CRAIGIEBURN PRIMARY SCHOOL

CPS School Chaplaincy Policy

Rationale:

Craigieburn Primary School engages a Chaplain to support the educational, social and emotional wellbeing of students. Our school Chaplain works closely with staff in the school to support students and their educational outcomes, staff, families and the wider school community.

The School Chaplain is guided by the Department's Principles for Health and Wellbeing which underpin effective professional practice to promote and support optimal health, wellbeing and educational outcomes for children in our school community.

Child Safe Standard:
Victorian Government Schools are child safe environments. Our school actively promotes the safety and wellbeing of all students, and all school staff are committed to protecting students from abuse or harm in the school environment, in accordance with the legal obligations including child safety standards. Refer to our Child Safety and Code of Conduct Policies.

Aim:

The Chaplain will provide support to staff and students by;

- Working as a member of the school’s wellbeing team in the delivery of student wellbeing services.
- Contributing to improving student engagement and connectedness
- Contributing to providing a safe, inclusive and supportive learning environment
- Providing pastoral care and guidance to students
- Operating within the school community and with external providers.

Policy Statement:

(DET School Policy Advisory Guide)

Chaplains will:

The roles and responsibilities of chaplains could include:

- providing support in areas such as student attendance, engagement and mental health
- providing students with support and/or appropriate referrals in difficult situations such as during times of grief, or when students are facing personal or emotional challenges
- providing pastoral care and guidance to students about values and ethical matters, referring students, or sourcing appropriate services to meet their needs, which may involve access to services in the community
- supporting students and staff to create an environment which promotes the physical, emotional, social and intellectual development and wellbeing of all students
- supporting students and staff to create an environment of cooperation and mutual respect, and promoting an understanding of diversity within the range of cultures and relevant traditions.

Chaplains must not:

- take advantage of their privileged position to proselytise, evangelise or advocate for a particular religious view or belief
• put themselves, or allow themselves, to be placed in a compromising situation, recognising that there are circumstances where confidentiality may be sought by the student
• conduct themselves in a manner which impacts the delivery of their services, even in a private capacity
• perform professional or other services for which they are not qualified
• conduct religious services or ceremonies or lead students or staff in religious observances unless agreed to by the Principal
• deliver special religious instruction.

**Code of Conduct**

Chaplains must comply with all State and Commonwealth legislation, and with all relevant government school policies, including those concerning child protection, mandatory reporting, privacy, anti-discrimination, human rights, and creation and retention of student records. To the extent that there is any conflict between a school or departmental policy and a policy of the organisation which employs the chaplain or with which the chaplain is affiliated, the relevant government school policies prevail.

Chaplains are required to observe a high standard of professional conduct at all times. When carrying out their responsibilities, they must:

• Recognise, respect and affirm the authority of the school principal (or delegate) and/or school governing body and work in consultation with them.
• Contribute to a supportive, safe, inclusive and caring learning environment within the school.
• Respect, accept and be sensitive to other people’s views, values and beliefs, including the cultural and religious perspectives of parents/guardians/carers.
• Ensure all students are supported with respect for their religious beliefs, or lack of religious beliefs.
• Actively discourage any form of harassment or discrimination.
• 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.
• Provide accurate and impartial information about the support and services available in the broader community.
• Be approachable to all students, staff and members of the school community.
• 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.
• 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.
• Keep appropriate records to document the support provided to students/school.
• Provide access to these records to the school, as appropriate, to ensure the school can meet its duty of care obligations to students.

**Consent**

Schools must obtain written consent from parents/guardians/carers or the student (if adult or mature minor) prior to the provision of chaplaincy services. Parents/guardians/carers and students must be advised that chaplaincy services are voluntary. They must also be informed of the nature of the chaplaincy service to be provided, the role of the chaplain, the type of information to be collected and reasons for its collection, conditions applying to disclosure of such information, and their right of access to the information. Schools can obtain consent from parents/guardians/carers and students at the beginning of each school year, as appropriate.

For more information, see: the Chaplaincy Information, Records and Reporting Policy DET

**Child Protection – Reporting Obligations**

Chaplains are in frequent contact with students and are well placed to observe when a child or young person appears to be at risk of abuse or neglect.

The chaplain must comply with mandatory reporting obligations under the Children Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic) as if the chaplain were a ‘mandatory reporter’. This means that the chaplain must make a report to the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Child Protection if they form a reasonable belief that a student is in need of protection as a result of physical injury or sexual abuse, and the student’s parents/guardians/carers are unable or unwilling to protect the student from that abuse.

All chaplains should:
- notify the school principal if they have concerns about the wellbeing of a child
- notify the DHHS Child Protection if they form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child or young person is in need of protection from significant harm as a result of physical injury or sexual abuse, and the child’s parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child.

**Related School Policies:**

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following Craigieburn Primary School Policies:

- Student Engagement and Inclusion Policy
- Working with Children Check Policy
- On Site Supervision Policy
- Student Safety Policy
- Excursion Policy
- Mandatory Reporting Policy and Procedures
- Digital Technologies Acceptable Use Policy

**Links:**


Department of Education and Training Website
http://www.education.vic.gov.au


Education and Reform Act 2006

Visitors in Schools

**Evaluation:**

This policy will be reviewed as a part of the school’s cyclic process or more often if necessary due to changes in legislation or regulations.

This policy was last ratified by School Council in **Oct 2016** and will be reviewed 2017.