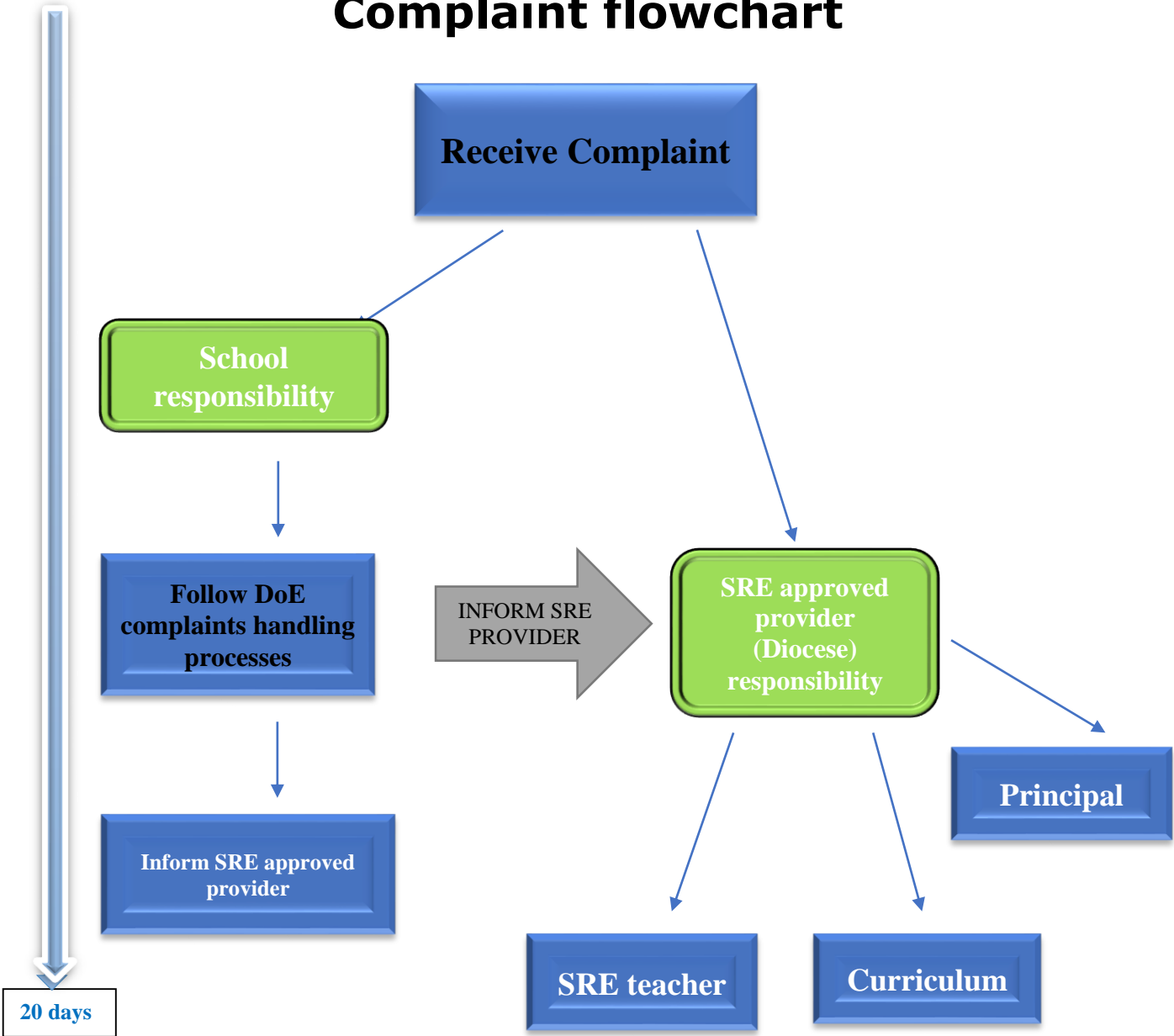
The Reverend Michael Ridge
02 6657 2015 michaelaridge2@outlook.com

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SCHEDULE 2 COMPLAINT FLOWCHART

Complaint flowchart



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SCHEDULE 3 COMPLAINT FORM



THE ANGLICAN DIOCESE OF GRAFTON

SRE Approved Provider
Complaint Form

If you have a complaint about any aspect of our provision of SRE in NSW public schools, we are keen to hear from you.

Please complete this form in English and send it to admin@graftondiocese.org.au or to PO Box 4, Grafton NSW 2460.

General Information
Please select from the following. I am a/an:
<input type="checkbox"/> parent <input type="checkbox"/> student <input type="checkbox"/> member of the public <input type="checkbox"/> employee

2. Personal details					
Title	<input type="checkbox"/> Mr	<input type="checkbox"/> Mrs	<input type="checkbox"/> Ms	<input type="checkbox"/> Miss	<input type="checkbox"/> Other
What is your family name?					
What is your given name?					

3. Contact details	
What is your current residential address?	Postcode
What is your mailing address? (if different to residential address)	Postcode
Email address	
Telephone number	
Mobile phone number	
Preferred contact method:	<input type="checkbox"/> Phone <input type="checkbox"/> Mobile <input type="checkbox"/> Letter <input type="checkbox"/> Email

4. Complaint details	
Have you lodged a complaint about this issue before?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	If yes, when:

Form Adapted from Complaints Policies and Procedures issued November 2017 V001/17
Developed by AFSRE and ICCOREIS in consultation with the NSW Consultative Committee for SRE

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This form is for SRE related complaints only. Do not use for complaints that do not relate to SRE.

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5. Complaint summary	
When it happened	
Where it happened	
Who was involved	
What happened (details of your complaint)	
What you would like to happen to resolve your complaint	
Attach any documentation that supports your complaint	

6. Acknowledgement	
All the information provided above is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.	
Signature	Date
7. Privacy notice	
We will only use the information collected on this form to resolve your complaint and access will only be provided to authorised officers.	

8. Office use only			
Action officer			
Position		Date	
Complaint lodged	<input type="checkbox"/> by telephone	<input type="checkbox"/> in person	<input type="checkbox"/> in writing
Notes			

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