

Dear Parents/Carers

Attached is a new consent form for your child/children's participation in Special Religious Instruction (SRI). This new form is being issued midway through the year because a new Ministerial Direction which governs the way SRI is delivered in schools has been issued, and takes effect on 14 July 2014 (the first day of Term 3).

The requirements of schools and SRI instructors are different under this new Ministerial Direction, and as a result existing parental consent does not extend into Term 3.

This form will be issued again for the beginning of the 2015 school year and, following that, annually and/or each time the school is approached by an SRI instructor seeking to deliver SRI in the school.

Please ensure that you thoroughly read the second page of the consent form, as it contains important information on what SRI is (that is, that it is not education about the religion, but instruction in how to live according to the tenets and beliefs of that religion), and the process through which it is delivered. SRI does not deliver on the AusVELS curriculum – it is an extra-curricular activity delivered by volunteers associated with religious organisations.

Your child will only be eligible to participate in SRI if you tick both acknowledgement boxes, sign, and return the consent form to school by the date specified. If SRI is offered and your child does not participate, they will be engaged in positive, educationally valuable activities while SRI is running.

Please note that even though forms are being issued, SRI sessions may not run in the school. Once consent forms have been received and compiled, I will then assess whether SRI can be offered within available resources.

In addition to reading the information on the consent form, I would encourage you to familiarise yourself with the changes to the way SRI is run, both through the Ministerial Direction (<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/department/legislation/Pages/sri.aspx>) and Department of Education and Early Childhood Development policy (<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/curriculum/pages/religious.aspx>).

Regards

Malcolm Aspinall

Principal

Special Religious Instruction – Parent Consent Form (CFMD141)

Special Religious Instruction – Parent Consent Information

The provision of Special Religious Instruction (SRI), delivered by churches and other religious groups, in government schools is authorised under section 2.2.11 of the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*.

Special Religious Instruction Policy

SRI may only be offered and delivered in accordance with Department policy and Ministerial Direction MD141. SRI can be offered only where accredited and approved volunteer religious instructors have approached a particular school, are available to provide a special religious instruction program and where a school has the resources to comply with legal requirements and ensure that duty of care obligations are met to all students during SRI.

Schools are obliged to provide parents with this form if approached by an accredited and approved SRI volunteer. Once this form has been provided to parents and returned forms compiled, the principal will decide whether there are sufficient resources to enable SRI to be offered at the school.

MD141 and the policy are available online at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/department/legislation/Pages/sri.aspx>
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/curriculum/pages/religious.aspx>

What is Special Religious Instruction?

SRI is instruction in the specific religious beliefs and tenets of a religion, and is not to be confused with General Religious Education (GRE). GRE is education about religions (which may or may not include using representatives of a particular faith to explain the workings and belief structure of their religion), whereas SRI programs are instruction in a particular religion and may include scriptural studies, and instruction in how to live and behave according to the tenets of the particular faith.

SRI **does not** provide an overview of all faiths or religions. Each particular SRI offering is instruction in one faith only, provided by a church or other religious group. Given the religious nature of the program, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development **does not endorse program content** used to deliver SRI by accredited volunteer instructors.

Who delivers Special Religious Instruction?

Special Religious Instruction is available to schools in a range of faiths including Christianity, Catholicism, Orthodox Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Bah'á'í, and Sikhism. The religions available to schools will vary depending on whether any instructors approach the school. Currently the providers accrediting the volunteer Special Religious Instructors are:

Religion	Agency/Provider	Website for accreditation information	Accreditation number
Christianity	ACCESS Ministries	http://www.accessministries.org.au/	1800 063 341
Catholicism	Catholic Education Office	http://www.ceomelb.catholic.edu.au/	9267 0228
Islam	Arkan Toledo/Islamic Council of Victoria	http://arkan.org.au/	1300 857 797
Judaism	United Jewish Education Board	http://www.ujeb.org.au/	9038 5028
Buddhism	Religions for Peace Australia (RfP)	http://religionsforpeaceaustralia.org.au/	
Orthodox Christianity			
Bahá'í faith			
Sikhism			
Hinduism			

Volunteer instructors are associated with a church or religious organisation. Their role is not that of a teacher. To obtain accreditation, they must have undertaken training through one of the providers listed above, and signed up to a code of conduct which outlines how they are to conduct themselves in a government school. It is a requirement of accreditation that volunteers have a valid Working With Children Check.

Participation in Special Religious Instruction

Participation in Special Religious Instruction is voluntary. Schools cannot place children in SRI unless parental consent is provided for a child to participate (opt-in). SRI materials are available online and via the agency delivering SRI for parents to review.

Parents are requested to complete and return this form to the school if they wish their child to participate in SRI, should it be offered at the school. If this form is not returned, the child will not participate in SRI, should it be offered. Students not participating in SRI will be engaged in educationally valuable activities that are outside the core curriculum in a separate classroom or learning space to the students participating in SRI.

If SRI in more than one religion is being offered at your child's school, you will be provided with a consent form for each religion.

You may withdraw your child/children from Special Religious Instruction at any time by notifying the school principal in writing.

Further information

MD141 and Department policy can be accessed at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/department/legislation/Pages/sri.aspx>
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/curriculum/pages/religious.aspx>



Special Religious Instruction – Parent Consent Form (CFMD141)

School Name: UPWEY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Date form issued: FRIDAY 20TH JUNE 2014

Schools are obliged to provide parents with this form if approached by an accredited and approved SRI volunteer. Once this form has been provided to parents and returned forms compiled, the principal will decide whether there are sufficient resources to enable SRI to be offered at the school.

The school has been approached by a Special Religious Instruction volunteer offering SRI in the following religion: Christianity

If it is offered by the school, it will be delivered by the following instructor(s) and organisation(s) with the following religious affiliations:

Volunteer Instructor Name(s): CHRISTINE SIMPSON (5/6 & 2), JULIE DZIOBA, GABRIELLE SYMONS (P/1), JANICE HICKINGBOTHAM (CO-ORDINATOR)

Provider who has accredited the SRI volunteer: ACCESS Ministries

Religious affiliation/auspicing church: UPWEY COMMUNITY BAPTIST

If it is offered, it will be delivered for 30 minutes per week. The program will be run all year.

Further information and program overview/materials may be accessed online at: <http://www.accessministries.org.au/>

If offered, I authorise my child/children

Student's Family Name	Student's First Name	Student's Will

to participate in Special Religious Instruction in the religion specified above, should it be offered at the school.

I confirm that I have read the information about SRI on p2 of this form prior to signing

I understand that there may be an associated fee to purchase materials for my child's use in SRI, and that this will be collected once it is determined whether SRI will be offered in the school

Parent/Guardian's Name:

Address:

Signature: Date:/...../.....

If you would like your child to participate in SRI, please sign and return this form to the school by **FRIDAY 27TH JUNE**

If you do not return this form, your child will not participate in SRI, should it be offered at the school.

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development Special Religious Instruction Policy can be accessed at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/curriculum/pages/religious.aspx>