

CHAPLAINCY IN ANGLICAN SCHOOLS

GUIDELINES FOR THE CONSIDERATION OF BISHOPS, HEADS OF SCHOOLS, CHAPLAINS, AND HEADS OF THEOLOGICAL COLLEGES

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1. BACKGROUND

At the National Anglican Schools Conference held at Melbourne Girls' Grammar in April 1997 the National Anglican Schools Consultative Committee was asked to conduct a survey on Religious Education and Chaplaincy in Anglican schools in Australia. The Survey was conducted on behalf of the Committee by Dr Peter Coman, Executive Director of the Anglican Schools Office in the Diocese of Brisbane in February 1998. An Interim Report was presented to the National Conference in May 1998.

The Rev'd Dr Tom Wallace of the Anglican Schools Commission in Western Australia was asked to give consideration to ways in which the Report may be followed up and a small consultative committee, representative of all the States, was appointed to work with him. It was agreed that Dr Wallace would prepare a discussion paper on Chaplaincy in Anglican Schools, which would be considered initially by members of the representative committee with a view to wider circulation to Principals, Chaplains and Diocesan Bishops. That discussion paper was prepared and feedback on it was received from several Chaplains from three Australian States.

As a result of the feedback the Paper was revised with a view to it being considered at a national gathering of Chaplains at the National Anglican Schools Conference in May 1999. This set of guidelines is the result of that process of consultation and development.

2. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

While these Guidelines assume that a Chaplain will be a Priest, much of what is said will be equally relevant for a deacon or a lay person.

□ The Purposes and Ethos of Anglican Schools

The role of a Chaplain is situated within the broader context of the purposes and values of the school in which she/he ministers. The Chaplain will have a significant role in the furtherance of these purposes and values. Some very helpful statements of the ethos and purposes of Anglican schools have been produced in Queensland and Western Australia.¹

□ Congruence with Priestly Ministry.

In most Anglican schools the Chaplain is an ordained priest, although in a relatively small number a lay person or deacon may fulfil that role. It seems reasonable to conclude that a School Chaplain should exercise a ministry which is congruent with her or his ordination vows, recognising that such ministry will take on a particular shape appropriate to the school context. Priestly ministry includes teaching, liturgical, pastoral care, and leadership functions.

□ Theological Expertise.

A Priest, or others with specialised training in theology, should exercise a ministry which utilises that training by bringing the perspective of faith to bear in all

aspects of the life of the school, its “*moral culture*” as well as its religious education and worship.

□ Flexibility.

Each School Chaplain will bring her or his own set of strengths and abilities to the role and thus there should be some flexibility about the way the role is exercised in a particular school. This will affect the weighting that is given to particular functions as well as the shape which those functions take.

□ The Nature of Schooling.

A school is a specialised social and educational institution which is concerned with the communication of the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes which young people need to live with purpose and creativity in contemporary society. It has a set of structures and ways of operation which are appropriate to such an institution. A School Chaplain will need to understand the nature of the institution in which he/she works and how to operate helpfully in such a context.

3. THE ROLE OF A CHAPLAIN IN AN ANGLICAN SCHOOL

□ Evangelism and Mission

In various ways the Chaplain will make the gospel of Jesus Christ known and will be responsive and sensitive to those opportunities when students or staff want to talk about issues of faith and commitment. While the principal focus of the Chaplain will be on the school community, from time to time there will be opportunities for the school to exercise a ministry to the local community in which it is set and of which it is a part. This may take the form, for example, of projects of care for needy people, help to parents with teenage children, drug education programs, and so on. It will be important for the Chaplain to be involved in these activities in an appropriate way.

In a number of schools creative links are being established with local parishes. Where this happens the Chaplain has an opportunity to work with the clergy concerned to enhance the mission of the church as a whole.

“As the Lord’s messenger, proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ. Seek the lost, announce God’s justice, warn and correct those in error.” (A Prayer Book for Australia, p. 793)

□ Pastoral Care.

Anglican schools have in place structures and procedures for the pastoral care of students including, in many cases, the existence of house and tutorial groups. The Chaplain has an important role to play but she/he will need to do that in collaboration with other members of staff among whom may be specialist people such as psychologists and nurses.

In some cases the pastoral care of students will involve significant contact with other family members. The Chaplain has an important pastoral care role in relation to the Principal and members of staff. In some schools the Chaplain will also have a significant pastoral care role with those “old students” who look to the school

for help in times of crisis or on important occasions such as weddings or baptisms. If there is a boarding facility at the school this will increase the pastoral care responsibilities of the Chaplain.

There is no doubt that the pastoral care role of the Chaplain can be very demanding, although the precise pastoral care responsibilities will vary from school to school and will depend on the Chaplain's pastoral care skills. Some Chaplains may have more specialised counsellor training and the school may wish to draw upon that from time to time.

“Be a pastor after the pattern of Christ the great Shepherd, who laid down his life for the sheep” (A Prayer Book for Australia, p.793)

□ Liturgy and Spirituality.

The basic responsibility for arranging the liturgical life of the school will rest with the Chaplain. This will involve arranging opportunities for students to share in services of worship and to participate in their planning and conduct. One of the most challenging and demanding tasks of the Chaplain will be to facilitate experiences of worship which have meaning and relevance for young people.

There will also be services which are arranged for members of staff and on occasions for the whole school community. In some situations students may be prepared for baptism and/or confirmation. There will be those occasions when the Chaplain will provide a liturgical framework for the expression of grief, as in the case of the death of a student or teacher, or for the expression of joy, as in the case of the celebration of marriage or the opening of new school facilities.

The spirituality of young people will, in the main, be nurtured through meaningful involvement in services of worship, times for quietness and reflection, meditative experiences which draw upon the creative arts, and time to appreciate and enjoy the natural environment.

It is clear that this area of responsibility requires careful thought and preparation. If it is to be done well the Chaplain must have a time allocation for it which is realistic.

***“You are to encourage and build up the body of Christ,
preaching the word of God,
leading God’s people in prayer’
declaring God’s forgiveness and blessing,
and faithfully ministering the sacraments of God’s Grace with reverence
and care.”*** (A Prayer Book for Australia, p.793)

□ Teaching.

The teaching role of the Chaplain in a school context is a very important issue. The position advanced in this set of guidelines is that the Chaplain will exercise this ministry most effectively, not only by teaching Christian/Religious Studies, but also by acting as a resource person, especially for others who teach in this

learning area. The Chaplain may assist other members of staff in dealing with theological issues as these arise in learning areas other than Religious Studies. A number of schools have appointed a separate Head of Religious Studies and this seems to be a desirable policy to pursue. Where this is the case, the Chaplain will need to attend meetings of the staff involved in this learning area. It may also be helpful if the Chaplain has some opportunity to visit classrooms and contribute in ways which make use of her/his expertise.

It follows that the Chaplain might have a limited and perhaps relatively small teaching load. This view is reinforced by an appreciation of the time-consuming nature of the other aspects of his/her role.

It is recognised however that traditionally, in some Anglican schools, the Chaplain carries a fairly heavy teaching load and in fact may wish to do so. It is also recognised that in some schools the Chaplain may teach a subject other than religious studies. In some situations the Chaplain is the Head of Religious Education. The important point is that there needs to be a proper balance which allows the Chaplain to fulfil other aspects of the role with some degree of effectiveness.

The Chaplain may exercise a significant teaching ministry by providing professional development for staff in dealing with theological/philosophical/ethical issues as these arise in the curriculum. The Chaplain might also help staff explore the implications of the Christian purposes of the school for classroom practice.

“Be a teacher taught by the Lord in wisdom and holiness” (A Prayer Book for Australia, p.793)

□ Leadership.

There is a sense in which the Chaplain represents and symbolises the Church’s commitment to its mission as this finds appropriate expression in a school community. Thus the Chaplain will exercise a prophetic ministry, as necessary, reminding the school community of its Christian purposes and encouraging its members to give expression to their Christian commitment in ways which are helpful in an educational context.

Another important way in which the Chaplain can exercise leadership is by the manner in which she/he continues to remind members of the school community of the significance of the spiritual dimension in human experience. This capacity will be enhanced if the Chaplain places some priority on the nurture of his/her own spiritual life and takes opportunities for renewal through retreats and other professional development activities.

This leadership would be enhanced further if the Chaplain was a member of the school executive team and had an opportunity, from time to time, to talk with the school Council about issues affecting the spiritual and religious life of the school. This needs to be done in consultation with, and with the approval of the Head who may share leadership responsibility in this area with the Chaplain.

“Lead the people of God as a servant of Christ” (A Prayer Book for Australia, p.793)

4. THE QUALIFICATIONS REQUIRED OF A SCHOOL CHAPLAIN

A School Chaplain, in most cases, will need to be licensed by the Diocesan Bishop. In addition she/he should have :

- ❑ an accredited theological qualification, preferably at degree level;
- ❑ a professional qualification in Religious Education or Education - (this may not be essential but it certainly is an advantage);
- ❑ pastoral skills and understandings which will enable her/him to exercise pastoral care both for young people and adults;
- ❑ an ability to work as a member of a team in the school community and with local parish clergy where that is appropriate;
- ❑ a degree of maturity of Christian faith which will give integrity to his/her ministry with students, staff and parents;
- ❑ an open and warm personality which demonstrates a loving concern for others.

5. TRAINING FOR A SCHOOL CHAPLAIN

A School Chaplain will need to participate in the training which is appropriate for her/his diocese for those in ordained ministry. Normally this will include a sound theological education and formation for priestly ministry. This latter part of the program will need to include :

- ❑ a strong component of training in pastoral care;
- ❑ an understanding of the theory and practice of religious education in a school context;
- ❑ an understanding of the developmental characteristics and needs of children and adolescents;
- ❑ an understanding of the role of liturgy in a school context and its practical implementation;
- ❑ an understanding of the nature of a school as an educational institution in society and its internal structures and dynamics;
- ❑ the development of skills in team membership and leadership;
- ❑ at least one practicum in an Anglican school to provide an apprenticeship period with an experienced Chaplain and the opportunity for constructive feedback.

6. PROCEDURES FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF A CHAPLAIN

In most cases the School Principal will need to :

- ❑ consult with the Diocesan and/or Regional Bishop concerning plans to appoint a Chaplain;
- ❑ prepare a Position Description and clarify the contractual arrangements;
- ❑ advertise if appropriate;
- ❑ interview applicants (each school will need to determine the procedure for the interviews - it may be helpful to involve a member of the school Council, a parent representative and a person nominated by the Bishop). For clergy outside the particular diocese it is important to seek an assurance from their diocesan bishop that he/she is a priest in good standing and suitable for a school chaplaincy position. It should be noted that, under normal circumstances, there is a standing arrangement between diocesan Bishops not to seriously consider an application for appointment unless the person has been in her/his current position for a minimum of three years. If the period of service is between three and five years the agreement is that the Bishop will be consulted for his permission before an approach is made;
- ❑ consult with the Diocesan Bishop and obtain his approval for the appointment of the preferred applicant;
- ❑ offer the position to the preferred applicant and negotiate the appropriate contractual arrangements;
- ❑ ensure that an appropriate induction and orientation process is in place for the new Chaplain.

7. REMUNERATION, TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF APPOINTMENT

A School Chaplain is, in most cases, primarily a Priest of the Diocese who is licensed by the Bishop to function in a particular school, accountable on school matters to the Principal. Tensions may arise between what is perceived to be the Chaplain's responsibility to the Diocesan Bishop or the wider church and the demands of the school. In most cases these concerns can be resolved if there is an open and respectful relationship between the Chaplain and the Head. It is conceivable that in some cases the Bishop or his representative may need to assist in the resolution of the difficulty.

Some Chaplains have spoken about their feelings of isolation and a lack of pastoral care. It is important that appropriate structures be developed to meet this need. In some dioceses the Bishop has appointed a Dean of Chaplains who has responsibility in these matters.

It is recognised that many chaplains will have professional teaching qualifications. It will be important, however, to determine "*the Chaplain's remuneration*" in relation to the diocesan standards for clergy stipends and allowances as this will maintain

parity with other clergy and thus not erect a barrier to the movement of clergy from parish to school or vice versa. This arrangement will ensure the Priest does not lose long service leave, superannuation and other entitlements, if moving from one school to another or from a school to parish ministry. Some parish clergy are of course paid a stipend which is a percentage above the minimum and this would be entirely appropriate for a school chaplaincy position. The components of the package would need to include :

- ❑ a Stipend **which is at an appropriate percentage above** the Diocesan minimum;
- ❑ provision of a house (either owned or rented by the school) or a housing allowance, plus appropriate allowances for utilities and telephone.
- ❑ the payment of long service leave and superannuation to the appropriate clergy funds.
- ❑ the payment of a travelling allowance or the provision of a car (This will be necessary, especially where the Chaplain is involved in the visitation of families off campus).
- ❑ some provision of assistance in relation to professional development. This will include time to participate in a regular retreat with other clergy and to maintain some contact with the wider life of the Diocese;

Some process should be put in place for an appropriate form of appraisal which is helpful to the Chaplain in identifying areas of need and arranging professional development. Some dioceses have a form of ministry review for clergy and a school Chaplain may participate in such a review which takes proper account of the school context.

Where a lay Chaplain is appointed the salary arrangements will need to take into account the person's qualifications and experience as well as the level of responsibility carried within the school community.

ⁱ These documents are titled, "The Christian Purposes of Anglican Schools in the Diocese of Perth" and "Ethos Statement for Anglican Schools in the Province of Queensland".