

SRE Complaints Policy

Baptist Churches of NSW & ACT

As an approved provider it is expected that all people engaged with SRE within our organisation always maintain the highest level of professionalism. This includes both in the way we speak about, or refer to, a local school and or their staff. We expect that there will always be a substantial effort in trying to resolve issues at a local level first, with courtesy and respectfulness. As an approved provider we are committed to supporting our SRE teachers, open communication, and responsibility.

The overall process

Our flowchart included diagram provides a quick overview of the different stages a person may find themselves in, with a general guide for seeking advice and following a plan of action. Below is a more detailed explanation of the various roles and interactions that can take place when trying to resolve a matter, as well as the types of concerns and complaints that can arise.

Churches and SRE Boards

Wherever possible, any concerns or complaints should be dealt with at a local level and as quickly as possible, while keeping the main approved provider informed. As a result, Churches and SRE Boards become the main point of contact in resolving initial and ongoing concerns or complaints. Some of the people at a local level who may be involved in resolving a matter include:

- SRE Teachers, SRE board chairperson or SRE board representative
- School Representatives - Principal, Deputy Principal, School SRE coordinator.

The Role of Generate

Generate seeks to support SRE teachers and providers with resources and advice. When a Generate staff member speaks with a school it does so in partnership with the approved providers. For example, NSW Baptist might request a Generate employee represent the association at a school level. Generate will mainly communicate with:

- SRE Teachers
- SRE Boards
- School Representatives-Principal or Deputy Principal (When delegated by the provider)
- Approved providers

SRE Providers

Providers play the significant role in raising complaints. It is their responsibility to pursue the complaint through the Department of Education complaints processes. It is assumed that when the provider speaks with schools it does so in partnership with the local church/board.

People who may be involved in resolving a matter include:

- Local SRE Coordinator
- Principals
- Church Representatives
- Department of Education's program manager for SRE & SEE
- Regional Director and above

Types of Complaints

a) Parents may have concerns about the SRE curriculum, the implementation of SRE or the SRE teacher.

As an approved provider we will fully co-operate with any concerns a parent may have, including reporting to relevant authorities. If a parent has a concern about curriculum, they can refer the matter to the school. The school will then be able to direct the parent to their website containing the web link for further curriculum information. Alternatively, parents can also contact Baptist churches of NSW directly through our website. Link [here](#)

b) Schools may have concerns about the conduct of an SRE teacher, the implementation of SRE or the content of curriculum.

Approved providers will fully co-operate with any concerns a school may have regarding reportable conduct or allegations of abuse attributed to an SRE teacher. It is expected that the Department of Education will follow its procedures regarding any such matter, including reporting to relevant authorities. If there are concerns regarding the implementation of SRE, the school should initiate discussions with church representatives. If there are concerns about curriculum content, they can contact the provider directly.

c) Approved providers may have concerns about the conduct of a student or a parent or a classroom teacher or the implementation of SRE.

It is expected that a school will fully co-operate with any concerns an approved provider may have regarding positive behaviour for learning. We would expect the school to follow its procedures regarding any such matter, including reporting to relevant authorities.

Approved providers must follow the Department of Education *School Community and Consumer Complaint Procedures*. Link [here](#)

d) SRE teachers may have concerns regarding the implementation of SRE at a local school.

SRE teachers can contact their church representative, who will then contact the approved provider for advice and suggested ways to proceed. The provider will then seek to implement the negotiation and escalation flowchart for high school SRE.



Managing Complaints: Key Stages for the Approved Provider

1. Acknowledge concern or complaint

As an approved provider we will acknowledge a concern or complaint as soon as possible. This can be done via a church representative, Generate, an SRE board member, in person, by telephone, email or formally in writing. Where the acknowledgement was made verbally, it should be documented in writing and dated. All parties that the concern or complaint relates to will be kept up to date with the progress. The matter will be kept as confidential as possible by only sharing information with those who need to know about the concern or complaint issues. Each party involved will be listened to carefully with resolution happening at the local level and as quickly as possible in most cases.

2. Gather Information

Information will be gathered 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
- Information from the approved providers' SRE manager/coordinator.
- Documentation in the way of a report from; the school, career, SRE teacher and or SRE coordinator.
- The bringing together of all relevant email communication.

3. Resolve

Complaints and concerns should be finalised as soon as possible. All parties involved will be informed and updated on the progress of the concern or complaint. If a delay is anticipated, reasons for the delay will be given to the various parties.

Any reasonable outcomes suggested by the principal, church representative, Generate/Board representative will be considered. It is the desire of NSW Baptist to work proactively with schools for an equitable solution.

Outcomes will depend on the circumstances of each concern and complaint and will consider the role of SRE teachers i.e., volunteers or paid role. Outcomes are also subject to the Department's policies and procedures for SRE. Link [here](#)

4. Inform

The approved provider will provide information about the outcome to the relevant people involved and other providers in the case of a combined arrangement. When giving the outcome information, explain:

- 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 concern or complaint outcome should be confirmed in writing. 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 possible 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.

5. Implement Actions

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 other parties involved.

6. Record Outcome

The approved provider should document:

- Their contacts with the principal, church representatives, board representatives and Generate
- How they managed 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. Ongoing Responsibilities

An approved provider has ongoing responsibilities to:

- Respond to and manage concerns or complaints so that the complaints process is accessible to all providers' representatives
- Take reasonable steps to prevent people making complaints being treated unfairly because a concern has been raised or a complaint been made by them or on their behalf
- Always keep confidentiality about concerns and complaints, 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.

School Community and Consumer Complaint Procedure- [Link](#)

Approved Provider Complaint Form- [Link](#)