



NSWPPA Position Paper – Special Religious Education / Special Education in Ethics

This position paper focuses on issues related to the current Special Religious Education (SRE) and Special Education in Ethics (SEE) programs being implemented within NSW public schools.

Rationale

- NSW public primary schools have a significant issue with an overcrowded curriculum, making it difficult for teachers to address all curriculum requirements due to insufficient time.
- The requirement to allocate 30 minutes per week (minimum) to SRE/SEE lessons contributes to this issue, particularly as many school teachers spend an additional 5-10 minutes before and after these lessons moving some students to different learning spaces.
- Timetabling of the varying SRE denominational groups plus the SEE groups can result in limiting options for other school activities.
- Students who are not involved in SRE/SEE programs are unable to receive academic instruction or other formal school activities.
- The requirement of SEE classes to have no more than 22 students can lead to accommodation issues for schools with a lack of additional learning spaces.
- Principals have expressed concerns about the inconsistent quality of instruction and variable content delivery from some teachers involved in the current SRE/SEE programs.

Position

The NSWPPA believes that:

- SRE/SEE providers should be given the same access to NSW public schools as other community organisations, who provide their lessons outside school hours - i.e. they be able to use school learning spaces either before or after school hours, with parents having responsibility to make transport arrangements for their children.

If SRE/SEE remain part of the curriculum during school hours, the NSWPPA believes that:

- Student involvement in these programs should be determined via an “opt in” model for parents. All students not involved should then be able to participate in the full range of learning activities deemed suitable by the school.

Current as at April 2022