

## SPECIAL RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AT PAGWOOD PUBLIC SCHOOL

Special religious education (SRE) 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 (SEE) 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It will be offered during the time set aside for special religious education to students whose parents/caregivers have withdrawn them from special religious education and nominated interest in Ethics.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 9.20am to 9.55am.

Children are allocated to Scripture groups on enrolment based on information provided on the Enrolment Form. Parents may advise the school (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 Special Religious Education (SRE) curriculum series is designed for use as the main resource to support parents/carers who choose Catholic SRE "Scripture" for their children attending public schools. Through St. Bernard's Catholic Church Botany we offer the Sacraments of Reconciliation and First Holy Communion (Year 3 and above) and Confirmation (Year 6). All Scripture teachers are volunteers and have undergone a Working with Children Check and have been fully trained as per government requirements. If you require any further information, please call the Catechist Co-ordinator on 0402077850.

### Orthodox

The volunteer represents St Spyridon Greek Orthodox Church, Kingsford. She has been teaching scripture for 15 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 year a book is provided to each child, free of charge. The children take the books home at the end of year. 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 its 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.

### Combined Christian

Protestant Scripture (SRE) at Pagewood Public is taught by a team of trained Christians from Wild Street Anglican Church, Maroubra. Our lessons cover the broad sweep of Bible history from creation to God's ultimate purpose for humanity. Each lesson seeks to introduce key biblical concepts, themes and significant people in an active and engaging way, allowing students to explore the Christian faith and see how it is relevant to their lives and contemporary problems. We use a variety of activities in our lessons including songs, stories, videos, games, crafts and other activities to engage each child in an age appropriate way. Combined Christian SRE is provided by teachers who are authorised and trained by the Anglican Diocese of Sydney. The curriculum can be viewed at [whysre.com.au](http://whysre.com.au)

### Jewish

In BJE's SRE classes (also known as 'Scripture'), students have fun while learning about Jewish culture and values and connecting with their Jewish peers. These interactive classes feature an experiential based curriculum that engages and inspires students to create a personal connection to their Jewish identity.

The lessons are inclusive for all backgrounds, enabling students to connect with Judaism in a way that works best for them and their family. For more information visit [bje.org.au/primary-school](http://bje.org.au/primary-school)

### Buddhist

Buddhism is a faith that was founded by Buddha more than 2,500 years ago in India. Buddha is not a god. Buddha is a teacher. Buddhism teaches students a way of life. Students learn about kindness and compassion as well as breathing techniques in meditation. This helps students to have better concentration and awareness.

### Ethics

Ethics classes support children to develop a life-long capacity for making well-reasoned decisions about ethical issues. Through the give-and-take of reasoned argument students learn to disagree respectfully, to challenge ideas and to support their arguments with considered evidence rather than according to habit or peer pressure. Our volunteer ethics teachers, which are trained members of the school and broader community, use detailed lesson materials which present a range of stories, scenarios and questions to generate discussion. Ethics teachers are trained to impartially facilitate student discussions, helping students develop their critical thinking and collaborative inquiry skills. Ethics teachers support student learning by:

- modelling the inquiry process – by asking questions and encouraging discussion
- showing genuine curiosity and interest in the questions being discussed
- staying neutral – ethics teachers are trained to keep their own views out of the discussion
- creating a positive learning environment – by allowing students time to think, and encouraging students to share ideas and give reasons

The Special Education in Ethics program is provided by Primary Ethics. We currently have one volunteer for Ethics who takes a Stage 3 group. You can find out more information about the program the Primary Ethics Website, or by contacting the Area Manager, Sydney Metro-South  
email - Anuya.velpanur@primaryethics.com.au  
phone - 02-8068 7752

### 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.”