



Diocese of Wagga Wagga

Catholic Diocese of Wagga Wagga

Special Religious Education

Authorisation Procedure

Confraternity of Christian Doctrine



SRE Authorisation Procedure

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Types of Authorisation

Ex officio

As ministers of religion Clergy (priests and deacons) are authorised as teachers of Special Religious Education ex officio.

Clergy are required to sign a Code of Conduct in the Protection of Children and Young People which is kept on file at McAlroy House and a consent form to release their date of birth to the NSW DoE school/s. Clergy are only able to teach/assist with SRE in the schools where their details have been provided. Clergy actively engaged in SRE are also required to participate in mandatory training updates in the areas of classroom management and child protection issues.

Clergy are required to have a cleared Working With Children Check number and wear an identification lanyard containing an Authorisation Card when on school property for the purpose of SRE.

Volunteer

Religious and Laity volunteer their services as Special Religious Education teachers (catechists) and are therefore required to complete the authorisation process contained in this document.

Volunteers are required to wear an identification lanyard with their Authorisation Card when on school property for the purpose of SRE.

Who needs to be authorised?

All *catechists (SRE teachers), relief catechists, helpers and observers* (those considering if they would like to become a catechist) need to obtain authorisation before going onto school property for the purpose of SRE.

There are six steps for initial authorisation:

- Obtain a Working With Children Check clearance number (or under 18s complete a declaration form available from CCD Wagga Wagga). Attach a copy of clearance letter to Teacher Engagement Form
- Complete the Teacher Engagement Form (TEF)
- Read & Sign the Diocese of Wagga Wagga Code of Conduct in the Protection of Children and Young People (DWW CC PCYP).
- Complete the Child Protection and Code of Conduct Introductory training. Submit response sheet with TEF
- The Diocesan Catechist Coordinator will process your authorisation and provide your details to the NSW DoE school/s
- The Diocesan Catechist Coordinator will issue a lanyard containing a name tag and Authorisation Card which must be worn when on school property for the purpose of SRE

Catechists, helpers and observers are not to attend SRE classes without having completed the above requirements and been issued with an Authorisation Card.



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Should an observer become a regular helper or catechist please notify the Diocesan Catechist Coordinator so records can be updated and the school notified. The TEF, DWW CC PCYP and Child Protection and Code of Conduct Introductory training module can be downloaded from the diocesan website: <https://wagga.catholic.org.au/sre-teacher-qualifications-requirements/>

Guest Speakers:

One-off guest speakers visiting the classroom

- Have the permission of the Parish Priest
- Contact the principal in order to follow school protocols for guest speakers (sign in procedures etc)
- Notify Catechist Coordinator
- Guest speakers must be accompanied by an authorised SRE teacher and must not be left alone with the students

Materials and internet resources:

Any materials and internet resources for the purpose of SRE outside of the approved curriculum cannot be used without prior approval. Any materials and internet resources of this nature need to be age appropriate and approved by the Catechist Coordinator.

Notifying the school:

As an Approved Provider the Diocese will notify the schools of:

- The link to the approved provider's website which holds information about SRE, to allow schools to place the link onto the school's website
- The approved providers participating in a combined arrangement, including participating denominations and which approved provider is responsible for managing the authorisation of the SRE teacher(s), the curriculum and complaints.
- The names, contact details and date of birth of SRE teachers.



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How to Apply for a WWCC

In June 2013 legislation was introduced which requires all paid and volunteer people who work face-to-face with children to obtain a Working with Children Check (WWCC) clearance number.

What you need to do:

1. Log on to <https://www.service.nsw.gov.au/transaction/apply-for-a-working-with-children-check> to complete the online application. You will need to select 'volunteer' on the form and for the Child Related Sector please select 'Religious Services'. You will need your licence number (or other identification document) to complete the form.
2. Print the application receipt and take it, with your licence (or other proof of identity), to the RMS (there is no cost involved because you are a volunteer).
3. When your WWCC clearance number notification arrives in the mail or by email, **KEEP YOUR ORIGINAL** somewhere safe as you can use it for other volunteer organisations in NSW. **Record your clearance number on the Teacher Engagement Form** in the space provided, with your date of birth. **Attach a copy of your clearance letter to the Teacher Engagement Form.**
4. The Diocese of Wagga Wagga will verify you. You must have verification before you are able to volunteer in the schools. The WWCC clearance number notification you receive in the mail **DOES NOT** give you permission to go into the schools. You are unable to enter schools until you have received a lanyard containing your name tag and Authorisation Card.
5. The Working with Children Check is valid for five years. You are responsible to update this before it expires.

Volunteers under the age of 18

Volunteers under the age of 18 are exempt from needing a WWCC. The Department of Education (DoE) requires that SRE volunteers under the age of 18 complete the declaration form available from CCD Wagga. This form can be downloaded from the Diocese website:

<https://wagga.catholic.org.au/sre-teacher-qualifications-requirements/#materials-documentation>

The form is to be submitted to the Diocese of Wagga Wagga with the Teacher Engagement Form.

Under 18s are able to apply for WWCC 3 months prior to their 18th birthday. They will need to apply for a WWCC clearance number and provide a copy of the clearance letter to the Diocesan Catechist Coordinator prior to their 18th birthday in order to keep their authorisation. Once they have turned 18 they are not allowed to enter schools for the purpose of SRE unless the Diocese has verified their WWCC number. Under 18's must be accompanied by a qualified adult SRE teacher at all times.



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DIOCESAN AUTHORISATION PROCEDURE

Under the agreement with the NSW Department of Education, the Diocese of Wagga Wagga is required to provide each school with a list of the name, contact number and date of birth (DOB) of all authorised SRE teachers/helpers who may work in the school regularly or as a relief. The provision of DOB allows the school to check the department's NTBE (Not to be Employed) database.

As such, SRE volunteers will be granted authorisation to enter particular, nominated schools within the parish where they are authorised to work. These are the **ONLY** schools they are permitted to enter at any time for the purpose of SRE. SRE volunteers may obtain authorisation to enter additional schools through written consent to release their name, contact details and DOB to the particular school/s.

If a SRE volunteer would like to obtain authorisation to work in two parishes, they will need the Parish Priest/Parish Administrator of both parishes to sign their Teacher Engagement Form. A space is provided on the form for this.

How to obtain Authorisation

Documents you will need can be downloaded from the diocesan website:

<https://wagga.catholic.org.au/sre-teacher-qualifications-requirements/>

1. Apply for a WWCC clearance number. If under 18, complete statement:
2. <https://wagga.catholic.org.au/sre-teacher-qualifications-requirements/#materials-documentation>
3. Read & Sign the Diocese of Wagga Wagga Code of Conduct in the Protection of Children and Young People (DWW CC PCYP).
4. Download and complete the Child Protection and Code of Conduct Introductory training (diocesan website).
5. Fill in a current Teacher Engagement Form (TEF). The Parish Priest must sign this form giving his authorisation for the catechist to volunteer in his parish. Should a catechist change parish they will need to complete a new TEF to be authorised to volunteer for SRE in that parish. If being authorised for two parishes, make sure the Parish Priest/Parish Administrator of both parishes signs the form in the space provided.
6. The original TEF (with WWCC clearance letter attached), DWW CC PCYP, and Response Sheet to the Child Protection and Code of Conduct Introductory training is to be posted to Barbara Chigwidden, Catechist Coordinator, PO Box 473 205 Tarcutta Street WAGGA NSW 2650. A copy of the form is to be kept by the catechist/helper. A lanyard containing a name tag and Authorisation Card will be sent to the Parish Office to be distributed to the catechist.
7. The information contained on the TEF is private and confidential. The Diocese is required to provide schools with a list of the names, contact phone numbers and dates of birth of authorised SRE personnel who may attend the school (regular and relief). **Working with Children Check clearance numbers** are **NOT** to be disclosed to schools or to anyone else.
8. Authorisation in the Diocese of Wagga Wagga is for a period of three years. Once authorisation has expired catechists and helpers will need to complete a new TEF to obtain a renewal of their authorisation. Catechists should apply for the renewal of their authorisation three weeks prior to the expiry of their authorisation.
9. All expired Authorisation Cards must be collected by the Parish Office/Parish Coordinator and destroyed before issuing a new Authorisation Card.
10. It is the responsibility of catechists and helpers to apply for a new Working with Children Check when their clearance number expires. They will need to provide a copy of their new WWCC clearance letter to the Diocesan Catechist Coordinator.
11. A lanyard containing a name tag (identification) and Authorisation Card **must** be visibly worn by catechists and helpers whenever they are on school grounds volunteering for the purpose of SRE. SRE personnel **must** also carry photo ID (eg driver's licence) and be prepared to present this upon the request of the school.



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Maintaining Authorisation- TRAINING

As a provider of SRE in Public Schools, the Diocese of Wagga Wagga signs an annual agreement with the NSW DoE. In order to comply with this agreement the Diocese is required to provide Basic Accreditation training for SRE personnel and ongoing training in the areas of classroom management and child protection issues.

The six Basic Accreditation modules can be downloaded from the Diocesan website and are to be completed within six months of authorisation, with the requirement that one module be submitted per month. Should a volunteer require an extension for a module they need to contact the Diocesan Catechist Coordinator prior to the due date. Each module should take approximately 1 ½ to 2 hours to complete.

Basic Accreditation modules can be found: <https://wagga.catholic.org.au/sre-accreditation-correspondence-training-modules/#sre-training> Failure to complete the mandatory basic training may result in this temporary authorisation being withdrawn until the mandatory training has been completed by the catechist. Qualified teachers or SRE volunteers from other dioceses may apply for recognised prior learning. Contact Diocesan Catechist Coordinator for more details.

Mandatory child protection training is currently held every two years- even years, e.g. 2022, 2024. All SRE personnel are required to participate. Volunteers are currently required to update in classroom management strategies and implementation of the curriculum every two years. Training sessions are held in each deanery every two years- odd years, e.g. 2023, 2025. All SRE personnel are required to participate.

Failure to complete the mandatory ongoing training may result in the catechist's or helper's authorisation being suspended until the training is completed. Other training opportunities will be made available and though not compulsory it is strongly recommended that catechists avail themselves of these opportunities to develop their skills in this important ministry.

The Diocese of Wagga Wagga is required to review SRE Teaching, which could include teacher self-reflection, student feedback, classroom observation, supervisor feedback, mentor support and adherence to the authorised curriculum. The diocese is required by the DoE to report the results of the teaching review process, which will be part of the annual assurance process, describing efforts to address identified issues such as further training and mentor support.

Teacher Engagement Form- Guide/Checklist

Please provide your full legal name.

- Your full legal name will be written on your Authorisation Card. Your preferred name for name tag- e.g. Libby for Elizabeth or the name you go by which may not be your legal name. The name tag is for identity purposes, not so the children know what to call you.
- Preferred name for certificates- e.g. you may be known as Libby, but would prefer Elizabeth on certificates.
- Please provide email address if you have one. This is the easiest way to ensure you receive information about SRE matters. If you don't have an email address please ask one of the other SRE volunteers who does to keep you informed about any communication that is sent out.
- Recognised prior learning- this applies to qualified teachers (Bachelor of Education or equivalent) or those who have acquired SRE Basic Accreditation in another diocese, e.g. Sydney.
- Please read through the whole form carefully and fill in ALL sections. Missing information may result in delays processing your authorisation.
- Please attach relevant documentation- WWWC clearance letter or Working with Children Check- Declaration form for under 18s, Child Protection and Code of Conduct Introductory Training (new SRE volunteers), Please ensure you have signed the form on page 2 and page 3.
- Please ensure the Parish Priest/Parish Administrator has signed the form- page 3 prior to posting. Authorisations cannot be processed without the authorising agent's signature.
- You may scan and email your Authorisation documentation and then post original TEF, DWW CC PCYP, Training Response Sheet, copy only of WWCC clearance letter.



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PARISH COORDINATORS/PARISH OFFICE CHECKLIST IN RELATION TO AUTHORISED CCD CATECHISTS

The checklist of important actions for SRE Parish Coordinators to undertake:

- All catechists (SRE teachers), helpers and observers must be in possession of a lanyard containing name tag and Authorisation Card **BEFORE** visiting NSW Government Schools in the Diocese. The Diocese must also provide the school with a list of the names, contact details and DOB of authorised SRE personnel **BEFORE** they enter the school. The letter is updated annually before the start of term 1 or as required.
- ALL SRE personnel must wear the lanyard containing their name tag and Authorisation Card when on school property for the purpose of SRE.
- ALL SRE personnel must carry photo ID (eg driver's licence) and be prepared to present it upon the request of the school when they are on school property for the purpose of SRE.
- No catechist/relief catechist/helper/observer is to enter a public school without **current** authorisation for that particular school.
- At no time is an unauthorised replacement to be used or unauthorised persons (including children) to be taken with the catechist into the school. If a catechist is unable to attend a session then a person with a current authorisation for that particular school may be used as a replacement, but the school must be notified of this arrangement.
- If catechists intend to take guest speakers into SRE classrooms, they must have the permission of the Parish Priest, contact the Principal in order to follow school protocols for guest speakers, and notify the Catechist Coordinator. Guest speakers must always be in the company of an authorised SRE teacher and not be left alone with the students.
- As part of our agreement with the NSW DoE SRE volunteers must teach an authorised age-appropriate curriculum. The Bishop of the Diocese is responsible for authorising the curriculum. As a provider of SRE the Diocese is required to provide the public with online access to the authorised curriculum via a website. The authorised curricula for the Diocese of Wagga Wagga can be found: <https://wagga.catholic.org.au/sre-catechesis/> The Parish Priest/Administrator chooses which authorised curriculum they would like used in their parish. SRE volunteers need to teach the authorised curriculum chosen by their Parish Priest/Administrator.
- Expired Authorisation Cards should be retrieved and destroyed by the Parish Office when the new ones are issued.
- The Diocesan Catechist Coordinator is to be notified of retiring/inactive catechists. Lanyards containing identification and Authorisation Card of retiring/inactive catechists must be collected and returned to **Barbara Chigwidden** Po Box. 473 205 Tarcutta Street Wagga Wagga 2650 Retiring/inactive catechists will be removed from the active list of catechists on the CCD database. Teaching resources should be retained by the Parish Coordinator/Parish Office and re-used.
- The Diocesan Catechist Coordinator is to be notified when an observer becomes a regular helper or catechist.
- Please advise the Diocesan Catechist Coordinator when catechists change address/email/phone number or move from the parish. It is important that the Parish and Diocesan databases of volunteers are accurate and up-to-date.
- Please advise the Diocesan Catechist Coordinator when catechists/helpers would like to return to active ministry.



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WHAT TO DO IF A CATECHIST/HELPER RECEIVES A BAR FROM THE OFFICE OF THE CHILDREN'S GUARDIAN

In the event that a catechist receives a bar from The Office of the Children's Guardian when they apply for their Working with Children Check clearance number, this means that the person is not able to work face-to-face with children. It is imperative that they do not complete the authorisation process and do not go into State schools to teach.

The responsibility for informing the person that they are not able to work with children belongs to the Parish Priest.

WHAT TO DO IF A PARISH IS NOTIFIED THAT A CATECHIST WHO WAS PREVIOUSLY GIVEN A CLEARANCE NUMBER HAS SINCE BEEN BARRED?

The database at the Office of the Children's Guardian is constantly updated and monitored. If someone who has previously been cleared to work with children becomes a barred person, the employer will be immediately advised.

In this event, the Parish Priest will remove the SRE teacher from the classroom immediately and their lanyard containing identification and Authorisation Card will be retrieved and destroyed. The Diocesan Catechist Coordinator is to be notified when this has been done. Lanyard holders are to be returned to the Diocesan Catechist Coordinator to be reused.

The responsibility for informing the person that they are no longer able to work with children belongs to the Parish Priest.

If such a situation arises and you require advice or support, please phone Barbara Chigwidden 0429203047.

PLEASE NOTE:

If you have any concerns about the suitability of any person to be working with children for any reason, please speak to your Parish Priest or Parish Coordinator.