
POLICY TITLE:	RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN ACT GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS
YEAR OF PUBLICATION:	2008 (Amended and updated 2008)
IDENTIFIER:	RES200812
LEGISLATION:	<i>Education Act 2004</i>

1. Policy Statement

1.1 Section 29 of the *Education Act 2004* (the Act) provides for the teaching of religious education in government schools.

1.2 The teaching of religious education in government schools will be coordinated in individual schools by the principal in co-operation with specific religious bodies and parents.

2. Rationale

2.1 These procedures and guidelines aim to:

- provide the context for the teaching of religious education in government schools, and
- to establish the system and procedures for facilitating the teaching of religious education in government schools.

3. Definitions:

Child:

A person under the age of 18.

Directorate:

Education and Training Directorate.

Parent:

A parent is a person having parental responsibility for the child under the *Children and Young People Act 2008* including a carer appointed under that Act.

Principal:

The person who is the recognised principal of a government school or the person giving an approved educational course (non-government).

Religious Education in ACT Government Schools

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Religious Body:

A term inclusive of groups of people holding similar religious beliefs. These groups must be endorsed as an income tax exempt charity by the Commissioner of Taxation, and/or hold governing documents containing acceptable clauses showing the organisation's non-profit character or be approved by the Director-General of the Education and Training Directorate to conduct religious education in ACT Government schools.

Religious Education:

Instruction in a particular religion as delivered by a representative of a religious body.

Screening:

The process of checking a person's police record.

Screening report:

A record of criminal convictions having regard to the Spent Convictions Act 2000 and its exemptions.

4. Procedures**4.1 Parental Responsibilities**

(refer to Section 29(1) of the Act)

4.1.1 The parents of children at a government school may request that their child receive religious education in a particular religion.

4.1.2 The parents have responsibility for organising with the religious body to provide religious education in the government school that their child attends.

4.2 Religious Body Responsibilities

(refer to Section 29(3) of the Act)

4.2.1 The religious body providing the authorised religious education program must provide to the principal proof of their endorsement as an income tax exempt charity by the Commissioner for Taxation and/or governing documents containing acceptable clauses showing the organisation's non-profit character before being admitted to the school to provide religious education.

4.2.2 Persons providing the authorised religious education program must be approved by the religious body to which the person providing the instruction belongs.

4.2.3 Persons approved by the authorised religious bodies will be regarded as volunteers and as such must comply with the Directorate's *Working with Children and Young People - Volunteering Policy and Procedures (especially clauses 6.2, 6.3 and 6.4)* and associated documentation.

4.2.4 All necessary materials and resources needed in the provision of the religious education program, must be provided by the religious body authorising the religious education program.

4.2.5 Responsibility for developing and providing program content, materials and resources, and ensuring its suitability for the targeted children, resides with the religious body.

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4.3. Principals' Responsibilities

(refer to Sections 29(4) and 29(2) of the Act)

4.3.1 The principal must sight the screening report of the person proposing to provide religious education classes in the school and deem it to be satisfactory before allowing the person to proceed with the classes.

4.3.2 In working with the approved representative of the authorised religious body, the principal should apply the policy and procedures, including the Code of Conduct as outlined in the Directorate's *Working with Children and Young People Volunteering Policy and Procedures* and associated documentation.

4.3.3 The principal should ask to sight materials (eg visual aids and handouts) used by the approved representative of the authorised religious body to ensure its suitability for presentation to the children undertaking the program on school premises.

4.3.4 The principal is responsible for providing a suitable location, on the school grounds, for the religious education program to be held.

4.3.5 The principal must ensure that classes from the regular, approved school curriculum are provided for all children not attending the religious education program.

4.3.6 The principal must ensure that the only children who attend the religious education program are those whose parents have consented to their attendance.

4.3.7 The principal has the ultimate responsibility for ensuring that all reasonable care is taken to protect the safety of any children against injury or harm that should have reasonably been foreseen.

4.3.8 The principal must be satisfied that the location in which the religious education is being carried out, provides appropriate outside visibility to enable periodic observation by the school principal and/or administration staff.

4.3.9 A reasonable time for the children's religious education is deemed to be no more than forty minutes for one lesson or 7 hours per school term as negotiated with the principal.

4.3.10 If parents of a child at a government school ask the principal for their child to receive religious education in a particular religion, the principal must cooperate with parents to organise its provision and ensure that reasonable time is allowed for the child's religious education in that religion.

4.4 Directorate Responsibilities

4.4.1 If a parent asks that religious education be provided by a religious body, that organisation must provide to the principal the proof required in section 4.2.1 or approval may be requested from the Director-General of the Education and Training Directorate.

Contact

Manager, Curriculum Support
Phone: 6205 9382

Related Policies

Working With Children and Young People – Volunteering Policy (2003)
Children and Young People Act (2008)

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