



VIEN GIAC BUDDHIST ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED

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VIEN GIAC TEMPLE

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Teacher Authorisation Process

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Policy references and guides:

Special Religious Education Procedures (revised 4 May 2020):

<https://policies.education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/associated-documents/REimplementproced.pdf>

NSW Department of Education Code of Conduct (updated 4 August 2020):

<https://policies.education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/policies/code-of-conduct-policy?refid=285855>

Values in NSW Public Schools (updated 29 July 2020):

<https://policies.education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/policies/values-in-nsw-public-schools>

Working with Children Check:

<https://www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au/child-safe-organisations/working-with-children-check>

Office of the Children's Guardian Training and resources:

<https://www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au/child-safe-organisations/training-and-resources>

1. Checklist and Overview of Processes

Before being authorised as a Special Religious Education (SRE) teacher, have you...

1. ... read and understood the Department of Education’s Code of Conduct for SRE teachers?

The Code of Conduct clarifies the standards of behaviour that is expected of all SRE teachers in the performance of their duties. It gives guidance in areas where staff need to make personal and ethical decisions.

2. ...completed Child Safety induction training and understood your mandatory reporting responsibilities?

All SRE teachers must participate in initial Child Safety training and update this annually. This is to ensure that SRE teachers are aware of their responsibilities regarding the safety and wellbeing of children and young people that arise in the course of their work. SRE teachers are mandatory reporters of suspected risk of significant harm and must understand and follow procedures relating to this.

3. ...obtained a Working with Children Check (WWCC) and signed the declaration in relation to Specific Crimes (in this document)?

- All SRE teachers are required to apply for a WWCC and obtain a [clearance number](#). As an approved provider, we keep relevant WWCC documents for five years after the employment or engagement has been completed.
- Any SRE teacher authorised to enter NSW Government schools must not have had a criminal conviction for any crime against a minor, a conviction for violence, sexual assault or for providing prohibited drugs.

4. ...completed basic training to deliver the SRE curriculum?

SRE approved providers ensure that all SRE teachers have access to basic training standards. The basic training includes context, knowledge of authorised curriculum, classroom management, child safety and the importance of continued professional learning.

This training is provided by VGBA for any new SRE teachers, and on an ongoing basis.

5. ...completed and signed the SRE Teacher Declaration at the end of this document?

You need to sign, date and return this declaration before being authorised to teach our approved curriculum as an SRE teacher in schools.

2. Code of Conduct for SRE Teachers (Department of Education)

The Code of Conduct clarifies the standards of behaviour expected of all staff in the performance of their duties. It gives guidance in areas where staff need to make personal and ethical decisions.

2.1 Audience and applicability

The SRE Code of Conduct applies to all employees, volunteers, religious and lay people working on behalf of our organisation.

SRE teachers are to endorse the principles of current Child Protection Law and follow the Department of Education Religious Education Implementation Procedures as an essential responsibility. The SRE Code of Conduct will help you understand and fulfil your legal and other responsibilities.

2.2 Context

We are committed to the highest standards of conduct in public education, training and administration. The Dept of Education has issued this single Code of Conduct to align staff conduct with the organisational values and ethics that underpin the Department's policies and procedures. This Code of Conduct is aligned with the Department of Education's Code of Conduct:

<https://policies.education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/policies/code-of-conduct-policy?refid=285855>

2.3. Legislative provisions

- Anti-Discrimination Act 1977
- Community Relations Commission and Principles of Multiculturalism Act 2000
- Crimes Act 1900
- Fair Work Act 2009
- Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009
- Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988
- Industrial Relations Act 1996
- Work Health and Safety Act 2011
- Ombudsman Act 1974
- Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998
- Public Interest Disclosures Act 1994

2.4 Expectations

As an employee or volunteer, you are required to be aware of all legislation, policies, procedures and work related to the role. The most relevant of these will be made available to you through induction and training. This is a requirement for people undertaking the role of SRE teacher.

As a representative of our faith, you will be caring and compassionate towards the students in your class. In doing so you must set appropriate boundaries since you are in a position of authority and have a duty of care for students. There is an expectation that you will only use approved curriculum materials and age-appropriate resources for SRE lessons.

The Code touches on many significant issues relating to people working with children and young people. Special Religious Education teachers who do not comply with the Code of Conduct can be asked and expected to withdraw from SRE and their authorisation to teach will be revoked.

2.5 Reporting concerns about employee conduct

SRE teachers are to promote an atmosphere of respect for the classroom teacher and school personnel by their language and behaviour. All students are to be treated fairly. An interaction with a student which is discriminating, demeaning or belittling is not acceptable and constitutes a breach of the Code.

A breach in the Code of Conduct may initially be identified by a student, parent/carer, classroom teacher, SRE Coordinator or school staff who would then refer the matter to the authorising person. Our organisation must be notified of breaches of the Code and will determine the course of action to be taken.

2.6 Respect for others

We are committed to creating a safe and friendly environment in which the children and young people in our care can grow and develop.

Behaviour, attitudes and language are an integral part of the SRE lesson. SRE teachers must not discriminate against or harass colleagues, students or members of the public on a number of grounds including gender, marital status, pregnancy, age, race, religion, culture, ethnic or national origin, physical or intellectual impairment or sexual preference or politics. Such harassment or discrimination may constitute an offence under the Anti-Discrimination Act 1977. SRE teachers need to be sensitive to gender, physical and intellectual differences and avoid language and activities which discriminate.

Respect and care: SRE teachers must always treat students with respect even when their behaviour may be difficult or challenging. There is no place for sarcasm, derogatory remarks, offensive comments or any conduct that may result in emotional distress or psychological harm to a child. Such behaviours include targeted and ongoing criticism, belittling or teasing, excessive or unreasonable demands, hostility, verbal abuse, threatening rejection or scapegoating and using inappropriate locations or social isolation.

SRE teachers need to be sensitive to the words they use, especially in the classroom, which make any assumptions about a child or young person's background, family status and primary caregivers. The family takes many forms in today's society and SRE teachers must respect the support structures of the children and young people in their care.

Cultural awareness: SRE teachers need to be sensitive to cultures and traditions that are different from their own. They should not make statements, or behave in a way that demonstrates ignorance, bias or ridicule towards other denominations, religions or cultures.

School environment: Every school has a Discipline and Welfare Policy. SRE teachers must obtain a copy of the policy for the schools in which they work and adhere to the policy (see school website).

2.7 Duty of care

Duty of care is the legal obligation to provide reasonable care and not harm others. The care of children and young people begins with the attitude of SRE teachers to a variety of issues which can impact on those in our care. Duty of care includes, but is not limited to:

- Providing adequate supervision of SRE classes
- Ensuring a safe physical environment which is free from obstacles and obstructions and activities which may cause injury
- Reporting any bullying or harmful behaviour to school authorities
- Seeking assistance from trained school personnel should a medical need for a student arise
- Considering safety of self as well as that of others
- Ensuring the physical and psychological wellbeing of individuals

2.8 Responsibilities

As SRE teachers you have a responsibility to:

- Become familiar with and support the NSW Department of Education statement of core values, Values in NSW Public Schools. <https://policies.education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/policies/values-in-nsw-public-schools> (updated July 2020).
- Apply for a Working with Children Check (WWCC) clearance number and inform us of your clearance number for verification
- Agree to and undertake induction, Child Safety and other relevant training
- Become familiar with Child Protection laws and mandatory reporting procedures
- Report any concern of risk of significant harm to students directly to the principal
- Report any situation of reportable conduct to the principal
- Comply with all reasonable instructions from your approved provider
- Wear a name badge identifying yourself and the approved provider
- Regularly and punctually attend SRE classes, and notify schools in a timely manner if you are unable to attend a lesson
- Always use the authorised SRE curriculum(s) of the approved provider and prepare lessons according to authorised curriculum materials
- Use language, words and behaviours that are not threatening
- Dress appropriately for SRE classes
- Not let personal feelings adversely affect SRE interactions with students
- Comply with all reasonable instructions from the school principal, delegate or any supervising teacher
- Become familiar with related laws and policies and individual DoE school policies over time

2.9 Behaviour management

It is good work practice to make sure that you are aware of and comply with the applicable school policies, especially the Student Discipline in Government Schools Policy and Procedures in the school in which you work. Ask the SRE coordinator/principal of each school for copies of these documents. Schools have policies appropriate to learning, behaviour, privacy and safety.

Practise positive reinforcement and be respectful in all interactions with the students.

2.10 Unacceptable (Prohibited) behaviour management practices

SRE teachers must NOT under any circumstances:

- Use physical discipline or practise behaviours which humiliate, belittle or frighten students
- Use an object, such as a ruler, to gain a student's attention
- Hold or restrain a student other than to prevent an injury or harm to another
- Intimidate students by standing over them, making them feel alienated, ashamed, guilty or engaging in discriminating behaviour or disrespectful behaviour
- Use corporal punishment which is prohibited by law.

2.11 Appropriate relationships between SRE teachers and students

SRE teachers must not:

- Impose physical, verbal or psychological punishment
- Have an inappropriate relationship with any student
- Give gifts of a personal nature that encourages the student to think they have a special relationship with the SRE teacher
- Expose a student to material that contains messages and themes that are violent or inappropriate given the student's age and curriculum experience
- Invite student(s) to your home or hold conversations of an intimate nature with students
- Use sexual innuendo or inappropriate language and/or material with a student
- Have contact with a student through social media, letters, phone, etc.

2.12 Being alone with students

SRE teachers should avoid, as far as is reasonable, situations where they are alone with a student. When responsible for a single student, SRE teachers are advised to discuss the situation with the school authorities. If ever alone with a student be sure to locate yourself and the student in a visible area like the hallway and/or make sure classroom doors are open.

SRE teachers are reminded to become familiar with Child Protection policies and related laws:

- The law prohibiting sexual or inappropriate relations with a person under the age of consent (16 years), Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998, Crimes Act 1900
- The law prohibiting any sexual or inappropriate relations between a volunteer (employee) and student under the age of 18 (NSW Ombudsman 1974)
- The law prohibiting child pornography (NSW Ombudsman Act 1974)
- Privacy laws
- Provision of prohibited drugs
- An act of violence towards another person
- Any offence against a minor person

2.13 Relationships with students and their families outside school hours

A healthy student/teacher relationship is confined to the school and classroom. SRE teachers must not give details of their email, telephone numbers or address to a child or young person. However, if contact happens through family and social networks and is an existing relationship with a student's family, avoiding contact with that student and their family would be impractical and undesirable.

2.14 Use of alcohol, drugs and tobacco

Children and young people must not be given alcohol, tobacco or prohibited substances. Students are to be encouraged in healthy practices. SRE teachers must not enter school premises under the influence of alcohol or prohibited drugs.

2.15 Impartiality

SRE teachers must remain impartial and objective and this occurs when you follow your approved curriculum. It is inappropriate and improper to encourage or influence students to adopt a faith group or activity which is not the preference of their family.

2.16 Copyright and intellectual property

Please see the following link for guidelines and further information:

<http://www.smartcopying.edu.au/information-sheets/schools/educational-licences>

It should be noted that some material used for SRE will fall outside this and approved providers are responsible for retaining their own copyright.

Generally, the only material that is free for teachers and schools to use from the internet is online material that is licenced under Creative Commons.

<http://www.smartcopying.edu.au/open-education/open-education-resources/cc-information-packfor-teachers-and-students>

3. Child Safety and Mandatory Reporting

All staff and volunteers have a responsibility in their roles to provide support and to report risk of harm concerns about children and young people.

The VGBA Child Safety Policy and Code of Conduct outlines our policies and procedures with regard to child protection, guided by the Child Safe Standards adopted by the NSW Government. Any of our staff who participate directly in activities with children and young people (including SRE teachers) must complete initial and ongoing training, including eLearning courses provided by the Office of the Children's Guardian: <https://www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au/child-safe-organisations/training-and-resources/child-safe-elearning>.

SRE teachers must:

- Have participated in an initial Child Safety induction and an update during the past year
- Be aware of the indicators of abuse and neglect of children and young people
- Be aware of their obligation to advise the principal or workplace manager of concerns about the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children and young people that arise in the course of their work
- Be aware of their mandatory obligation to report suspected risk of significant harm and of the procedures for doing so

The Department of Education has developed and updated Mandatory Child Protection Training via an on-line portal*. The aim of the course is to increase responsive and responsible reporting of child protection concerns by schools.

Skills developed include:

- Identifying when a student might be at risk of harm
- Discussing concerns with appropriate staff
- Engaging with professional networks, parents and community members
- Gathering information within the school and externally using information exchange provisions
- Using the mandatory reporter guide to clarify concerns and assist decision making
- Depending on the decision of the mandatory reporter guide, reporting to FACS or seeking advice from the Child Wellbeing Unit and then working constructively and positively with the family and with external professionals.

All teachers must complete and update Child Protection training via the following link:

<https://education.nsw.gov.au/student-wellbeing/child-protection/child-protection-training>

New accounts can be registered here: <https://mypl.education.nsw.gov.au/auth/login/>

*Updated training available early 2021

4. Working with Children Check

In accordance with the Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012, the safety, welfare and well-being of children and in particular protecting them from child abuse, is the paramount consideration in the Working with Children Check (WWCC) procedures.

The Department of Education requires that all non-employees who are permitted to teach SRE in its schools be appropriate and responsible persons. Each approved provider must give an undertaking that any SRE teacher authorised to enter NSW Government schools has not had a criminal conviction for any crime against a minor, a conviction for violence, sexual assault or for providing prohibited drugs.

In keeping with current child protection legislation, all SRE teachers are required to apply for a WWCC and obtain a clearance number. The number and date of birth must be provided for verification.

Approved providers must keep relevant WWCC documents for five years after the employment or engagement has been completed, or longer if required (for example, if the recruitment or engagement action has been the subject of legal action).

The following records are kept for each teacher:

1. Full name
2. Contact details
3. Date of birth
4. WWCC number
5. Verification date
6. Verification outcome
7. Expiry date

You can apply for a Working with Children Check via the Office of the Children's Guardian:
<https://www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au/child-safe-organisations/working-with-children-check>

Each authorised religious persuasion must also give an undertaking that any SRE teacher authorised to enter NSW Government schools has not had a criminal conviction for any crime against a minor, a conviction for violence, sexual assault or for providing prohibited drugs.

SRE Teacher Volunteer Charter and Declaration

‘Viên Giác’ means complete enlightenment, peace, cessation of suffering and pureness within oneself. Viên Giác Buddhist Association Incorporation (VGBA) provides spiritual, physical and emotional support and guidance to those in need.

We are committed to teaching Buddhism philosophy to the young generation to help them to lead a healthier life and have a healthy mind to contribute to a healthier society. Buddhism classes, including those delivered through our approved Special Religious Education (SRE) curriculum, are centred on Buddha’s teachings and how they can be used as life skills in day-to-day situations.

This Volunteer Charter outlines the commitment between individual volunteers and VGBA.

Viên Giác Buddhist Association (VGBA) will:

1	Direction	provide thorough instruction of any given tasks and responsibilities
2	Supervision	provide contact details of VGBA members who will offer support and guidance
3	Safety	provide protection to all volunteer’s safety under health and safety regulations and covered under public liability
4	Development	provide regular feedback on performance and ongoing training if needed
5	Fairness	not make unreasonable requests of volunteer's principles or beliefs
6	Participation	encourage volunteers to participate in decision making when applicable
7	Updates	Inform volunteers of any changes within VGBA and relating to tasks
8	Appropriateness	assign/allocate tasks suitable to the individual's voluntary skills, motivation and experience

As a Volunteer to Viên Giác Buddhist Association (VGBA) I will:

1	Values	become familiar with and commit to the core value principles of VGBA
2	Procedures	accept and support VGBA guidelines and follow procedures to the best of my ability
3	Effort	carry out reasonable and acceptable tasks to the best of your ability
4	Confidentiality	maintain confidentiality of information, within and outside VGBA
5	Accountability	carry out volunteer commitments to the best of my ability and inform VGBA if unable to do so
6	Teamwork	share support within and between teams, and provide constructive suggestions within VGBA principles to enhance the delivery of SRE teaching
7	Development	be willing to learn new tasks and skills
8	Service	understand, recognise and respect the role of VGBA as a Charity Organisation and its commitment to assist those in need

Your Personal Details

Full Name: _____ Title: _____
First name Last name (Mr, Mrs, Ms, Miss)

Address: _____
Unit/Apartment Street Address

Suburb State Postcode

Date of birth _____
(DD-MM-YY)

Mobile Phone: _____ Home phone: _____

Email address: _____

WWCC clearance number: _____ WWCC expiry date: _____

Volunteer declaration

I [insert full name] _____ being employed or engaged by Viên Giác Buddhist Association (VGBA) in the role of Volunteer SRE Teacher acknowledge that I have:

- Understood and accept my responsibilities as a Volunteer with Viên Giác Buddhist Association (VGBA) as outlined in the Volunteer Charter above
- Understood and agree to comply with the SRE Teacher Authorisation Process, Child Safety Policy and Code of Conduct for Viên Giác Buddhist Association (VGBA)
- Completed a Teacher Training induction including Child Safety, Mandatory Reporting and classroom management
- Obtained a WWCC clearance and received a WWCC number and expiry date (provided below).
- Never been convicted for violence, sexual assault or any crime against a minor
- Never been convicted for providing prohibited drugs.

I understand that if, after signing this declaration, I am later convicted on any matters related to the above offences, I am no longer authorised to enter NSW Government schools.

Signature: _____ Date: ___/___/___

<p>Office Use Only</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Date of birth verified</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> WWCC verified</p>	<p>Name of verified person: _____</p> <p>Signature: _____</p>
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