

# Wise Ministry for SRE Teachers and Helpers



For SRE Teachers and Helpers there are some additional wise ministry issues to consider.

## Authority and Reporting

When teaching Special Religious Religion (SRE) in Department of Education schools SRE teachers are responsible to the school Principal at all times they are on the school grounds.

Teachers and helpers must report to the school Principal (as well as their authorising person from Church, ie. pastor, minister, or session clerk, who will report to the Conduct Protocol Unit), if they have reasonable grounds to suspect a child has been abused or is at risk of harm. This should be done immediately the teaching responsibility has finished, normally after the SRE lesson is completed.

When there is an allegation against the Principal, the local network Director of Department of Education must be contacted - contact details are available on the Department of Education website at <https://education.nsw.gov.au/public-schools/going-to-a-public-school/operational-directorates>. You can also consult with your authorising person from Church or the Conduct Protocol Unit for guidance.

Once a concern is raised the Principal should communicate back to the SRE teacher or helper that they have reported to the appropriate authorities - Police and/or Community Services. The SRE teacher/helper should make objectives note of what they observed and what action was taken, and continue to respect confidentiality.

## Wise Ministry Practices

Wise practice for SRE teachers and helpers includes the following:

- Identify who is your support person. In primary schools, this is often the Classroom Teacher who remains present for the lesson or Head Teacher in secondary schools. Ask them if there are any special needs that an SRE teacher should know in advance. This could be related to health, emotional or behavioural issues that could impact on the SRE teacher's ability to teach and provide duty of care. Please note that as part of its online training Presbyterian Youth provides a Duty of Care module for High School SRE teachers.

- In teaching the approved curriculums and participating in school, an SRE teacher must always be sensitive and age appropriate at all times.
- In the case of an accident or if a child is unwell, check where to send students requiring first aid. This is usually the School's office. Find out what the school's procedure is concerning giving permission for a student to leave the classroom: buddy pair, note etc.
- SRE teachers and helpers must comply with the school's policies relating to safety when assessing risk of learning activities such as games, making food etc.
- Check with the class teacher for any minor concerns. For example, a child might say she is afraid to go home. A quiet word with the teacher could explain the student's worry. The worry could be a result of an incident before school where there was damage done to a parent's car by the child who failed to move their bike from driveway when asked, or it could be a signal there is something more serious going on and that this information needs to be considered with other signs.
- As SRE teachers and helpers are never to be alone with only one child at any time, if the situation arises that a child comes into the classroom while the SRE teacher is setting up the lesson, just ask the child to wait outside for the rest of class to arrive. If the child will not leave, then you step out to find a teacher to help you.
- Any communication or resource that an SRE teacher would like to send home must be shown to the SRE Coordinator and School Principal for approval.
- SRE teachers or helpers should never use social media to contact students. They must be wise when using social media generally.
- SRE teachers and helpers must also be wise with physical contact. Avoid hugging students and being overly affectionate. If a child insists on being hugged a sideways hug is preferable. Better still is to use a high-five to greet or congratulate someone.