**Information for Queensland state school principals**

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1. ***Funding for chaplaincy and student wellbeing officer services***

**How can my school fund a chaplaincy or student wellbeing officer service?**

With support from the school community, schools may choose to use school funds provided by the State Government for educational purposes on chaplaincy and/or student wellbeing officer services.

Eligible schools may also implement or supplement their service through the following government funding programs:

1. The State Government Chaplain/Student Wellbeing Officer Program (recurrent CSWOP) provides **recurrent** funding to eligible state schools to engage the services of a chaplain or student wellbeing officer; and/or
2. The Australian Government’s National Student Wellbeing Program (NSWP) provides non-recurrent funding to schools to deliver a chaplaincy or student wellbeing officer service for the 2023-2027 school years; and/or
3. The State Government’s non-recurrent Chaplain/Student Wellbeing Officer Program provides **non-recurrent** funding to schools to deliver chaplaincy or student wellbeing officer services for 2023-2027.

School funds provided by the State Government for educational purposes, or community-raised funds (i.e. funds raised by the P&C, Local Chaplaincy Committee (LCC) or Accredited Employing Authority (AEA)) specifically for these services may also be used to fund a chaplain and/or student wellbeing officer.

**How does my school apply for government funding for a chaplaincy or student wellbeing officer service?**

All government funding for chaplaincy and student wellbeing officer services is fully allocated for 2023. During 2023, all Queensland schools will be invited to apply for funding for future years. Schools will also continue to have the option to fund/top-up these services through school funds or fundraised money.

**Can my school’s chaplaincy/student wellbeing officer government funding be used on other support services (i.e. youth workers/teacher aides)?**

No. This funding is strictly for the engagement of a chaplain or a student wellbeing officer.

**Can government funding for my school’s chaplain/student wellbeing officer be used to purchase resources specifically for the service?**

No. Chaplaincy/student wellbeing officer funds from government programs cannot be used to purchase resources such as workbooks, products for a Breakfast Club or equipment for the worker.

However, the principal, in consultation with the school community, may choose to direct school-based funds or community funds raised specifically for the program to purchase resources that support its delivery.

**Can my school fundraise directly for chaplaincy and student wellbeing officer services?**

No. However fundraising for these services may be conducted by the school’s P&C, the LCC (if one exists) and/or the AEA or through a direct donation.

Fundraising activities should clearly outline:

* the purpose of the fundraiser (i.e. for chaplaincy or student wellbeing officer services)
* who will receive the funds (i.e. the school, school cluster or school chaplaincy/student wellbeing officer services across the state).

All funds raised by the P&C or LCC for these services may be donated to the school to use to engage a service through an AEA, or the P&C/LCC may use the funds to purchase services on behalf of the school directly through the AEA instead. Usual expenditure processes are followed and a purchase order raised by the school, or the P&C if making a direct payment to the AEA on the school’s behalf.

Funds donated directly to an AEA through its fundraising events are to be used in accordance with the relevant agency’s charity collection rules and applicable laws, and may include an administration fee.

**What processes are to be followed for chaplaincy and student wellbeing officer fundraising events?**

Principals are to ensure that:

* All chaplaincy and student wellbeing officer fundraising events for the school are endorsed by the principal, in consultation with the school community.
* Communication regarding fundraising clearly outlines the purpose of the fundraiser (e.g. raising funds for the school chaplaincy and/or student wellbeing officer program).
* Communication regarding the chaplaincy or student wellbeing officer fundraiser does not contain any evangelising, proselytising or attempt to undermine a student’s religious or other beliefs.
* Contribution to and participation in such fundraising is voluntary.

**What should my school do with unspent government funding carried over from previous years?**

If the school is unable to use accumulated chaplaincy/student wellbeing officer funding from the previous year/s in the current school year (i.e. by increasing the service hours of an existing worker, or by engaging a second worker), principals may wish to consider returning the surplus funding to the department for reallocation to other schools.

1. ***Establishing chaplaincy and student wellbeing officer services***

**How does my school establish a chaplaincy or student wellbeing officer service?**

Local community support, including from the P&C/School Council, is required for the introduction of a chaplaincy or student wellbeing officer service. This support is to be documented (e.g. in minutes of a P&C meeting) and includes justification as to why the service is supported, taking into consideration the needs of the student population and the characteristics of the school community.

State schools do not employ chaplains or student wellbeing officers directly. Instead, these workers are sourced through an [Accredited Employing Authority (AEA)](https://education.qld.gov.au/student/Documents/chaplaincy-aeas-list.docx) – an external organisation approved by the department to provide these services in schools. AEAs ensure workers meet minimum qualification requirements.

The principal, in consultation with the school community, determines the most appropriate AEA for the school’s needs from the department’s [List of AEAs](https://education.qld.gov.au/student/Documents/chaplaincy-aeas-list.docx). Schools can switch to a different AEA at any time, however they should provide sufficient written notice to the existing AEA regarding their decision to cease using their services.

**How much do Accredited Employing Authorities charge for these services?**

Under the agreed contract with the department, all AEAs charge an hourly rate that does not exceed $60 per hour. This hourly rate includes an administration fee to cover insurances, superannuation, worker leave, general administration fees, and training and development costs associated with the worker.

**What documents need to be completed before a chaplain or student wellbeing officer begins at my school?**

Before services begin at the school, the following items are to be completed:

* [**Purchase Order**](https://education.qld.gov.au/student/Documents/purchase-order-example.docx) (to be submitted by the school to the AEA)

The Purchase Order should clearly outline the anticipated cost of the service and the days/hours of expected service delivery. The Purchase Order should include community-raised funds and can be varied in negotiation with the AEA.

* [**Schedule A: Contract Schedule**](https://education.qld.gov.au/student/Documents/QEDSOA-91112-schedule-a-contract.docx) (to be signed by the school and the AEA)
* [**Deed of Confidentiality, Privacy and Conflicts of Interest**](https://education.qld.gov.au/student/Documents/deed-of-confidentiality-privacy-conflicts-interest.pdf) (to be signed by the school and the chaplain/student wellbeing officer)
* [**Form 2 Workplan**](https://education.qld.gov.au/student/Documents/chaplaincy-workplan.docx) (to be signed by the principal, chaplain/student wellbeing officer, AEA and a representative of the P&C) to be completed prior to service commencement, or within the first month of commencement.

**What information should my school provide to parents about the service/s?**

At enrolment, and/or on request, information outlining the school’s chaplaincy or student wellbeing officer service should be provided to parents. This supports parents to make an informed decision regarding their child/ren’s participation in chaplaincy or student wellbeing officer activities and/or provide consent for ongoing one-on-one meetings. It is useful to publish this information on the school’s website, in the parent handbook and/or in the school newsletter. Any communication about chaplaincy/student wellbeing officer events or activities should clearly state the facts and not be presented in the form of an advertisement.

Information about activities or events to be delivered by the worker which contain a religious component (i.e. lunchtime prayer group) must be clearly communicated to parents to enable them to make an informed decision about their child’s participation. Such activities are to be approved by the principal and be documented in the [Form 2:Workplan](https://education.qld.gov.au/student/Documents/chaplaincy-workplan.doc).

**There are no suitably qualified chaplains or student wellbeing officers in my school’s local community. What can I do?**

The department understands that the remoteness of a school’s location may act as a barrier to finding a suitably qualified worker (through an AEA). As the employer of chaplains and student wellbeing officers in state schools, the school’s chosen AEA is able to request a [Waiver](https://education.qld.gov.au/student/Documents/minimum-qualification-waiver.docx) for consideration by the department if there is evidence that reasonable attempts have already been made by the AEA to locate a suitably qualified worker.

**Can my school change between a chaplain or student wellbeing officer?**

Yes – however the school community must support the change. Schools that receive government funds will need to advise the department of any change in service type once a worker has been engaged, by emailing chaplainswellbeingofficers@qed.qld.gov.au.

Fundraisers conducted by the local community, including the school’s P&C and/or LCC, should clearly outline the purpose of the fundraiser (i.e. for the school chaplaincy OR student wellbeing officer program – or both), and can only be used for that purpose. The preferred service should be determined by the principal, in consultation with the local community, and the support be clearly documented (e.g. in minutes of a P&C meeting).

**What happens if the service hasn’t been delivered for a significant period of time (i.e. due to inability to locate a qualified worker etc)?**

If there has been no service for more than one term, principals should liaise with their AEA to resolve the situation. The AEA and school may choose to increase the service hours during the next school term to compensate for the hours of service not delivered. A variation to the Purchase Order should be completed to reflect any significant change in service.

1. ***Day-to-day running of chaplaincy and student wellbeing officer services***

**Who is responsible for decision making regarding these services?**

The principal holds decision making responsibility regarding the chaplaincy and/or student wellbeing officer services in their school. Decisions should be informed by consultation with the school community, and with the AEA as appropriate.

**Is parent consent required for students to participate in chaplaincy or student wellbeing officer services?**

A student may attend an initial one-on-one meeting with the chaplain or student wellbeing officer without parent consent. Any further one-on-one meetings, or involvement in activities that have a religious element, require written permission from the student’s parent or the student themselves**\***.

**\*** Students are able to provide written consent only if the principal deems them to have a sufficient level of maturity and understanding to consent to attending ongoing one-on-one meetings with the chaplain or student wellbeing officer.

Schools may choose to capture this consent on the department’s [Form 1 parent/student consent form,](https://education.qld.gov.au/student/Documents/parent-student-consent-form.docx) or through an alternative option.

Consent is not required for participation in day-to-day activities provided by the worker, unless they contain a religious element.

**Who can access information obtained by a worker about a student during one-to-one meetings?**

The reason a student seeks to access, or the outcome of any consultation with, a chaplain or student wellbeing officer cannot be disclosed by the worker without the informed consent of the student’s parent or student, unless required by law. Any case notes recorded by the worker remain the property of the worker’s employer (the AEA) even though they are stored securely at the school.

**Complaints management and resolution – how should complaints be resolved?**

Wherever possible, issues, problems or conflicts related to a chaplaincy or student wellbeing officer service should be addressed at the school level in the first instance and treated in a confidential and professional manner, and in accordance with the department’s [Customer Complaints Management Framework](https://ppr.qed.qld.gov.au/attachment/customer-complaints-management-framework.pdf), [policy](https://ppr.qed.qld.gov.au/pp/customer-complaints-management-policy) and [procedure](https://ppr.qed.qld.gov.au/pp/customer-complaints-management-procedure).

**Where can I find more information about chaplaincy and student wellbeing officer services?**

The department’s Chaplaincy and student wellbeing officer services policy statement and supporting documents are located on the department’s website. Schools may also contact their Regional Office, or alternatively email chaplainswellbeingofficers@qed.qld.gov.au.