SPECIAL RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AT PAGEWOOD PUBLIC SCHOOL

Special religious education is education in the beliefs and practices of an approved religious persuasion by authorised representatives of that persuasion. This occurs during the time usually known as “Scripture”.

Special education in ethics is a program in ethical decision making, action and reflection within a secular framework, based on a branch of philosophy. It will be offered during the time set aside for special religious education to students whose parents/caregivers have withdrawn them from special religious education and nominated interest in Ethics.

General religious education is education about the world’s major religions, what people believe and how that belief affects their lives. It is taught mainly in class time through the school curriculum.

In public schools, classes in Special religious education and Special education in ethics are run by volunteers who have been validated by an approved church or Ethics provider. At Pagewood PS, classes occur once per week on Tuesday from 9.15 to 9.50am. Scripture groups will start on Tuesday, 16th February.

Children are allocated to Scripture groups in Kindergarten, based on information provided on the Enrolment Form. As time goes by, parents advise us (in writing) of any changes they would like re their child’s group. Attendance at Scripture or Ethics groups is optional. Any parent may request that their child goes to non-scripture.

Each of our existing Scripture groups was asked to provide some information which may assist you in deciding which group is appropriate for your child/ren:

Catholic

The Catholic program prepares children for the sacraments of Reconciliation and First Holy Communion. Year 6 students are encouraged to prepare for Confirmation. Links with local Catholic churches are encouraged, as is having fun at the church club on Sunday afternoons. Children learn the prayers which are a special part of services. They also learn about Christian values. Children of other denominations, both Christian and non-Christian, are welcome to join the Catholic Scripture groups. At the moment, the co-ordinator is desperate for more volunteers as only one of last year’s volunteers is able to continue. There is a training course coming up, so if you are interested, please phone Tina on 0425297248.

Orthodox

The volunteer is Helen Candi and she represents St Spyridon Greek Orthodox Church, Kingsford. She has been teaching scripture for 9 years at Pagewood School. She teaches children from Kindy through to Year 6. Having the children for 7 years straight makes it difficult to say goodbye to the year 6's at the end of the year. Orthodox scripture is open to all Christians of the orthodox faith which includes Greek, Lebanese, Armenian, Serbian and Russian.

Each term a book is provided to each child, free of charge. The book consists of 8-10 lessons. The children take the books home at the end of term. Each week the children are presented with a story from their books about a saint, a miracle or a parable that was given by Christ. They discuss how they can relate that to today's events or our everyday lives.

The great events of the calendar -Easter, Annunciation and Dormition of the Holy Mary and Christmas are also taught. They are taught about fasting, which is a vegetarian diet and what foods we can eat prior to Holy Communion. They are reminded of the sacraments they have already taken and of future sacraments. We talk about Church and going there on a Sunday morning. They are taught about world environment day which was initiated by the Patriarch of America and how important it is to care for the earth and it's creatures. Throughout the year the children are reminded about respect for others, love and care. Overall the children enjoy the class, enjoy working from their books and colouring the various pictures from each lesson.

Protestant

Protestant Scripture (SRE) at Pagewood Public is taught by a team of trained Christians from Kingsford Church of Christ and other local churches. We use stories and teachings from both the Old and New Testaments to teach about God's love for us and his plan to give us a full life through Jesus. The children learn how they can respond to that love through wise life choices. Songs, stories, videos and other activities help make these timeless truths relevant and engaging to the students.  
  
While the lessons are particularly appropriate for children from Anglican, Baptist, Church of Christ, Methodist and similar church backgrounds, no prior knowledge is necessary and we welcome all who come. Further details on the approved curriculum can be found at [http://www.kingsfordchurch.org.au/ministries/scripture/](https://staffowa.det.nsw.edu.au/owa/redir.aspx?C=LOiJHr3PuECD1hHcFKNT-ur-Jm9-F9JIDtZ_TdPF2iotdIE72iK6dNQebO6ClnZuuyxfCx27lcY.&URL=http%3a%2f%2fwww.kingsfordchurch.org.au%2fministries%2fscripture%2f)

Non-scripture

The children are supervised by teachers while they draw, colour, read, etc. A frequent question is why the children at non-Scripture are only “minded” and not “taught”. The guidelines for schools are very specific: “Principals support special religious education by ensuring that no academic instruction or formal school activities occur during time set aside for special religious education. Such activities create conflict of choice for some parents and students attending special religious education.”

Another question is about provision of other denominations. In recent years, parents have investigated Jewish, Buddhist and Moslem groups but were unable to obtain teachers for the very small number of children involved. If another denomination is established, we would provide a room.

In 2015, children in K - Y6 chose between 4 groups during Scripture time: Orthodox, Catholic, Protestant and Non-Scripture. Years 1-4 also had the option of Ethics. With only one trained volunteer for Ethics in 2016, we can only accommodate children from Years 1 and 2.

**What happens now?**

When school resumes in 2016, new students will be given a form so that they can nominate which group they would like to attend. Current students who wish to change groups will also be able to use the form to do so.

At the end of 2015, the Catholic group and Ethics group each had only one volunteer, greatly limiting the number of students who could access lessons. Please phone the school office if you are interested in volunteering to teach any of the groups.