

# 2024-2027 Chaplain and Student Wellbeing Officer funding Fact Sheet

Revised July 2024

## About the funding programs

The Commonwealth's National Student Wellbeing Program (NSWP) and Queensland's Chaplaincy and Student Wellbeing Officer Program (CSWOP) provide for the delivery of Pastoral Care by a Chaplain or Student Wellbeing Officer in schools.

Funding through the NSWP or CSWOP must be directed towards the employment of one of the following workers:

Chaplain	Student Wellbeing Officer
<p>A Chaplain:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1) Is recognised by the school community and the appropriate governing authority for the school as having the skills and experience to deliver school chaplaincy to the school community; and</li><li>2) Is recognised through endorsement by a recognised or accepted religious institution; and</li><li>3) Meets the Minimum Qualification Requirements; and</li><li>4) Holds a current and valid Blue Card</li></ol>	<p>A Student Wellbeing Officer:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1) Is recognised by the school community and the appropriate governing authority for the school as having the skills and experience to deliver Student Wellbeing Services to the school community; and</li><li>2) Meets the Minimum Qualification Requirements; and</li><li>3) Holds a current and valid Blue Card</li></ol>

**Note:** The **National Student Wellbeing Program** requires the Chaplain or Student Wellbeing Worker to complete the professional learning package in responding to and preventing cyberbullying training delivered by the Office of the eSafety Commissioner within three months of commencing NSWP Services and refreshes this at least once every two and a half years. This is not a requirement of the CSWOP funding program.

## Funding Offers – UPDATED JULY 2024

The Queensland Catholic Education Commission (QCEC) receives an allocation of funding from each program at the start of the funding agreement. Funding is offered to schools on a waitlist ordered according to principles agreed to by the Commission, until all funding is exhausted. Offers are made by QCEC to Diocesan Directors (in the case of Diocesan schools) or to school principals directly (in the case of non-diocesan schools). Decisions concerning the offer of funding to schools are final.

Schools who accept an offer of funding must spend their allocation of funding every year. From 2024, **if a school fails to expend any funding (i.e. zero hours of service have been delivered) within a calendar year, the funding will rollover to the next calendar year and the school will be excluded from receiving a funding allocation for the following year.** Provided they spend their rolled-over funding in the following year, funding allocations will return to normal for the subsequent year. The following two case studies are provided to clarify.

#### **Case Study One:**

- A school receives funding in 2024 and hires a Student Wellbeing Officer, fully expending their funding. At the end of the 2024 school year the worker resigns.
- In 2025 the school is unsuccessful in recruiting a replacement worker and therefore does not expend any of their 2025 allocation of funding.
- In 2026, the school retains the unspent funding from 2025 but does not receive their 2026 allocation of funding. This funding is instead offered to a school on the waitlist as a 'one off' payment.
- In 2027, provided the school spent their rolled-over funding in 2026, they receive their 2027 allocation of funding.

#### **Case Study Two:**

- A school receives funding in 2024 and hires a Student Wellbeing Officer, fully expending their funding. At the end of the 2024 school year the worker resigns.
- In 2025 the school successfully recruits a replacement worker. Recruitment processes take much of the year and as a result, the school does not fully expend their full allocation of funding. Some funds are expended.
- In 2026, the school receives funding and is obligated to fully expend their remaining funding from 2025 and their 2026 allocation of funding (which will be received as normal).
- Provided at least some of their 2026 allocation of funding is spent in 2026, funding for 2027 will be unaffected.

Schools who are not offered funding in the first round may still receive an offer at a later date. This generally happens in one of the two following ways:

- 1) A school in receipt of funding opts to return it (for example, due to their inability to recruit or retain a suitable worker). This allows their full allocation of funding to be offered to the next school on the waitlist **for every year for the remainder of the agreement.**  
OR,
- 2) A school in receipt of funding fails to spend any of their funding allocation within a calendar year and, as a result, is excluded from receiving funding the following year. Schools on the waitlist who receive funding in these circumstances will receive a **one year allocation of funding only.** At the end of this calendar year, provided the original recipient school expends funding, the allocation returns to the original school.

School funding offers will notify schools whether the offer is for ongoing funding or a one-year allocation to allow schools to make staffing choices as appropriate.

*Please note that schools in receipt of a one-year allocation will be prioritised should an ongoing offer of funds become available. Schools should not decline a one-year allocation in the hope of receiving an ongoing funding offer.*

Schools funded under the CSWOP receive 100% of their annual allocation in March. Schools funded under the NSWP receive approximately 95% of their annual allocation in March, with the remaining 5% to be received in October.

## School obligations

Schools who accept NSWP or CSWOP funding must fulfill all management and reporting obligations outlined in the funding agreements as provided in the table below. Catholic School Authorities may also have additional requirements dependent on their local contexts and processes.

*Please note:* report templates are developed by the Commonwealth and Queensland Department of Education and are forwarded to QCEC prior to mid- and end of year-reporting periods. Requirements for reporting can change from time to time. Schools will be notified of the report requirements and the method of data collection within each reporting cycle.

	On receipt of funding	Confirmation required in Mid-year report <i>Due date TBC: late May to early June</i>	Confirmation required in End of year report <i>Due date TBC: late September to early October</i>
<b>Qualification compliance</b>			
<b>Minimum Qualification Requirement:</b> Ensure the Chaplain or Student Wellbeing Worker has a qualification equivalent to or higher than a Certificate IV that includes a competency in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mental health and making appropriate referrals AND either               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Providing Pastoral Care OR</li> <li>○ Working with youth</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	✓	✓	✓
If the appointed worker does not meet these qualification requirements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apply for a waiver (see below)</li> <li>• Ensure the worker attains required qualifications prior to the waiver end date</li> <li>• Respond to all emails from the Queensland Department of Education regarding the waiver</li> </ul>	✓		

State whether the worker is on a waiver		✓	✓
Report whether the school employs a Chaplain or Student Wellbeing Officer		✓	✓
<b>[National Student Wellbeing Program only]</b> Ensure the Chaplain or Student Wellbeing Worker completes the professional learning package in responding to and preventing cyberbullying training delivered by the Office of the eSafety Commissioner <u>within three months of commencing NSW Services and refreshes this at least once every two and a half years</u>	✓	✓	✓
<b>School procedural compliance</b>			
Gain written confirmation of support for a Chaplain or Student Wellbeing Officer from the school community (i.e. through minutes from a P&C meeting)	✓		
Confirm <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chaplains may be from any faith OR</li> <li>Student Wellbeing Officers may be from any faith/no faith</li> </ul>		✓	✓
Ensure processes are put in place and reviewed every six months to ensure:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>participation by students is voluntary</li> </ul>	✓	✓	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the worker does not proselytise</li> </ul>	✓	✓	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the worker respects, accepts and is sensitive to other people's views, values and beliefs</li> </ul>	✓	✓	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the worker promotes a safe and inclusive school community where all people are respected</li> </ul>	✓	✓	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the worker holds a current Blue Card or exemption card issued by the Queensland Government's Blue Card Services</li> </ul>	✓	✓	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the worker complies with Queensland laws and policies in relation to student/child protection and child safety matters</li> </ul>	✓	✓	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the worker complies with relevant legislation relating to mandatory reporting of suspected child abuse or neglect</li> </ul>	✓	✓	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the worker is aware of and has regard to the National Principals for Child Safe Organisations (NPCSO) (available at <a href="https://childsafe.humanrights.gov.au/national-principles">https://childsafe.humanrights.gov.au/national-principles</a>) and National policies and strategies led by the National Office for Child Safety, including the Commonwealth Child Safe Framework (available at <a href="https://childsafety.pmc.gov.au">https://childsafety.pmc.gov.au</a>)</li> </ul>	✓	✓	✓
<b>Funding accountability</b>			

Confirm if the funding is expended or committed to be expended			✓
Notify QCEC or your Diocesan representative if your school determines they will be unable to expend or commit the funding that calendar year	<i>As soon as possible at any time</i>		
Report the number of Chaplains or Student Wellbeing Workers employed across the year (at any one time)			✓
Report the total hours the Chaplain or Student Wellbeing Worker worked across the year			✓
<p>Submit an audited statement prepared by a qualified accountant who is either:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) registered as a company auditor under the Corporations Act 2001 (Cth); or</li> <li>2) a member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Australia or the Australian Society of Certified Practising Accountants.</li> </ol> <p>The audited statement must:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) record, separately from all other income and expenditure, details of the receipts/income and disbursements/expenditure relating to the delivery of the Services and the performance of its operations under this Agreement; and</li> <li>2) demonstrate that all Funding was used for the sole purpose of the delivery of the Services.</li> </ol>	<i>Forms part of the QCEC Accountability Process</i>		

## Waivers

School principals are responsible for determining whether a worker satisfies the Minimum Qualification Requirements. In making this decision, Principals should consider whether the qualifications are related to and aligned with the above requirements of the role and include the required units of competency.

*Please note: Guidelines from the Department of Education suggest that a qualification enabling teacher registration in Queensland is appropriate **if** it includes units in the relevant areas of competency (i.e. mental health and making appropriate referrals and providing pastoral care or working with youth).*

**A worker who does not meet the minimum qualification requirements must gain the requisite competency through training or through a Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) assessment to be fully compliant.**

Schools should make every effort to employ a suitably qualified worker. Where a qualified worker cannot be sourced due to remoteness, local worker shortages, etc., schools wishing to appoint a person who does not satisfy the qualification requirements will need to apply for a waiver. A waiver application will require the school to demonstrate:

- The worker's current qualifications, qualities, skills and experience that led the school to deem the candidate as being the best person for the position

- Details of the minimum qualifications the worker does not satisfy
- Details of the effort the school made to attract a suitably qualified worker
- Confirmation that the worker will commit to obtaining the required qualifications within six to twelve months of appointment (pending application).

**Waivers are for a set period of time only, and schools are responsible for ensuring the worker completes the required RPL or training prior to the end date of the waiver.**

Waiver application forms can be downloaded via this [link](#) and should be submitted to the following addresses:

To: [chaplainswellbeingofficers@qed.qld.gov.au](mailto:chaplainswellbeingofficers@qed.qld.gov.au)  
 'CC: [hannaho@qcec.catholic.edu.au](mailto:hannaho@qcec.catholic.edu.au)  
 'CC: Diocesan representative (see list under Contacts)

## Contacts

Direct communication should only occur with the Department of Education when they contact the school in the first instance (i.e. in regards to a Waiver). All enquiries should be directed to the following contacts in the first instance:

Brisbane Catholic Education	Stephen Muller	<a href="mailto:smuller1@bne.catholic.edu.au">smuller1@bne.catholic.edu.au</a> 'cc <a href="mailto:dfrench@bne.catholic.edu.au">dfrench@bne.catholic.edu.au</a>
Catholic Education Services – Diocese of Cairns	Hannah Chapman	<a href="mailto:hchapman1@cns.catholic.edu.au">hchapman1@cns.catholic.edu.au</a>
Catholic Education – Diocese of Rockhampton	Joanne Perry	<a href="mailto:joanne_perry@rok.catholic.edu.au">joanne_perry@rok.catholic.edu.au</a>
Diocese of Toowoomba Catholic Schools	Angela Travers	<a href="mailto:Angela.Travers@twb.catholic.edu.au">Angela.Travers@twb.catholic.edu.au</a>
Townsville Catholic Education	Mary Mudge	<a href="mailto:mmudge@tsv.catholic.edu.au">mmudge@tsv.catholic.edu.au</a>
Non-diocesan schools including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EREA Colleges</li> <li>• EREA Flexible Schools</li> <li>• Religious Institute &amp; Ministerial Public Juridic Person School Authorities</li> </ul>	Hannah Orchard	<a href="mailto:hannaho@qcec.catholic.edu.au">hannaho@qcec.catholic.edu.au</a>

## Frequently Asked Questions

### 1. Will a school need to return the funding if they cannot attract or retain a suitable worker?

Yes. Funding from the NSWP and CSWOP can only be used for approved purposes. If a school cannot attract a suitable worker or attracts a worker who then resigns and cannot be replaced, the school must return the unused portion of funding to QCEC to be redistributed to another school.

**2. What happens if the school knows they will be able to recruit a suitable worker but it is taking a long time?**

Schools must spend some portion of their funding within the calendar year in order to receive funding the following year. Therefore, if a school does not successfully recruit a worker, their funding will roll over to the following year and a new allocation will not be received. The funding they 'miss out' on will be reallocated to a school on the waitlist as a one-off payment, assuming the school successfully recruits a worker that following year.

**3. Can a school use the funding to support a worker already on staff?**

Yes. Funding can be used to support a Student Wellbeing Officer or Chaplain already on staff. However, schools must be aware that all compliance points will apply to the worker while NSW or CSWOP funding supports their employment.

**4. Can a school contribute additional funding to increase the worker's hours?**

Yes. Schools wishing to do this should document the amount of NSW or CSWOP funding and the amount of funding from other sources used to support the position and may be requested to include this information in the annual report. Funding received through the NSW or CSWOP should be expended in full prior to contributing additional funds from other sources.