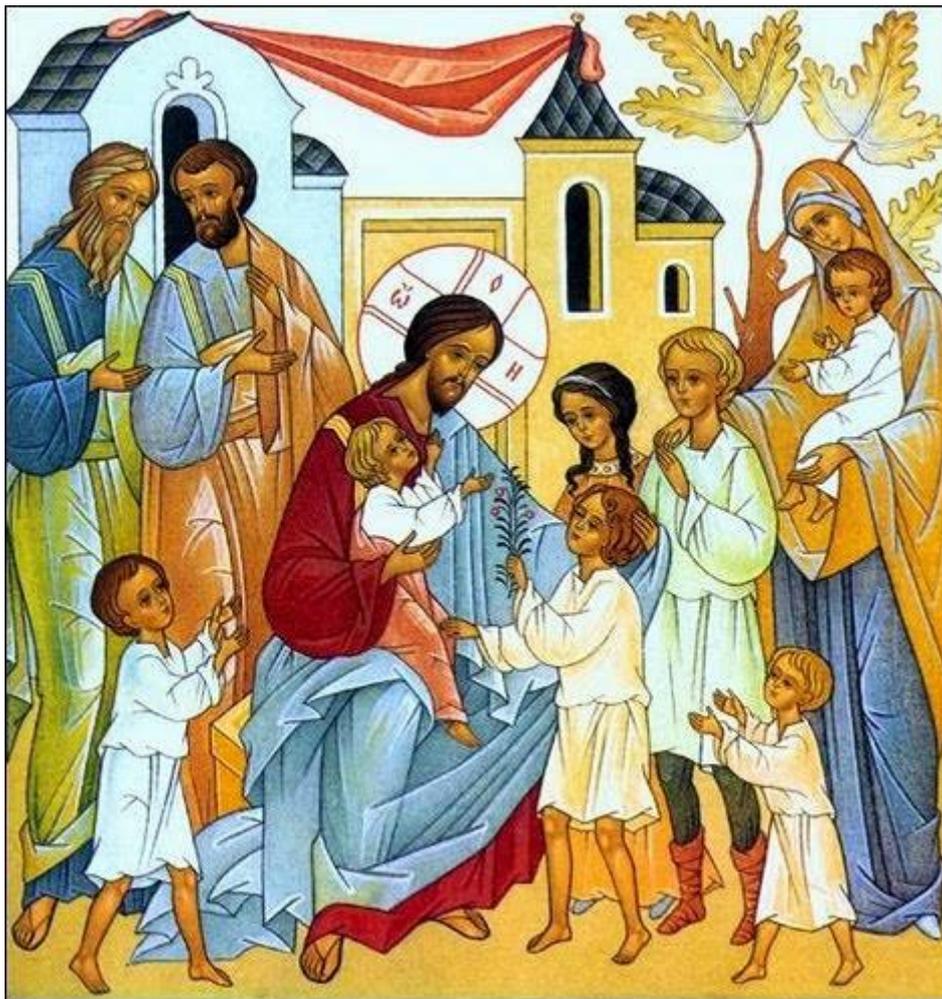




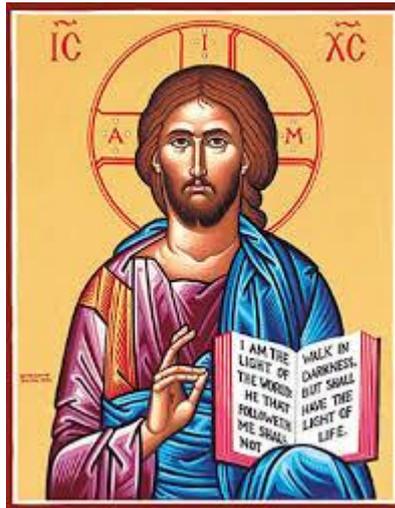
GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AUSTRALIA



Scripture Teacher Authorisation Processes

August 2018

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PRAYER OF THE CATECHIST

Christ the true light, which enlightens and sanctifies everyone who comes into the world, may the light of Your countenance be signed upon us, so that in it we may see the unapproachable light, and may you direct our steps towards performing your commandments through the intercessions of your all-pure Mother and all your Saints. Amen

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GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AUSTRALIA

PART 1 - AUTHORISATION OF SCRIPTURE TEACHERS FOR SPECIAL RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The purpose of this document is to provide an indication of the nature and scope of the process for the Authorisation of Teachers of Greek Orthodox Special Religious Education in the State Schools of New South Wales.

Authorised school catechists

The *Education Act 1990* states that: “The religious education to be given to children of any religious persuasion is to be given by a member of the clergy or other religious teacher of that persuasion authorised by the religious body to which the member of the clergy or other religious teacher belongs”.

Every Special Religious Education teacher (also known as Scripture Teacher), and anyone who accompanies the Special Religious Education teacher into the school precincts, must be authorised.

Even though a helper may not do any teaching, the person is still regarded as a Special Religious Education teacher.

Benefits of authorisation

Authorisation has a number of benefits:

- it encourages parishes to support those they authorise to teach on their behalf;
- it helps the school to know that Special Religious Education teachers are representing recognised churches;
- authorisation helps to ensure that the school, the parishes, the priest and the school catechists are aware of their responsibilities;
- authorisation attempts to ensure that parental wishes are met;
- authorisation also protects the interests of the churches with regard to insurance matters;
- the authorisation is renewable and subject to review. The parish priest can revoke authorisation;
- schools can ask for verification of authorisation;
- teachers carry a blue Greek Orthodox Authorisation Card, which is a simple way to provide evidence.

Selection criteria

In the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese, the appointment of Scripture Teachers is firstly a matter for the parish priest. They have the local delegation to authorise a person to become a teacher.

A parish will use the following criteria *inter alia* when selecting a person for teaching:

- Volunteers should have a strong personal faith, knowledge of that faith and behaviour consistent with that faith;
- Volunteers should have a demonstrated affinity with children, an understanding of their needs or capacities, and a commitment to their welfare;
- Volunteers, ideally, should have some prior experience of teaching children in church-based children’s programs; and

- Volunteers should be willing to undergo training for accreditation as Special Religious Education teachers.

The Archdiocese uses the following form of authorisation:

<p style="text-align: center;">GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AUSTRALIA</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <p style="text-align: center;">AUTHORISATION CERTIFICATE SPECIAL RELIGIOUS EDUCATION</p> <p>NAME: _____</p> <p>I commit myself to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Value the dignity of each child • Prepare my lessons to the best of my ability • Attend classes regularly and punctually • Participate in teacher training • Observe the instructions of the School Authorities • Follow the directions of the Parish Priest <p>Signed _____ Date _____</p> <p style="text-align: center; font-size: small;">TO BE RETURNED TO YOUR PARISH PRIEST WHEN YOU CEASE BEING A TEACHER IN THIS PARISH Greek Orthodox Archdiocese: (02) 9690 6100</p>	<p>_____ is hereby authorised to teach Special Religious Education Classes on behalf of the Greek Orthodox Parish of _____</p> <p>_____ in the school(s) listed below:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p style="text-align: center;">using the approved curriculum and has completed a Working with Children Check No. _____ Clearance valid until __/__/____</p> <p>This authority is valid unless revoked by the Parish Priest</p> <p>Parish Priest _____</p> <p>Date _____ Tel : _____</p>
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The next section outlines the key formal processes for the authorisation of those selected to be Scripture Teachers. It must be emphasised, however, the first step in authorisation is religious or spiritual and only then will the requirements set out in Part 2 take place. Then the Parish Priest or the coordinator for special religious education in the parish will advise each school principal of the teachers who have satisfied the authorisation processes (see Appendix B).



PART 2 – KEY TEACHER AUTHORISATION PROCESSES

This section and the following sections were developed originally through the Inter-Church Commission on Religious Education in Schools, of which the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese is a member. It has been adapted to reflect Greek Orthodox Special Religious Education.

The original document from the Inter-Church Commission on Religious Education in Schools set out the formal requirements for teachers. This has been followed in detail and the five processes now required are:

- Awareness of the Department of Education Code of Conduct
- Working with Children Clearance
- Child Protection Training
- An undertaking of no criminal convictions
- Completion of the Basic Accreditation Course for Greek Orthodox Scripture Teachers

The Greek Orthodox Archdiocese is conscious of the need to comply with these as minimal standards in the provision of Scripture in New South Wales schools. In addition, the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese has extra pre-requisites that were set out in the introduction.

The following sections summarise briefly the key formal requirements specified by the Department of Education. These are described in greater detail in Parts 2-5 of this document.

Awareness of Department of Education’s Code of Conduct

The Code of Conduct outlined in Part 2 clarifies the standard of behaviour that is expected of all Scripture Teachers in the performance of their duties. It gives guidance in areas where staff need to make personal and ethical decisions.

Verification of Working with Children Check Clearance

In keeping with current child protection legislation, it has been a longstanding practice that all Greek Orthodox Special Religious Education teachers (Scripture Teachers) are required to apply for a Working with Children Check (WWCC) and obtain a clearance number.

As an approved provider, the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese will retain the relevant Working with Children Check documents until engagement as a teacher of Special Religious Education (Scripture Teacher) has been completed or for whatever period is specified by law.

Child Protection Training

As an approved provider, the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese acknowledges its responsibility to ensure that all Scripture Teachers have participated in an initial child protection induction as well as an annual update. The annual update is conducted as part of the Advanced Course for Scripture Teachers.

Child Protection Training is provided in order to ensure that Scripture teachers are aware firstly of their (a) general obligation for the safety and welfare of children; and (b) to advise the principal of concerns about the safety, welfare or wellbeing of children or young people that may arise during the course of their Scripture Teaching. It is recognised that Scripture Teachers are mandatory reporters of suspected risk of significant harm and of the procedures for doing so.

Statement in Relation to Specific Crimes

The Greek Orthodox Archdiocese obtains a declaration that any Scripture Teacher authorised to enter New South Wales 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.

Completion of Basic Training

The Greek Orthodox Archdiocese ensures that all Scripture teachers have access to basic training standards. The basic training includes context, knowledge of authorised curriculum, classroom management and the importance of continuing education.

The following sections (Parts 3-6) outline these processes in greater detail.

PART 3- CODE OF CONDUCT

The Code of Conduct clarifies the standard of behaviour that is expected of all Scripture Teachers in the performance of their duties.

It gives guidance in areas where there is a need to make personal and ethical decisions.

It sets a minimum standard but Greek Orthodox would normally be expected to exceed this level of expectation. In every instance, the behaviours set out in the Code of Conduct are consistent with an Orthodox ethos.

1. Audience and applicability

The SRE Code of Conduct applies to all volunteers, religious and lay people teaching on behalf of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia in State Schools in New South Wales.

Scripture Teachers are required to endorse the principles of current Child Protection Law and follow the Department of Education Religious Education Implementation Procedures as an essential responsibility.

The Code of Conduct will assist Greek Orthodox Scripture Teachers in understanding and fulfilling their legal and other responsibilities.

2. Context

The Greek Orthodox Archdiocese is committed to the highest standards of conduct in public education, training and administration.

To meet this commitment, a single Code of Conduct has been issued through the Inter-Church Commission on Religious Education in Schools to closely align the conduct of special religious education teachers with the values that underpin educational policies and procedures. This Code of Conduct is aligned with the Department of Education's Code of Conduct: <http://www.dec.nsw.gov.au/about-us/code-of-conduct>

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

4. Expectations

Scripture Teachers 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 through induction and training. A requirement for people undertaking the role of Scripture Teacher is to engage in the relevant training.

As a representative of the Greek Orthodox faith, teachers will be caring and compassionate towards the students. In doing so they will set appropriate boundaries since they are in a position of authority and have a duty of care for students. There is an expectation that they should use only the approved curriculum materials and age-appropriate resources for special religious education.

The Code of Conduct touches on many significant issues relating to people working with children or young people. Greek Orthodox Scripture Teachers are representatives of their faith.

Special Religious Education teachers who do not comply with the Code of Conduct are not permitted to represent the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia and their authorisation to teach is revoked.

5. Reporting concerns about employee conduct

Greek Orthodox Scripture Teachers are expected to promote an atmosphere of respect for the classroom teacher and school personnel through 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, Special Religious Education Coordinator or school staff who would then refer the matter to the authorising person. The Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia must be notified of breaches of the Code and will determine the course of action that needs to be taken.

6. Respect for others

The Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia is 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 religion lesson. Accordingly, Greek Orthodox Scripture Teachers must not discriminate against or harass colleagues, students or members of the public on a number of grounds including sex, marital status, pregnancy, age, race, religion, culture, ethnic or national origin, physical or intellectual impairment or politics. Such harassment or discrimination may constitute an offence under the Anti-Discrimination Act 1977. Greek Orthodox Scripture Teachers need to be sensitive to individual differences and will therefore avoid language and activities that discriminate.

Respect and care: Greek Orthodox Scripture 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.

Greek Orthodox Scripture 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 Greek Orthodox Scripture Teachers must respect the support structures of the children and young people in their care.

Cultural awareness: Greek Orthodox Scripture 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. Greek Orthodox Scripture Teachers are entitled to a copy of the policy for the schools in which they volunteer and are expected to adhere to that policy.

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 Greek Orthodox Scripture 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 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

8. Responsibilities

Greek Orthodox Scripture Teachers have a responsibility to:

- Become familiar with and support the NSW Department of Education statement of core values, *Values in NSW Public Schools*. <https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/policies/values-in-nsw-public-schools>
- Apply for a Working with Children Check (WWCC) clearance number
- Inform your authorising body of your clearance number for verification
- Agree to and undertake induction, Child Protection and other relevant training
- Become familiar with Child Protection laws, 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 them and the approved provider
- Regularly and punctually attend classes
- Notify schools in a timely manner if they are unable to attend a lesson
- Always use the authorised curriculum(s) of the approved provider
- 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 interactions with students
- Not investigate allegations of misconduct or abuse
- Comply with all reasonable instructions from the school principal, delegate or any supervising teacher
- Become familiar with related laws and policies over time
- Become familiar with individual DoE school policies over time

9. Behaviour management

It is good work practice to make sure that teachers 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 they volunteer. Teachers may ask the special religious education coordinator/principal of each school for copies of these documents. Schools have policies appropriate to learning, behaviour, privacy and safety. Greek Orthodox Scripture Teachers are asked to adhere to these policies.

Teachers are expected to practise positive reinforcement and be respectful in all interactions with the students.

10. Unacceptable (Prohibited) behaviour management practices

Under no circumstances are Greek Orthodox Scripture Teachers to:

- 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.

11. Appropriate relationships between Greek Orthodox Scripture Teachers and students

All students have a right to a safe physical and emotional environment. All Greek Orthodox Scripture Teachers are required to follow the Code of Conduct. All Greek Orthodox Scripture Teachers are required to understand and observe current Child Protection Policies and attend training in Child Protection. Concerns about a child or young person's wellbeing, should be reported to the school principal or delegate.

Greek Orthodox Scripture Teachers must not engage in improper conduct that could lead to Reportable Conduct.

Greek Orthodox Scripture 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 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 their 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.

12. Being alone with students

Greek Orthodox Scripture Teachers should avoid, as far as is reasonable, situations where they are alone with a student. It is not appropriate to be responsible for a single student. In such instances Greek Orthodox Scripture Teachers are advised to discuss the situation with the school authorities. If ever alone with a student then teachers should be sure to locate themselves and the student in a visible area like the hallway and/or make sure classroom doors are open.

Again, it is emphasised that Greek Orthodox Scripture 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

13. Relationships with students and their families outside school hours

A healthy student/teacher relationship is confined to the school and classroom.

Greek Orthodox Scripture Teachers must not give details of their email, telephone numbers or address to a child or young person.

If contact happens through family and social networks and is an existing relationship with a student's family, then avoiding contact with that student or their family would be impractical and undesirable.

14. Use of alcohol, drugs and tobacco

Greek Orthodox Scripture Teachers are to support a safe, productive and healthy workplace. Children and young people are not to be given alcohol, tobacco or prohibited substances. Students are to be encouraged in healthy practices. Greek Orthodox Scripture Teachers must not enter school premises under the influence of alcohol or prohibited drugs.

15. Impartiality

It is not permitted to encourage or influence students to adopt a faith which is not the preference of their family. This is the case when students who are non-Greek Orthodox attend our classes. Greek Orthodox Scripture Teachers must simply follow the approved curriculum. Teachers will still outline the Orthodox faith and talk about prayer, going to church or participating in the Sacraments.

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>

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

PART 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 involved in special religious education in its schools be appropriate and responsible persons.

In keeping with current child protection legislation, all Greek Orthodox Scripture Teachers are required to apply for a Working with Children Check and obtain a clearance number. The number and date of birth must be provided for verification.

The Greek Orthodox Archdiocese will maintain relevant Working with Children Check documents for until 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 whether the teacher is in paid or volunteer work:

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

Teachers who require a Working with Children Check number will log onto

<https://www.service.nsw.gov.au/transaction/apply-working-children-check>

PART 5 - CHILD PROTECTION

All teachers have a responsibility to report risk of harm concerns about children and young people, within their roles, and to provide support to children and young people.

The Greek Orthodox Archdiocese ensures that:

- There is an initial child protection induction and an update during the past year
- Teachers are aware of the indicators of abuse and neglect of children and young people
- Teachers are aware of their obligation to advise the principal of concerns about the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children and young people that arise during the course of their work
- Teachers are aware of their mandatory obligation to report suspected risk of significant harm and of the procedures for doing so

The Greek Orthodox Archdiocese also encourages its Scripture Teachers to undertake the Mandatory Child Protection Training developed by the Department of Education. This is offered via an on-line portal. The aim of the course is to increase responsive and responsible reporting of child protection concerns by schools. Following an introduction that summarises the roles and responsibilities of staff, participants go through scenarios where child abuse or neglect concerns are identified and options for responding are explored and best practice is reinforced.

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 Family and Community Services or seeking advice from the Child Wellbeing Unit and then working constructively and positively with the family and with external professionals.

Questions are included throughout each scenario to test understanding of the concepts covered. A certificate is provided after successful completion of the training. Teachers may complete this course via the following link (unless an alternative training method has been provided): <https://education.nsw.gov.au/mypl/community-members>

The Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia has also adapted the Mandatory Child Protection Training of the Department of Education. Following an introduction that also summarises the roles and responsibilities of staff, participants go through the scenarios most relevant to special religious education.

PART 6 - SPECIAL RELIGIOUS EDUCATION TEACHER COMPLIANCE

This section deals with the completion by each teacher of a Statement in Relation to Specific Crimes.

The Department of Education requires that all non-employees who are permitted to teach Special Religious Education in its schools be appropriate and responsible persons.

As has already been mentioned, in keeping with current child protection legislation all Greek Orthodox Scripture Teachers are required to apply for a Working with Children Check (WWCC) and obtain a clearance number. The number and date of birth must be provided to the approved provider for verification.

The Greek Orthodox Archdiocese is also required to give an undertaking that any Scripture Teacher authorised to enter New South Wales Government schools does not have a criminal conviction for any crime against a minor, a conviction for violence, sexual assault or for providing prohibited drugs.

In response to the above requirements, all Greek Orthodox Scripture Teachers must sign the declarations in Appendix A.

Appendix B sets out the letter that is sent to school principals from each Greek Orthodox Parish.

Acknowledgement

The cooperation and support of the All-Faiths Special Religious Education and the inter-Church Commission on Religious Education in Schools is gratefully acknowledged.



APPENDIX A



GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AUSTRALIA

Application to be a Scripture Teacher in 2019

Special Religious Education – Teacher Compliance and Acknowledgement

- I have applied for a WWCC, obtained a clearance and received a WWCC number with expiry date.
- I have provided these WWCC details to the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia.
- I have never been convicted for violence, sexual assault or any crime against a minor
- I have 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.

WWCC clearance number: _____

WWCC Expiry Date: ____/____/____ Date of birth: ____/____/____

Surname: _____ First Name: _____

Title: []Mr []Mrs []Ms []Other _____

Address : _____

Suburb: _____ Postcode: _____

Home phone: _____ Mobile phone: _____

Email: _____

Parish: _____

School(s) at which I will teach: _____

I [insert full name] _____ apply to the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia for authorisation to be a Scripture Teacher for Special Religious Education and I hereby acknowledge that I have undertaken the Teacher Authorisation Process including:

- Code of Conduct Training
- Working with Children Check
- Child Protection Training
- SRE Teacher Compliance

I acknowledge that I am obliged to comply with the Teacher Authorisation Processes, including any amendments made from time to time.

Signature of Teacher:

Date: ____/____/____

Approval of Parish Priest:

Date: ____/____/____

Office Use Only [] Date of birth verified [] Date of document verified

APPENDIX B

GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AUSTRALIA



Parish of

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL - NOT FOR DISTRIBUTION

LETTER TO THE PRINCIPAL - (Name of School)

AUTHORISED SPECIAL RELIGIOUS EDUCATION TEACHERS APPROVED PROVIDER OF SRE

The following Greek Orthodox Scripture Teachers visiting [name of school]

_____ have completed the following SRE Authorisation

Procedures:

1. Working with Children Check - clearance obtained and verified
2. Code of Conduct training
3. Child Protection training

NAME OF TEACHER:	DATE OF BIRTH:

PARISH PRIEST/ PARISH COORDINATOR'S NAME: _____

PHONE: _____

APPROVED PROVIDERS WEBSITE: http://www.greekorthodox.org.au/?page_id=3854