What is a chaplain?

A chaplain funded under this program is an individual who is recognised:

i. by the school community and the appropriate governing authority for the school (where applicable) as having the skills and experience to deliver school chaplaincy to the school community, and

ii. through formal ordination, commissioning, recognised religious qualifications or endorsement by a recognised or accepted religious institution.

A chaplain may be from any faith, and a title other than ‘chaplain’ may be used where the title is appropriate to the religious affiliation of the individual.

What is the role of the school chaplain?

School chaplains support the emotional wellbeing of students by providing:

- pastoral care services, and
- strategies that support the emotional wellbeing of the broader school community.

Pastoral care is defined in the agreement with the Commonwealth as the practice of looking after the personal needs of students, not just their academic needs, through the provision of general spiritual and personal advice.

What are the minimum requirements for a school chaplain?

In addition to meeting the above definition of a chaplain, the chaplain must:

- not proselytise
- respect, accept and be sensitive to other people’s views, values and beliefs
- comply with NSW laws and policies in relation to child protection matters
- meet minimum qualification requirements (either a Certificate IV in Youth Work or Pastoral Care, or an equivalent qualification. The qualification must include competencies in ‘mental health’ and ‘making appropriate referrals’).

Schools should sight written evidence that a prospective chaplain complies with these requirements prior to appointment.

Can my school receive funding for a secular student welfare worker instead of, or as well as, a chaplain under the NSCP?

No. The NSCP will only provide funding for chaplains. Schools that had a student welfare worker in 2014 under the previous National School Chaplaincy and Student Welfare Programme may apply for a chaplain in 2015 under the NSCP.

Is participation in the NSCP compulsory?

No. Participation in the NSCP is voluntary for schools and for students.
Do I need to consult with parents before appointing a chaplain?

Yes. Schools need to consult with their school community about possible plans for engaging a chaplain.

Schools recommended for participation in the NSCP will need to hold evidence that the school community has been consulted, eg Statement from parent organisation

My school currently has a secular student welfare worker who wants to apply to be a chaplain. How does the school ensure that the person meets the requirements for a chaplain?

The person will need to satisfy the program's definition of a chaplain and comply with minimum requirements, as noted above. The school should seek written confirmation from a recognised and accepted religious institution that the person has been endorsed to undertake the role of a school chaplain.

How will schools be selected to participate in the NSCP?

Schools will be assessed against the same criteria used by the Commonwealth under the National School Chaplaincy and Student Welfare Programme. This includes consideration of the school’s location, number of enrolments, the number of Aboriginal enrolments, the level of disadvantage, the school’s existing wellbeing services and the school's statement of need for a chaplain.

For 2015, priority will be given to schools that participated in the National School Chaplaincy and Student Welfare Programme in 2014. Once this allocation has been exhausted, the above criteria will be used to allocate any remaining funding to additional schools.

How much will my school receive under the NSCP?

Participating schools may receive up to $20,000 per year ($24,000 for remote schools). The level of individual school funding will be based on the following:

- the number of hours (annually) the chaplain will be available at the school
- the number of successful applications for chaplain funding and the amount of funding available under the NSCP.

For how many hours a year will a school chaplain be funded?

The maximum number of annual hours that will be funded under the NSCP is 400 hours. Schools may apply for a chaplain for fewer hours, but a smaller funding allocation will then apply.

Will my school receive the same level of funding as for 2014?

Not necessarily. Less funding is available under the NSCP compared to the 2014 program. As a result, if interest from existing schools to continue in 2015 exceeds available funding, funding allocations to individual schools may be scaled back.

How many chaplains is my school entitled to?

Funding under the NSCP will only be available for one chaplain per school.
My school is part of a multi-campus college. How many chaplains is the school entitled to?

A multi-campus college can receive funding for a maximum of three chaplains ($60,000 per annum, or $72,000 in remote locations) across all the campuses. However:

- the number of funded chaplains must not exceed the number of campuses
- each campus must be geographically separated, for example, in another town or suburb.

Each campus will be required to submit its own application.

When will my school receive its funding for 2015?

This will depend on when the Commonwealth provides funding the NSW to administer the NSCP program. It is anticipated that funding will be available to participating schools early in 2015.

Does a school need to use a chaplain provider or can it directly employ a chaplain?

Independent schools can employ a chaplain who meets the Commonwealth Government’s criteria or use an approved chaplain provider.

Where a school makes arrangements through a chaplain provider, the school is responsible for making payments to the provider. For 2015, the provider must have already been approved by the Commonwealth to operate in any State or Territory under the National School Chaplaincy and Student Welfare Programme.

Will schools selected for 2015 automatically be included in the NSCP for 2016-2018?

No. All schools seeking funding for a chaplain in 2016-2018 will need to submit a new application. Details of the application arrangements for 2016-2018 will be available in 2015.

For how many years will funding be available for a school chaplain?

The NSCP will run from 2015 to 2018. For 2015, participating schools will be funded for that year only. For 2016-2018, schools will participate for the three years and will receive funding on a yearly basis.

Can a school change its chaplain at any time?

Yes. Funding to schools is tied to the provision of chaplaincy services, not to an individual chaplain.

What happens if a school chooses to discontinue its participation in the NSCP?

The school will need to notify AIS and return funds as outlined in the school’s funding agreement.

What happens if the school chaplain is no longer available?

The school will be able to employ another chaplain or use an approved provider to fill the position in accordance with the requirements in the school’s funding agreement.
How do I find out which chaplain providers were approved by the Commonwealth in 2014?

Appendix 4 of the NSCP NSW Arrangements for 2015 document is a list of providers approved by the Commonwealth that operated in NSW schools in 2014. If you wish to enter into an arrangement with a provider not on this list, please contact Wendy Godden (wgodden@aisnsw.edu.au) at the AIS, who will advise on whether the provider was approved for school chaplaincy services in another state or territory.

How does a school deal with a complaint about a chaplain?

The school’s complaints/grievance handling processes will apply.

What reporting requirements do participating schools need to meet?

Participating schools will be asked to provide reports and participate in evaluations, as required, through their peak sector body. While efforts will be made to minimise reporting burdens, it is important that accountability requirements are in place to minimise the risks associated with the NSCP. A minimum requirement will be for schools to provide evidence that their funding has been used for the provision of school chaplaincy services.