

2018-2019 Concerns and Complaints Policies and Procedures

Policy

As an approved provider it is expected that all people engaged with SRE within our organisation, the Baptist Union of NSW (Baptist Churches of NSW & ACT) always maintain the highest level of professionalism in any conflict resolution process. This includes both the way they speak to and about a local school and how they represent themselves and the organisation. We expect our representatives to listen to the school's perspective and never assume ill intent. We expect that there will always be a substantial effort in trying to resolve issues at a local level first, with courtesy and respectfulness. It is important that the approved provider is still informed about concerns and complaints to understand how we can further support teachers and schools to ensure that SRE is always delivered professionally. As an approved provider we are committed to open communication and taking ownership and will also keep the various parties informed when we are directly involved in the resolution of a matter.

The overall process

Below is a 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. There is also a summary document that overviews the different stages and types of issues that may be encountered in the Flow Chart for Concerns & Complaints 2018-2019 (See at the end of this document).

The following addresses:



People Involved

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 us, the Baptist Union 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
- School Representatives – Principal, Deputy Principal or Head Teacher
- School SRE Coordinator/Advisor
- SRE Board Chair/Representative
- If there is a combined arrangement it would also be appropriate to inform other approved providers especially if their curriculum or teachers are involved

The Role of Generate

Generate has a limited role in raising complaints. Its main role is to support providers with resources and advice. When it speaks with schools it does so in partnership with providers. Generate will mainly communicate with:

- SRE Teachers
- SRE Boards
- School Representatives – Principal or Deputy Principal
- Approved providers

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The Baptist Union of NSW as an Approved SRE Provider

Providers play a 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
- Regional Director and above
- Consultative Committee
- Denominational Ministry Standards Manager

ICCOREIS/All Faiths Group/Better Balanced Futures (BBF)

These groups have no formal role in raising complaints. They support the larger providers as they raise and resolve complaints. They can provide advice and support to smaller approved providers as they seek to resolve complaints. People they will communicate with will include:

- Approved Providers
- Consultative Committee

Types of Complaints

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

Approved providers 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 or alternatively their concerns regarding the delivery of the SRE curriculum. Approved providers will follow its procedures in regards to any such matter, including reporting to relevant authorities. If a parent has a concern about curriculum content they can refer the matter to the school or contact the provider directly through the SRE Curriculum Form ([INSERT 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 in regards to reportable conduct or allegations of abuse attributed to an SRE teacher. It is expected that the Department of Education will follow its procedures in regards to 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 professional 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 in regards to positive behaviour for learning. We would expect the school to follow its procedures in regards to any such matter, including reporting to relevant authorities. Approved providers must follow the Department of Education *School Community and*

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

D. SRE teachers may have concerns in regards to 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 possible action. Approved providers must 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

Managing Complaints: Key Stages

1. Acknowledge concern or complaint

As an approved provider we will acknowledge a concern or complaint as soon as possible, ideally within 3 working days. 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.

2. Gather information

Information will be gathered by the Baptist Union 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

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

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, they will seek to explain:

- The outcome of the complaint and any action to be taken, by whom and when
- The reasons for the decision

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- 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
- In some cases the investigation outcome report may need to be provided to other external organisations such as the NSW Ombudsman and the NSW Office of the Children Guardian.

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
- Keep confidentiality about concerns and 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.

Appendix

School Community and Consumer Complaint Procedure

https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/associated-documents/School-complaint-procedure_AC.pdf

Approved Provider Complaint Form

Online form link

SRE Curriculum Form

Baptist Union of NSW (Baptist Churches of NSW & ACT)
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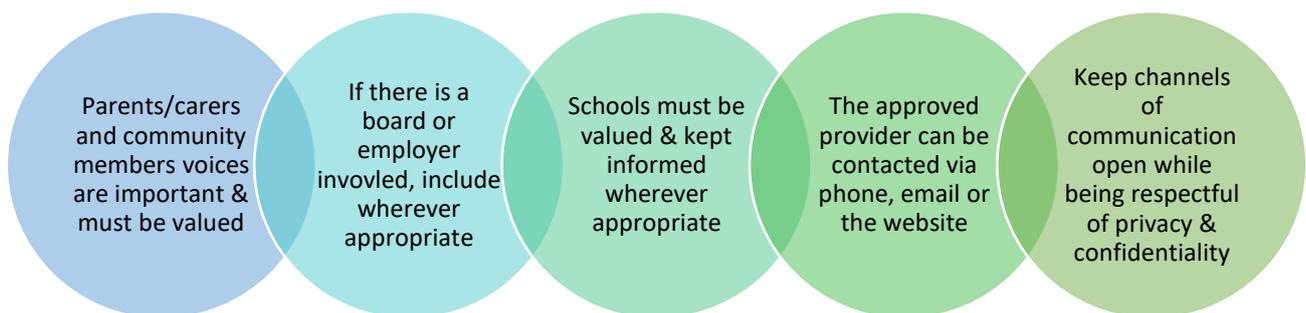
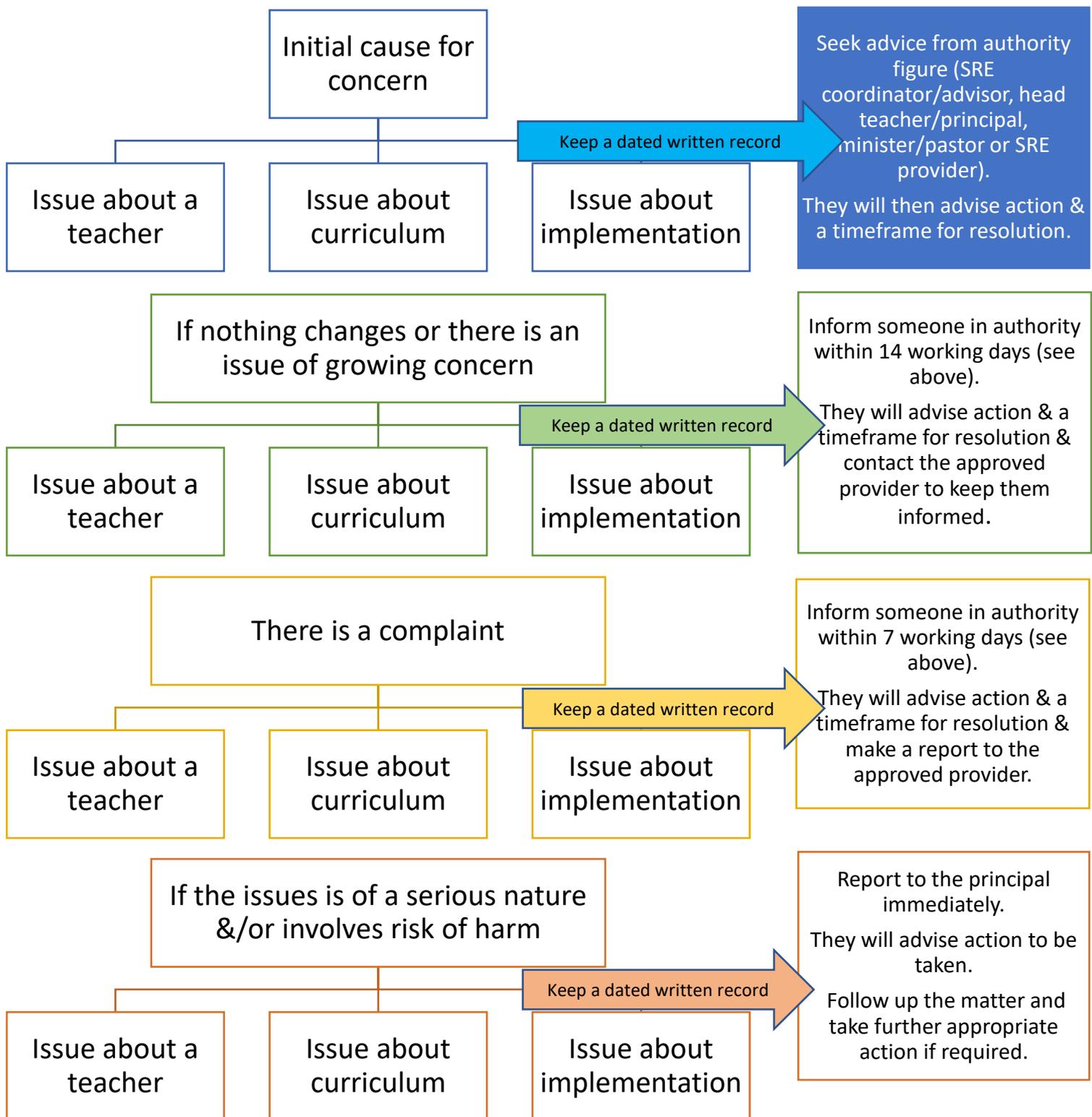
Online form link

For Further Information

Please contact the SRE Consultant and Development Manager for any further clarification on sre@nswactbaptists.org.au

Flow Chart (next page)

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