

# GENERATE CODE OF CONDUCT

## SRE Teachers employed in NSW secondary schools

SRE Teachers employed by Generate must comply with all relevant legal and policy requirements when operating in NSW public schools. This includes meeting child protection and reporting obligations, as well as complying with school policies and laws, such as code of conduct, privacy, occupational health and safety, anti-discrimination, complaints and information management.

The following documents, combined, provide for the standard of behaviour and conduct required of a Generate SRE Teacher. These Guidelines include content from Department of Education policies and curriculum and the content is used with permission. This Code of Conduct should be read in conjunction with the **NSW Department of Education Code of Conduct (2021)**.

<https://policies.education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/policies/pd-2004-0020/pd-2004-0020-01.pdf>

## INTRODUCTION

### Generate's Mission

Generate seeks to facilitate effective Christian service in all NSW public schools as we enable churches to bring God's love and good news.

### Generate's Values

1. Be dependent on God, prayerful and faithful, looking for God-honouring results.
2. Work in cooperation with the local Christian community.
3. Respect and act with integrity towards the government, schools, parents and other caregivers and their children.
4. Humbly provide a trustworthy and reliable service with integrity.
5. Model courageous, entrepreneurial, servant-hearted leadership.

## AUTHORISATION AND ACCREDITATION

**Teachers are to ensure the following requirements are satisfied and appropriately maintained:**

1. Authorisation by an approved SRE Provider. (This is usually managed by the SRE office of the denomination or association and arranged through the local church's SRE coordinator or senior minister/pastor.)
2. Complete SRE Accreditation Training with their approved SRE Provider, according to that provider's rules.
3. Church-based child protection training.
4. Working with Children Check.
5. Use a curriculum authorised by an SRE provider represented in the SRE Board, endorsed by Generate, and agreed to by the Board.
6. Complete, or be enrolled in a Diploma of Theology or above.
7. Attend annual professional development training as required by Generate.
8. A name badge is to be worn at all times while on the school site.
9. Ensure that lunch time groups are registered with and facilitated by SU NSW.

## PERSONAL CHRISTIAN CHARACTER AND CONDUCT

**Teachers are to:**

1. Contribute to a supportive, safe, inclusive and caring learning environment within the school including actively discouraging any form of harassment or discrimination.
2. Conduct their personal relations in a godly manner, acting with respect, love, integrity and truthfulness towards all those with whom they associate, irrespective of position, race, gender or religious opinion, and in a manner that honours God and his people.
3. Be an active and attending member of a local Christian Church that subscribes to the Nicene Creed.
4. Behave with honesty and integrity, avoiding exaggeration and misrepresentation.
5. Act with scrupulous honesty in all financial matters and publicly account for all monies handled on behalf of others.
6. Remain chaste in singleness and faithful within marriage, taking full responsibility for your sexual conduct.
7. Avoid self-destructive behaviours such as alcohol intoxication and drug use.
8. Avoid behaviour that could give rise to an impression of favouritism or inappropriate relationship.

## CHILD PROTECTION

Refer to Child Protection training for further information on indicators, disclosure and reporting.

### **Reportable Conduct means:**

Any sexual offence, or sexual misconduct, committed against, with or in the presence of a child, including any assault, ill treatment or neglect of a child; or any behaviour that causes psychological harm to a child whether or not with consent from the child.

### **Reportable conduct does not extend to:**

Conduct that is reasonable for the purposes of the discipline, management or care of children, having regard to the age, maturity, health or other characteristics of the children and to any relevant codes of conduct or professional standards. Examples of conduct that would not constitute "reportable conduct" include (without limitation) touching a child in order to attract a child's attention, to guide a child or to comfort a distressed child; a teacher raising his or her voice in order to attract attention or to restore order in the classroom; and conduct that is established to be accidental.

### **Teachers are to:**

1. Report disclosures of significant harm, or indicators of risk of significant harm, to the Principal.

Indicators can include, but are not limited to;

- a person tells you of their abuse or neglect (disclosure)
- someone else tells you of the abuse or neglect of a vulnerable person
- unexplained and marked changes in a person's behaviour or mood
- a parent/carers misuse of alcohol or drugs is affecting their ability to care for the vulnerable person
- a history of previous abuse or neglect to the child, young person or a sibling
- ongoing or sporadic violence between the parents of a child or young person
- parents or caregivers are experiencing significant problems in managing their child, which is incongruent with the child's or young person's behaviour or special needs
- a deficiency in functional parenting skills required to provide for the safety, welfare and wellbeing of a child or young person

(adapted from NSW Interagency Guidelines for Child Protection Intervention, 2006)

2. Participate in any monitoring and/or evaluation procedures by NSW DoE.

## DUTY OF CARE

Teachers are to:

1. Recognise, respect and affirm the authority of the school principal who is ultimately responsible for the welfare of students within their school.
2. Teachers must adhere to existing school operational requirements.
3. Take reasonable care for the health and safety of yourself and others and cooperate with the school executive so far as reasonably practical, to enable compliance with the school's WHS policy.
4. Apply considerations of safety related to both physical and psychological wellbeing of students.
5. Provide a duty to take reasonable care for the safety and welfare of the children and young people in your charge. That duty is to take all reasonable action to protect students, children and young people from risks of harm that can be reasonably predicted; such as risks from known hazards and from foreseeable risk situations against which preventative measures can be taken. The standard of care that is required, for example the degree of supervision, needs to be proportionate with the students' maturity and ability.

## ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Teachers are:

1. To only use personal email accounts for social media sites and other online activities.
2. Not to invite students to join their personal social network or accept invitations to join a personal social network.
3. Not to mention the name of their employer/school in social media.
4. Not to communicate with SRE students via text, email or phone, or social media, unless an exception has been approved by the Principal.

## TAKING AND USE OF PHOTOGRAPHS

Teachers are not to take photos or make video or audio recordings of any individual or group without the express written permission of each individual (including parent/caregiver consent for minors) being recorded and the permission of an appropriate staff member.

To ensure where taking and use of photographs are a part of the Teacher's extra-curriculum duties within the school (eg. sports carnivals; newsletter) this is clearly documented as part of the Teacher's list of duties and only after consultation with the Principal. In such circumstances the Teacher should only use the school's own camera and files should only be downloaded and stored on the school's computer.

## RECORD KEEPING

Teachers are to keep accurate records as required by the school or SRE Board.

## CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

Teachers are to:

1. Only use official information for the work-related purpose it was intended.
2. Not disclose or use any confidential information without appropriate approval.
3. Take care that confidential information, in any form, cannot be accessed by unauthorised people.
4. Should always exercise caution and sound judgment in discussing other people's personal information.

## DRESS CODE

SRE Teachers have an obligation to dress appropriately and in a manner that maintains respect and establishes credibility. Teacher's must not wear clothes which are inappropriate or revealing, or may be construed as suggestive or offensive, such as: singlets, t-shirts, tracksuits or thongs, strapless tops or dresses, short skirts, clothes exposing bare midriffs, ripped or dirty clothes, or clothes with inappropriate slogans e.g. advertising for tobacco and alcohol.

## PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

While good teaching is always relational and requires developing trust with students, Teachers are required to be professional in their dealings with students at all times. Professional distance is a useful concept in defining appropriate professional relationships.

Actions that contribute to maintaining appropriate professional distance:

- Establishing clear boundaries with students regarding your role as an SRE Teacher in the school. Interaction with students should be friendly, accepting and inclusive but not overly familiar.
- Avoid using "street" language that could compromise appropriate teacher/ student distance.
- Be aware of personal space and maintain an appropriate physical distance when conversing with students.
- Avoid inviting yourself into intimate or deeply personal conversations.
- Create a safe and supportive classroom environment. Discuss guidelines that clearly outline behaviour expectations. These should be negotiated and not imposed by the Teacher. The class may wish to consider:
  - accepting what others say without judgement or criticism;
  - the importance of respecting others' feelings and confidentiality;
  - the *One Step Removed* strategy (See discussion overleaf);
  - the value of hearing a number of viewpoints expressed.
- Discussing sensitive, private information is not appropriate in the classroom setting.
- *Protective Interrupting* is important if a student begins to disclose private information that is overly personal or inappropriate for the context. An example would be 'It sounds as though you want to talk about this. Why don't we talk about it after class?' After *Protective Interrupting*, guide the discussion back to *One Step Removed* (See overleaf).

- Avoid physical contact with students unless there is a particular need for the wellbeing of the student.
- Interaction with students outside of the lesson need to be conducted in a manner that is clearly transparent and beyond reproach.
- Structure the location and times at which you are available to students outside of the prescribed lesson consistent with school policy.
- Discipline fairly and consistently.

## SENSITIVE ISSUES

- The *One Step Removed* strategy is a way of allowing students to explore a range of sensitive issues without confrontation or personal threat. *One Step Removed* suggests Teachers use fictitious case studies, moral dilemmas or any techniques that dissuade students from talking in the first person in class discussions. Instead of the direct 'What do you ...?' approach, substitute:
  - What if ...?
  - Suppose ...
  - Imagine someone ...
- Present accurate factual information. Correct misinformation in a way appropriate to the student's age, needs and cultural background. For example, information on human sexuality would need to take into consideration the age of students, the school philosophy and community cultural beliefs.
- Present the sensitive issue in a way that is sympathetic to the range of community cultural values and attitudes.
- Focus on problem solving to identify proactive strategies available to students within their local community.
- When exploring possible outcomes of case studies or moral dilemmas, it is important to use conditional language: or ... might happen; or ... could happen.
- Closing a lesson in a positive way is critical when teaching about sensitive issues. Discussions need to be summarised. Case studies or moral dilemmas should be brought to some point of resolution. Selection of activities needs to be carefully thought through so that there is time to complete the lesson with an appropriate closure. Students who participate in behaviour rehearsals (scenarios), or who express a strong point of view about an issue, may need to be debriefed. Provide opportunity for the expression of strong feelings and then return the student/s to the present situation.

## SOCIAL CONTACT WITH STUDENTS OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL

In many communities, the relationship between teacher and student does not cease at the school gate. Examples could include youth group leader, attending the same church, or sports coach. However, a student is always a student, regardless of the situation in which contact with a Teacher takes place.

### Some practical hints:

1. Clarify the nature of the out-of-school relationship with the student, and don't be afraid to adopt a different role at school. Establish clear and transparent expectations of how you will interact with a student in the different contexts. These expectations should serve the best interests of the student and preserve the appropriate professional distance when interacting in your role as SRE Teacher.
2. Interaction with a student outside of school should not impact your treatment of the student at school and your conduct should be consistent with how you interact with other students.
3. Be aware of the possibility that the student may expect special consideration at school. In response the Teacher needs to actively communicate the appropriate expectations of their interaction with the student and ensure those expectations are upheld.
4. The SRE Teacher should establish clear expectations of how they should be addressed in the school environment and during interactions outside of school. For example, students might be expected to address you with your Surname at school but have permission to use your first name at youth group.
5. Avoid discussing other teachers or students with the student. Do not discuss the outcomes of tests, assignments or other school activities.

## BREACHES OF CODE OF CONDUCT

Generate is committed to working closely with our Teachers, representatives of the school, parents and students to deliver quality SRE. As such we take the conduct of our Teachers very seriously and seek to work with stakeholders to ensure that when issues arise, they are dealt with in a timely and professional manner that respects the rights and responsibilities of all parties involved.

As per the Religious Education Implementation Procedure—

*Principals who have received complaints concerning alleged teaching inefficiency or inappropriate lesson content take appropriate steps and notify the representative of the approved provider that authorised the Teacher.*

*If a principal receives allegations of improper behaviour or other complaints of a serious nature it is managed in accordance with the Department's policies and procedures. The principal must refer allegations of a child protection nature to the Department's Employee Performance and Conduct Directorate.*

Generate SRE Teachers must be aware of the Generate Complaints policies and consequences of breaching the Code of Conduct. The following documents can be found on the intranet.

*Complaint BY Teacher Policy*

*Complaint AGAINST Teacher Policy*

*Complaint Form*