GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOL CHAPLAINS

A handbook

Church & Society, Education Committee
This handbook would not have been possible without the hard work, contributions and advice of many people. To those who were an integral part of the chaplain’s working group over the last 18 months, thank you for your assistance during this time.

I would particularly like to thank David Adams, Rev. David Logan, Lynne McEwen, Charlie Smith, Rev. Gayle Taylor, Rev. Alan Wilson, Jen Robertson and Rev Steve Younger, for everything they did to help put together this Handbook.

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The staff members of the Church and Society Council, for their dedicated work and support.

Marjorie Paton,
Convener of the Chaplains Working Group and Vice Convener of the Church of Scotland Education Committee
March 2017.
Foreword

Foreword by The Rt Rev. Dr. Derek Browning, Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland and Stephen Miller, President of School Leaders Scotland.

“Chaplaincy in all its forms continues to play an important part in the ministries of the Church. Chaplaincies in the many different schools in our country provide opportunities to develop and encourage different connecting places with school communities – with pupils, staff members and parents/guardians. The relationship is often challenging: some school communities are more welcoming than others. In a society where faith is no longer taken for granted (nor should it ever have been taken for granted) chaplaincy offers an opportunity not only to share the questions faith presents, but also to share the practice of openness, welcome and enquiry that faith demands. Whenever the opportunity to serve as a chaplain comes along, it should be seized!

School assemblies, appropriate class-room involvement, and engagement in the staff rooms and other places give chaplains the chance to connect and to support, as well as to act as a resource when invited. I am delighted to support this Chaplains’ handbook and commend it warmly.”

Rt Revd Dr Derek Browning
Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland
May 2017.

“School assemblies, appropriate class-room involvement, and engagement in the staff rooms and other places give chaplains the chance to connect and to support...
“I feel privileged to have been asked to contribute a foreword to this excellent and helpful document. As a son of the manse, a church elder, an RME teacher and a Headteacher, I think I understand from a number of different vantage points the opportunities and challenges you face. I am pleased to say, however, that I have also experienced the many and different ways in which opportunities have been taken and challenges more than ably overcome, to the undoubted benefit of staff and pupils.

I am doubly pleased to be sharing the task of writing a foreword with your Moderator. While I was Assistant Rector at Bell Baxter High School, his fruitful and committed chaplaincy as minister of Cupar Old Parish Church was one of the many excellent examples of a successful chaplaincy that I am fortunate to be able to recall.

I hope you are convinced of the key role you can play in a school community, whether that be in leading reflections on the spiritual dimension of what it means to be human or explaining why some people choose a life of faith to help them navigate the complexities of daily living. To do that in ways that really do connect with children and young people in our primary and secondary schools takes planning, courage and skill.

That being said, it is not impossible. This Chaplains’ Handbook is suffused with good advice and the experiences of those who have committed themselves not only to the routine activities of school life, but also to moments of significant celebration as well as times of great sadness. It is a very practical book, outlining many examples of good and interesting practice.

We hear much in the news at the moment about preferences to build walls. It was Martin Luther King who suggested: “Let’s build bridges, not walls.” Bridges connect, take us places and span barriers. Chaplains build bridges and this Chaplains’ Handbook provides an outline of the essential tools of the trade. I commend it to you and wish you every success in your calling as bridge builders between school and parish.”

Stephen Miller
President of School Leaders Scotland
1 March 2017
Introduction

Thank you for picking up a copy of this guide for school chaplains and for looking inside. While designed and published by the Church of Scotland we trust that those of other faiths, and indeed of no faith, might find the content of interest.

Education encourages a search for truth, meaning and values. Pupils merit a rational and sensitive understanding of religion and spirituality and how this has shaped and influenced the society of which they are a central part. The school chaplain has a key role to play.

This guide embraces content from previous publications then adds more by way of contributions from national organisations, parish ministers and others currently practising as chaplains to their local school community.

The Church of Scotland Education Committee sponsored a two year national initiative bringing to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 2017 a clear statement on all aspects of the life of a school chaplain. The underlying purpose was to raise awareness and understanding of chaplaincy within non-denominational schools and across the Curriculum for Excellence; to explore related theology and the praxis of ministry as a school chaplain.

However, much requires to be done. The field of school chaplaincy continues to grow and develop with further questions about training, the role of the local church and many others that this handbook has left untouched. In such a vibrant and dynamic context the publication of this guide is merely the beginning.

Sincere appreciation is expressed to all who contributed in so many ways to the process and publication of this guide; in particular to:

Marjorie Paton. Vice Convener of the Church of Scotland Education Committee and Convener of the School Chaplains’ Working Group; and to Agnes Mullen. Principal Assistant of the Church of Scotland Church and Society Council, Secretary to the School Chaplains’ Working Group.

Graeme Donald
Convener: Church of Scotland Education Committee
March 2017.
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1 Chaplaincy – A historical perspective

The role of the chaplain has a long history and although no specific mention is made of chaplaincy in the Bible or other faith books, it plays an important part in the work of Christians and other faiths. While modern day chaplains can come from a variety of faiths chaplaincy finds its origins predominantly within the Christian tradition and this is reflected in its name: the term “chaplain” may come from the Latin word “Capella” which means Chapel or a place of worship.

Today chaplains can be found in a variety of settings: industrial, commercial, in services such as the fire service, hospitals, prisons, work place, the armed forces, on the streets, and in schools and higher education, to name but a few. It is one of the very practical ministries within different faith groups and is sometimes the main ethos behind the work of local churches. While chaplaincy as now developed in the 21st century assumes a faith background, chaplains minister not only to only those of that faith but may walk with all who are on a spiritual journey.

2 Chaplaincy – An educational perspective

The Church has an historic commitment to education and schooling. It was the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 1560 which called for a school in every parish, to enable every person to read and write. Schools, which were paid for by the Church and local landowners, were established in all rural parishes and burghs by an Act of Privy Council of 1616, ratified by the Parliament of Scotland with the Education Act of 1633. Educational establishments were run by the Church of Scotland and were open to all boys and girls regardless of social status. The 1872 Education Scotland Act laid the basis for the modern education system and vested all authority over schools with the civil authority. However the need for schools to continue religious instruction was outlined in a Preamble to this Act, subject to the operation of a conscience clause which gave “liberty to parents, without forfeiting any of the other advantages of schools, to elect that their children should not receive such instruction”.

Today our education system seeks to equip young people for the world of further study and work, providing them with the knowledge, skills and values that enable them to become successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens. Chaplaincy has a vital role to play in supporting this, with school chaplains contributing what they can to the health and well-being and spiritual development of children as they undertake this journey. Spiritual development is recognised as a pupil entitlement not only in the RME guidelines but also as part of Health and Well-Being (“understand and develop my physical, mental and spiritual wellbeing and social skills” - Education Scotland: Health and Wellbeing across Learning: Responsibilities of All: Experiences and Outcomes)

It should be noted from the outset that a school chaplain is only there at the invitation of the Headteacher of the School. A chaplain has no statutory right to enter a school, the responsibility for the appointment of any chaplain and the role that he/she plays in a given school lies ultimately with the Headteacher. In supporting chaplains a Headteacher’s own religious beliefs should be respected and they should not be asked, or expected, to compromise them. The role may differ from authority to authority and from school to school but essentially it is to provide a resource and pastoral support to Headteacher, staff and pupils. As a Parish minister, do not be afraid to approach the school in offering this service.

With the implementation of Curriculum for Excellence within all of Scotland’s schools, the Scottish Government recognised the need to update the 1991 and 2005 Circulars on the provision of Religious and Moral Education and Religious Observance. The Education (Scotland) Act 1980 continues to impose a statutory duty on all local authorities to provide religious education and religious observance in Scottish schools and there are no changes to the legislative position regarding this.
This handbook uses Curriculum for Excellence Briefing Paper 16 as the basis for guiding chaplains in how to apply good practice in their schools with awareness and creativity. You can find a copy of the briefing paper at https://education.gov.scot/Documents/cfe-briefing-11.pdf.

The Education Committee of the Church of Scotland also seeks to encourage those who work in schools as chaplains to have a clear sense of their role and purpose with a school in line with the definition and aims of Religious Observance outlined in the report of the Religious Observance review group of 1995 (section 4 p11) which introduces broader thinking on spirituality within schools.

“The consultation paper defines the term, Religious Observance, for use in schools in Scotland as: ‘community acts which aim to promote the spiritual development of all members of the school community and express and celebrate the shared values of the school community.’ The aims of Religious Observance are defined as: ‘to promote the spiritual development of all members of the school community; to express and celebrate the shared values of the school community.’

The consultation process revealed the need to clarify the meaning of ‘spiritual development’ as used in the consultation paper, which states that spiritual development ‘includes being helped to recognise, reflect upon and develop a deeper understanding of the value and worth of each individual which comes from one’s dignity as a person’. The idea of spiritual development led the group to look at the concept of spirituality. The concept of spirituality has its origin in religion and is still popularly identified as a religious concept used by members of religious traditions. Its use, however, is not limited to members of religious traditions. It is also used by many out with formal religion to describe key aspects of their experience. In fact, in spite of the move away from involvement with formal religion in Scottish society, there is evidence of a growing interest in the spiritual dimension”.

**Facilitating Religious Observance (RO) / Time for Reflection**

Religious Observance, also known as Time for Reflection, is defined as: ‘Community acts which aim to promote the spiritual development of all members of the school community and express and celebrate the shared values of the school community’. Religious Observance happens in line with Scottish Government Circular 1/2005 ‘Provision of Religious Observance in Scottish Schools’.

This Time for Reflection need not be taken by the chaplain. Indeed there are many examples of good practice in which development of the spiritual life of the school should involve as many associated with the general life of the school as possible – co-ordinated perhaps through the role of the chaplain and chaplaincy teams.

Regardless of an individual's personal beliefs school chaplains are concerned with the pastoral care for all involved with the school community not just the students. No two chaplains work in the same way, so each chaplain is unique but reflects the situation in which she, he or they operate and multi-faceted skills are needed. A school chaplain is first and foremost a pastor.

“A wide range of community partners often support school staff to plan and implement RO. This can include members of faith communities, belief groups and other partners such as youth workers and local charity workers. It is important for schools to ensure that such community partners are diverse and varied – representing a range of beliefs and viewpoints. Schools recognise the important and varied contributions that community partners and other community leaders can make to the life of the school. Effective educational establishments act professionally in this respect, ensuring that relationships with partners are negotiated and agreed. They ensure that everyone concerned is fully informed about the content and aims of any RO activities planned and executed by partners. They also ensure that such activities are guided by educational principles and apply normal safeguarding protocols when working with visiting speakers.”

*Curriculum for Excellence 2016 point 5*
3 What makes a good school chaplain?

Here are some top tips for being a good school chaplain...

Remember you are a guest in the school...
Chaplaincy is not a right. It is a privilege, a responsibility, an opportunity, and a joy. You are there at the invitation of the Headteacher - a welcomed and wanted and needed guest - but always a guest. As a guest you are not there to criticise, to demand, to make things difficult. Like a guest your first questions might be “How can I help?” “What can I do?” “How can I make things easier for you?”. Like a guest who wants to be asked back again, always be polite and respectful. Your presence should be a blessing to the school community, not a burden!

Be informed...
Your role as chaplain in schools, your very presence, your input to Religious Observance and spiritual development, are all increasingly being contested and challenged. We cannot afford to be uncertain or apologetic about why we are part of the school community. Get to know the key documents inside out: your Council’s Religious Observance and Religious and Moral Education policies (which will shape what you can and can’t do). These include the ‘Report of the Religious Observance Review Group’ (available on the Scottish Government website - which defines ‘Religious Observance’ and specifies what you are aiming at in assemblies and in spiritual development), and the key 2011 Guidelines for Religious Observance.

Don’t fly solo...
Find partners - within the school and from the community. Who in the school’s Senior Management Team has the remit for delivering Religious Observance and liaising with you? Meet with them. Work with them. Find out who else on staff would like to help. Bring in members of your congregation and community as partners to help you. Are there other congregations you could work with who understand the school context?

Chaplaincy is “with”, not “to”...
Chaplaincy is not something we “do” for a school and for pupils. To act in this way would make pupils and staff passive spectators. As much as possible you should include pupils and staff as active partners, right from the planning stage. Get some honest, anonymous feedback from the pupils on what you are currently doing. Ask them what they want to hear about and explore in Religious Observance. Trust them. You can get a great series of vents by simply asking children and young people questions such as “If you could ask God or the wisest person in the world one question, what you would ask?”

Be flexible and committed...
School life is busy and demanding, we need to be able to adapt to changing plans and timetables. Teachers are under incredible pressure and do not need any more from us. Be prepared to change what you are doing and when, as requested, this builds trust between school and chaplain, and ensures that we are a useful part of the team not someone who is going to be intransigent with their own agenda. Our school chaplaincy should be a priority in our ministry, only by being part of the life of the school, in the ordinary everyday experiences, will our meaningful contribution to the school develop. In order to walk alongside pupil and staff we need to “be there” often, we need to commit for the long haul!

Know the curriculum...
Know the curriculum; know what the schools are doing. Congregations have an immense width of experience and can offer this expertise where appropriate to schools. Health and Wellbeing, developing the young work force, may be areas where chaplains or others in the congregation can share skills and experience. Awareness of the School Improvement Plan will also help to realise where chaplains could support the school1.

1 For more information on School improvement plans see: https://education.gov.scot/improvement/Documents/improvementplanning201617.pdf
4 Roles and responsibilities

Chaplains are concerned with care for all involved with the school community, regardless of individuals’ personal faith positions. In order to be effective, chaplains need good contact and liaison with Senior Management, Pastoral and support staff, and need to build positive relationships with staff, pupils and parents. Trust and respect on all sides is important.

The foundation for effective school chaplaincy is not simply a friendly association with the school. It is involvement in the regular life of the school and being seen as an interested and responsible friend. Key to this is building bridges between your church and the local school. Increasingly, schools need volunteers, and there are many ways in which church members can support teachers, provide opportunities for pupils and get involved with the life of the school (see below). While the relevant PVG registration is essential for such opportunities, they can be incredibly worthwhile and the school chaplain is pivotal in facilitating such links. For more ideas on building bridges between church and school, see Serve Your Local School http://www.syls.org.uk/ and Christian Values in Education Scotland http://www.cve-scotland.org.uk/chaplains-churches/case-studies.html

Chaplains and volunteers from churches must recognise that they are in an educational setting and must abide by educational guidelines and sensitivities. As such they are part of a learning community, must be open to interaction and dialogue, and accountable to the school.

Below is a list of some of the ways in which a chaplain can support the school they are in:

Providing pastoral support
Providing pastoral support for pupils, staff and parents in whatever way is required given the school community and setting. Such support may prove invaluable particularly in a crisis situation; e.g. death of staff member or pupil, and might be offered either on a one to one basis or where the whole or sections of the school needs to reflect and/or respond together.

One idea could be to arrange for a Chaplaincy Room to be set aside (e.g. at morning break, lunchtime or the end of the day) where the chaplain could be available to meet with staff and pupils. Being around at intervals and lunchtime, simply to chat to pupils and staff or even to establish a nodding acquaintance with them so that they begin to know who the chaplain is. Given their link between the school community and the society around it school chaplains can often be well placed to contribute pastoral care as and when appropriate.

In addition to this there may be a role for the chaplain in supporting the health and wellbeing of children through activities which develop their capacities for healthy relationships, their compassion and concern for justice, their care for those suffering from poverty and other forms of disadvantage, and their stewardship of the environment among other things.

Supporting Teachers
Offering to be an extra pair of hands in the classroom is something that can be particularly welcome in infant classes and assisting pupils with additional needs. This can be a key role for church volunteers working with the local school.

Similarly, helping to locate resources - particularly specialist speakers & participants and making opportunities available for community based learning can be of use. Many local churches have a wide range of expertise that could be of service to the school.

Attending regular evaluation and planning discussions with the Headteacher/designated member of management to plan and develop the best use of the resource of the chaplain(cy team).

Supporting the Headteacher, staff and pupils in the delivery of the curriculum in the widest sense.
This means the development of the knowledge and skills necessary to enable young people to be successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.

Religious and Moral Education facilitator/support. While the chaplain has no function in ensuring that Religious and Moral Education is being carried out you may contribute to aspects of the curriculum through conversation and agreement with staff. “Children and young people must become aware that beliefs and values are fundamental to families and to the fabric of society in communities, local and global..... children and young people should be given opportunities to participate in service to others and to meet people who show their faith in action” (Religious and Moral Education: Principles and Practice, p.1)

Input from the chaplain will complement that of the teacher who should be aware of “Curriculum for Excellence Religious and Moral Education – Experiences and Outcomes”. A chaplain/local church may often be able to introduce the school to various new approaches and resources. These may include ambitious programmes such as Prayer Spaces in Schools (http://www.prayerspacesinschools.com/) or resources that the church may offer to purchase for the school’s use, such as the video series introducing the God Question (http://www.thegodquestion.tv/introduce) although there are many others.

Providing opportunities for students
As the leader of a local faith community, a chaplain may be able to facilitate opportunities for community service by appropriate pupils of the school, e.g. helping at a crèche or elderly group, assisting pupils with special needs

Supporting Religious Observance / Time for Reflection
Supporting the delivery of Religious Observance within the school in accordance with school policy. Chaplain(s) might be part of the Religious Observance planning structures. Religious Observance - facilitator - in accordance with the school policy on Religious Observance. Responsibility lies with the Headteacher as does any programme of assemblies but chaplains may often be part of the planning team – “To promote the spiritual development of all members of the school community; to express and celebrate the shared values of the school community” (Scottish Government circular on Provision of RO 2005). Pupils should also be involved in the planning, and this can provide an excellent way-in for a chaplain to start to plan and develop his/her work closely with children and young people of the school.

Getting involved in the life of the school
The chaplain can be pivotal in encouraging church members to become more involved in the life of the school. Church members, who are also parents, should definitely consider volunteering as members of the Parent Council - especially since Parent Councils are likely to have considerably more responsibility and influence in future. Other congregation members can provide invaluable support to schools, where teachers are increasingly short of time.

Additionally, the school chaplain may have a range of more formal opportunities for personal involvement:

- Participating in special events in the school in ways agreed with the Headteacher.
- Attending school events such as concerts, prize-giving, sports day, sales, discos and helping on school outings.
- Taking part in the Parent/Teacher Association or the Parent Council

Continuing to develop in your role as a chaplain
Attending professional development and other training opportunities, (e.g. as provided by faith communities or associated bodies), on the recommendation of, or by agreement with, the Headteacher is important. Headteachers may consider the option of paying for such training, where budgets allow, as an investment in the support of the school community. In recognition of the fact that a chaplain is not a trained teacher opportunities could be given to attend courses on positive classroom management, managing classroom dialogue and conducting practical activities in the classroom.
There are also numerous online resources available, e.g. from Christian Values in Education Scotland
http://www.cve-scotland.org.uk/chaplains-churches.html

5 Chaplaincy teams

Where possible, team chaplaincies should be developed. Guided by Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Education (HMIe), schools are expected to put partnership at the heart of all they do. This includes, within the school, partnership with pupils. HMIe (and many forward-looking Headteachers) will therefore warmly welcome a chaplaincy committee that involves school chaplains, individual pupils and staff volunteers working as equal partners to develop the spiritual life of the school. For an example of such a policy/guideline see http://www.cve-scotland.org.uk/chaplains-churches/permissions-boundaries/school-chaplaincy-policy.html

Many schools benefit from the involvement of more than one school chaplain, resulting in teams which, where appropriate, are ecumenical and/or interfaith. Chaplains do not have to necessarily be clergy. Many Christian youth workers make outstanding chaplains, and are now serving most effectively across the country. Chaplains need to be very clearly aware of the difference between their function in school and their functions in church.

Chaplaincy teams can be an effective way of working as chaplains. Teams bring different gifts and approaches and can share the workload, benefitting both chaplaincy and the school. For teams to work well there needs to be a common vision, shared with the school and opportunities to meet regularly. Good communication with each other and with the school builds up good relationships. Chaplaincy input should be planned well in advance taking in to account the school calendar. If any member of the team moves on, it is important the strength of the team continues so succession planning should be in place. When a chaplaincy team works well it enriches the breadth and quality of support that can be provided.

To sum up, school chaplaincy teams represent an opportunity for the whole church to work in partnership with others in service of local school.

“Partnerships often involve interactions between visitors and children and young people that expose the learners to the real-life experiences of people whose lives may be very different to their own. This can provide an authentic experience for children and young people that enables them to come into contact with a wide range of viewpoints and perspectives – religious and otherwise. Such interactions go to the heart of meaningful education in that they involve meaningful dialogue between people, and the development of a sense of our shared human identity.”

Curriculum for Excellence 2016 point 3

6 Serving the school community in partnership with your congregation

Chaplaincy is not just about the Parish Minister, there are many ways congregations can support schools in positive and creative ways.

The Education Scotland Guidance How Good Is Our School (HGIOS 4) reminds us of the importance of schools working in partnerships with their community. This is an excellent area for congregations to link with their school communities and this relationship benefits both. “Strong effective partnerships at local and national level are the key to future improvements in Scottish education.” Serve Your Local School syls.org.uk is an excellent resource that gives direction and examples of how congregations have built these partnerships and supported their local school.
Look for the opportunities to make connections
A wonderful example of building school/church links came from a joint project studying World War 1. The local school was doing World War 1 as a topic: the church meanwhile was restoring its stained glass windows in memory of World War 1. The end result was a wonderful service of commemoration of World War 1 involving the school, the church and the local community. From this the relationships and link between the school community and the church have continued to grow and develop.

Chaplains, through their congregation and knowledge of their parish/church community can identify these opportunities to link with the school. Good communication is essential. Let the school know of events in your parish/church: e.g. Holiday Club, always of course with the permission of the Headteacher. Equally it is essential to be aware of what is going on in the school (e.g. concerts) and to support these events whenever possible.

Provide opportunities
Chaplains can be invaluable to a school by encouraging volunteers to liaise with the school to help with pupil-intensive activities within the school (e.g. working alongside pupils with additional needs, or scribing for exams), field trips, school visits, expeditions outside the building, and homework clubs etc. Remember that in most cases volunteers will need to undergo a check by Disclosure Scotland - but this is something which the school is generally more than happy to arrange.

There are also many opportunities to involve pupils in helping with projects outside of school - sponsored events, delivering Christmas parcels, concerts for the housebound or the elderly, environmental schemes.

One school needed help walking the pupils to church for an end of term service: the local congregation offered to help and this again developed into a closer relationship with the school. On outings, staff pupil ratios are strictly enforced and this may be an opportunity to offer assistance where appropriate. Some congregations supply gospels to pupils who are moving on to secondary school or support the transition to secondary school by building a programme of activities around the It’s Your Move booklet. Published by Scripture Union, this can be used relevantly in Scottish schools provided that one or two sections are pointed out as being exclusively for England http://www.scriptureunion.org.uk/3619244.id#.WIED-1wvnsc.

Often schools and churches can link through specific projects such as foodbanks. The church may be able to offer opportunities for serving the community e.g. helping with toddlers group. Pupils benefit from this participation in the wider community and partnership working is an important part of the curriculum. Many schools are involved in the Rights Respecting Schools programme, and Eco schools. Chaplains and church volunteers can contribute to this and other areas of values education.

The importance of relationships
Relationships are of immense importance and there are various ways to build on them. Refreshments are always relationship builders. Providing cakes for the staffroom, providing lunch for in-service days, providing juice, biscuits and a listening ear as senior pupils come out of their exams, these are effective ways of building relationships. When the school visits for the end of term service, can you offer refreshments to the parents who come along and a crèche for very young children? These are ways a congregation, through chaplains, can build up links with the school community.

Pray for your school community
The most important single thing you can do for the school is to get Christians praying - for the pupils, for the staff, for parents. Let the school know that you are praying for them, and invite specific requests for areas where they would like you to pray. Pray for Schools Scotland https://www.suscotland.org.uk/pray/pray-for-schools-scotland/ runs a network of prayer meetings across the country.
7 Supporting Pupils with Additional Needs

During his ministry Jesus often prioritised working with those who had the greatest needs. He included everyone and excluded no one. It’s really good, therefore, that our education system in Scotland is extremely inclusive: there is a presumption, in fact, that all children attend mainstream schools.

As a school chaplain, or a church member who works with a school, there are many ways to support the pupils who have the greatest needs.

95% of children and young people with Additional Support Needs attend their local school. They make up 21.7 per cent of mainstream school pupils.

What do schools mean by “additional support needs”/ “additional support for learning”? Many people think they only apply to children with long-term learning difficulties or disabilities but children can need support for many other reasons. These include:

- Difficulty in controlling behaviour
- Missing school because of an illness or long-term condition
- Having a physical disability
- Being a young carer
- Experiencing communication difficulties
- Being particularly able
- Having a difficult home situation
- Suffering a bereavement
- Being bullied

Some children need only a small amount of support for a short time. Other children may need a lot of support for a longer period of time. As a chaplain you may be able to offer your time to help the school in its support of these pupils.

8 Presbytery and Church

In one Presbytery, a Religious Observance Steering Group has been set up, which organises workshops to allow chaplains and staff to meet together and look at areas of interest, such as Curriculum for Excellence.

Within the Church of Scotland your Presbytery can also provide a focus for chaplaincy by inviting a speaker on a relevant topic or organising a chaplaincy event. There will also be a Presbytery committee who will have responsibility for chaplains and Religious Observance.

Your church can offer support in many ways. One very simple way is by prayer, or by raising awareness or by getting involved in the work that is being done.

Remember that chaplains do not need to be clergy. Members of the congregation may be gifted in working with young people and can be invaluable members of the chaplaincy team (whether on a regular basis or for short periods of time).

9 Support for chaplains – Local Authority, Education Scotland

Local authorities should have policies on Religious Observance and School Chaplaincy. These may be available on their website. Each school should also have its own policy on Religious Observance and include it in their handbook.
Each local authority will also have up to three church representatives on its Education Committee and these representatives can be an important contact.


10 Support for chaplains - schools

Schools can provide support for school chaplains in a number of ways. These may include:

• Providing clarity of the role they expect their chaplains to fulfil and their expectations of you within that role.
• Providing an integrated approach, in which the chaplaincy work is linked into the wider life and work of the school.
• Establishing a chaplaincy committee involving chaplains, pupils, staff and parent volunteers and keep minutes of all meetings. See http://www.cve-scotland.org.uk/chaplains-churches/permissions-boundaries/school-chaplaincy-policy.html for a downloadable example of a school policy which uses this approach (warmly approved of by HMle).
• Linking chaplains to a pupil group/house/year group. This can often help chaplains to be part of the school community.
• Establishing a clear process by which chaplains are to be informed of particular situations where their presence might be helpful, for example in times of illness or bereavement.
• Providing a photo board of chaplain(s) to be displayed in reception.

11 A Former Headteacher’s Perspective – Richard Coton

The Headteacher is a key individual in any school. Understanding, therefore, how best to work with Headteachers and convince them of the full potential of school chaplaincy is incredibly important.

Below are some suggestions on some of the important factors in doing this:

• Partners
  Schools have changed immensely, especially through Curriculum for Excellence. So, even if you have been a school chaplain for a number of years, take a breath, sit down with the Headteacher (or one of her/his deputes) and have a discussion about how your work with the school can develop and change. Start with the question, “What do you need as a school and how can our church help?”

  Invest time in working closely with teachers and pupils. Based on informal but very clear advice from HMle, we developed a highly effective chaplaincy committee with equal numbers of chaplains, teachers and pupils. The pupils were undoubtedly the most innovative and boldest members of the committee. And their advice (positive and invariably insightful) built our chaplains’ confidence in developing approaches that really met our young people’s needs. (To download a copy of the chaplaincy policy, go to: http://www.cve-scotland.org.uk/chaplains-churches/permissions-boundaries/school-chaplaincy-policy.html)

  Get regular feedback on your input to the school. Schools are expected to evaluate all aspects of what they do. Suggest to the Headteacher a regular evaluation of chaplaincy input, and you will gain significant credibility -- as well as a whole range of good ideas for the future. Your school will have numerous self-evaluation approaches (from surveys to pupil focus groups), and should be keen to work with you -- or, better still, with the school chaplaincy committee (chaplains/pupils/teachers).
• **Top job: Facilitator/Team Builder**

   Our chaplains didn’t try to do it all themselves. Instead, they were facilitators, building bridges between the school and their congregations (and/or other Christian organisations). I can’t recommend too highly of the website Serve Your Local School (http://syls.org.uk/). It has dozens of ways in which a church can really get involved with (and make a difference to) their local school. As a chaplain, you are the one who can make this happen -- and if you do so, you will multiply your effectiveness many times over. (See also CVE Scotland for numerous case studies: http://www.cve-scotland.org.uk/chaplains-churches/case-studies.html)

   Our chaplains also facilitated innovative programmes such as:

   • Prayer Spaces in Schools (http://www.prayerspacesinschools.com/). This outstanding week-long insert into the curriculum is only possible with manpower and expertise (plus a little funding) from a local church.


   • One of our chaplains offered weekly placements for senior pupils helping with the mothers and toddlers group -- and so enabled us to deliver certificated childcare courses. Schools need to develop a range of community service opportunities for their pupils. As a chaplain, you can be invaluable in offering a range of service opportunities, often through your church.

Teamwork, especially with pupils, was a hallmark of almost everything achieved by our chaplains. This all developed from our chaplaincy Committee (see above):

   Chaplains and their church members “walked the talk” of Christian love and service, supporting pupils with special needs, accompanying school trips, providing leadership training. Feedback from pupils showed they took much more notice of such coming-alongside service than of even the most innovative Religious Observance assemblies.

   Over time, our Religious Observance assemblies became more like interactive workshops than from-the-front presentations (remember that Curriculum for Excellence expects constant interaction in the classroom, certainly not silent rows of pupils listening to a lengthy presentation). Pupils were frequently the main speakers -- well prepared and supported by chaplains, they were listened to much more intently than any adult.
Interesting practice from school chaplains around the country

Out of School
For smaller churches (and school chaplains) getting to know Primary School youngsters, we have found a good option to be running an In - Service Day Club. Only do it three times a year – one day. We couldn’t sustain a summer week. Schools like it. Parents like it. We can do it, and be a blessing on our community. We have just completed our seventh one. Crafts, games, stories, songs, a video – etc.

Going into School
I am following up on ‘Bubblegum ’n Fluff’, and in later years will try ‘Easter Code’ (both available from http://www.calderside.org.uk/). The advantages of these are that they are a package already constructed, and they need both the chaplain and other members of the congregation. And it gets away from the Assembly type thing (especially when they are often interrupted with other stuff).

George Shand, minister Cairngryffe Parish Church, South Lanarkshire

Glasgow’s Disadvantaged Young People Need YOUR Help Now!
For nearly a decade the charity MCR Pathways has been working in secondary schools throughout Glasgow helping ‘care experienced’ young people overcome the challenges thrown at them – challenges they face through no fault of their own.

Our city’s most disadvantaged young people are five times more likely to leave school aged 16 or earlier and more than half end up in unsustainable post-school destinations. This is no surprise as, while care experienced young people have great potential, they often struggle to thrive due to instability in their personal lives. They often don’t have positive adult role-models or access to social networks that can introduce them to the workplace.

MCR Pathways has shown that having a volunteer mentor is key to unlocking the immense potential in these young people. I am a member of the Glasgow Presbytery Education Committee and have been a mentor with MCR for over a year. It involves a commitment of one hour a week. The only qualifications required are a listening ear and empathy with the young person. Training is given beforehand.

Can you help MCR? Can you volunteer your time to support a deserving young person just like Liam – a youngster who was in care and totally disengaged from education, and who is now a Chartered Surveyor? Join the City of Glasgow as we lead the way in shattering the cycle of deprivation, low aspirations and lost potential that looked-after young people face.

To learn more and to register to be a volunteer mentor please visit www.youngglasgowtalent.org If any group in your church would like me to come and speak to them about this worthwhile venture, please do not hesitate to contact me. There are so many success stories and I would love to share them with you.

Mary McIntyre mmmcintyre@ntlworld.com.

SPCK look after a website http://www.assemblies.org.uk which takes away the “blank page” syndrome for me and I find many of their suggestion easy to adapt for the schools where I lead assemblies. Also primary school aged children love Fischy Music and I use that a lot. I sometimes also extend the theme of a Holiday Club into assemblies.

With secondary schools my only advice is be yourself!

Christine Murdoch, Parish Minister Craigrownie linked with Garelochhead linked with Rosneath: St Modan’s Parish Churches
A Multi-faith religious values teaching project

This project relates to Curriculum for Excellence RME outcomes including 1-05b, 1-06a, 2-04a, 2-04c, 2-05b, 2-09a, 2-09b, 3-04b, 3-04c, 3-05c, 3-06b, 3-09a and 4-09d by teaching about the values that different religions upheld and for the following week the class would try to reflect on those values in their everyday experiences in school. This gives the pupils an opportunity to learn about the lifestyle of a religious person, and to reflect on the commonality of many of the values which different religions shared.

On Monday mornings in the autumn terms of P6 and P7 I spent time with the class describing some of the particular values of one of different faiths, where possible assisted by a member of the faith being taught. The pupils then tried to live by the values that they had just heard about in the coming week. The following Monday they reflected on how that had worked.

In addition to these single faith lessons, the class discovered the Golden Rule (Do unto others as you would have others do unto you) in slightly different words to be present in the scriptures of all world religions and of belief systems as diverse as Paganism and Humanism as well.

The follow-up activities that were used in the Monday morning classes included collaborative group work to produce posters, a script for a radio advertisement, and discussions.

To conclude the series of lessons on individual religions two summarising lessons were held. In the first, after reflecting as a whole class on the values that they had encountered in different religions, the groups designed a set of values for a “pick-and-mix” religion - an activity which they all found to be both challenging and enjoyable and forced them to think about how different religions put greater or lesser emphasis on different aspects of religious observation. In the final lesson the class were joined by school management team members to evaluate the project as a whole, and to complete an evaluation sheet (as an adult-led group).

The time commitment to fully engage with the projects objectives again turned out to be too heavy to be accommodated, but the pupils learned a great deal about different religions in the course of the two years, some of which was retained very effectively.

As chaplain I was fortunate to be able to block off sufficient time to prepare for and attend the class for 9 hours between September and November each year, which might not be realistically possible for many school chaplains.

Summary of Evaluation Exercise: All four groups felt that the way in which the topic had been taught was interesting, and that they had learned more about the topic by the manner in which it had been presented. In response to a question about how they tried to live out the values in the ensuing week comments included “lack of time” and “hard to remember to do it”.

Rating the different methods used the pupils rated making posters, watching video clips, discussions and trying to design a pick-and-mix set of religious values highly, but commented that the PowerPoint presentation were less interesting and too wordy, two of the groups were less keen on the radio advert exercise. Other comments included that the pupils had generally enjoyed the lessons, and that it enabled them to begin to understand why some people were religious and others not.

While the main objective of the project was to achieve a number of Curriculum for Excellence RME outcomes, many other Curriculum for Excellence outcomes were covered in the course of the project. It was a way to allow the pupils to see a level of integration of different curricular areas overlapping this RME slot. Please contact me at asarle@churchofscotland.org.uk if you wish more information on resources used.

Andrew Sarle, OLM, Bainsford Parish Church and chaplain to 3 schools including Langlees Primary School, Falkirk
In my experience, serving many schools across a rural area which operates in at least two languages (Gaelic and English), and the most useful resources are:

1. The regional para-church SU-trained but locally employed schools worker
2. Personal creativity according to times, seasons and other opportunities
3. Awareness of priorities within the school community
4. Willingness to make helpful connections beyond the school

Rev Rory Macleod Minister of Strath & Sleat, Isle of Skye

We are running a project (Go For It funded) called the "Ten Must Know Bible Stories" Project, working with our local schools to help them deliver Christianity within the RME curriculum. All our resources are being published online see - tenbiblestories.org

There are lesson plans to help chaplains and teachers teach and explore Bible Stories in a creative, active and engaging way. Many of the lessons are designed for outdoors.

It is being incredibly well received and feedback is hugely positive.

Sue Thomson, Schools Worker, St Columba’s Church of Scotland, Bridge of Don

13 FAQs

Can I pray at assembly?
An assembly is a Religious Observance event and not a form of worship, therefore it is not appropriate to assume that all present will want to pray. Some of the young people present will be people of faith and prayer will be part of their spirituality, however there will be others who do not wish to pray. If you are going to include prayer as part of the event it must be invitational, and the language you use must make it very clear that prayer is a choice not compulsory. You may say something like, “As a Christian I am going to pray about what we have been thinking about today, you can join in with this prayer or you can just think about what was important in today’s assembly.” To make it even more invitational you could say “For the next 20 seconds we are going to be silent and during this time you can think or pray about our assembly today” (make you sure you keep track of the time for the allocated time of silence.)

However, if the Assembly has been called to mark the death of a pupil or member of staff, and a chaplain is invited to take part, it is generally accepted that a Bible reading and prayer are part of the “package of comfort” that a Christian minister will bring.

Do I need to have a PVG with my local authority?
Yes you do. You will already be disclosed through the Church of Scotland but you need to complete a transfer PVG application so that Disclosure Scotland is aware of all the places you are working with vulnerable groups. In the busyness of school life the school may not ask you to do this, and as a childcare professional you should ask them to give you the relevant forms. While in the school you work under the safeguarding guidelines of the school. You should be aware of these and know which member of staff to report to if a child discloses anything of concern to you. Likewise, church members need to complete PVG applications, and to work under the safeguarding guidelines of the school.

Can I give out flyers for my congregation’s children/youth events?
This is the decision of the Headteacher, and you should always have a conversation with them in regard to publicity of events. Most local authorities now have a policy that pupils can be informed of events in the community but publicity material should not be placed directly into children’s school bags without their permission, rather the publicity should be placed in a central location e.g. the school office where children can pick it up if they choose to.

Some Headteachers may be happy to distribute publicity directly via form classes / registration classes.
Can we sing worship songs at assembly?
An assembly is a Religious Observance event and not a form of worship, therefore it is not appropriate to sing songs that are of a confessional nature, instead choose songs that all can sing with integrity, whether from a faith background or not. Fischy music songs, http://www.fischy.com, are ideal for this in a primary school setting. In a secondary school use appropriate secular songs, not to be sung collectively, but to be listened to and promote a guided reflection opportunity.

How do I get “in” to my local school?
It might be helpful to reword this question, something like, “How can I work with my local school?” “What could my congregation offer our local school?” If there is no direct request from the local school for chaplaincy initiatives then attend the community events in the school, be a positive presence. School community links are a really important part of Curriculum of Excellence there will be events you can simply attend e.g. Christmas fayres, concerts, etc. Make an appointment with the Headteacher to ask how you can support the school. It is their decision about who their school chaplain is and whether they have one! They may have had very negative or even damaging experiences of school chaplaincy in the past and it may take a long time for these to heal. Be available and be honest. It may be a long term process.

Can I use a bible story/biblical material in an assembly?
Yes, you can. The RO guidelines state that we should use our Christian heritage, and that a chaplain’s faith stance should not be compromised in their delivery of RO. However, how we use the biblical narrative will be different than in a worship context. The story should be left to be explored by the pupils rather than placing an interpretation on to it from our own perspective, give the pupils space to wonder and consider the story, and link it to a theme that all present can connect with.

What should I do if my school is not meeting the requirements for Religious Observance?
If we try and force Religious Observance into a school context by showing up the “faults” in the school’s delivery of it, then we will not get very far. It is not our job to ensure that the school meet their legal requirements; rather our role is to support the school in doing that. Quality of Religious Observance events is far more important than frequency, and if we can support the school to do one very meaningful and engaging event that gives the school community a taste of the benefits of Religious Observance, then they will want to do Religious Observance. Not just feel they have to.

Should we call it Religious Observance or Time for Reflection?
Many non-denominational schools refer to RO as Time for Reflection. This helps to describe the type of experience that the learner can have through engaging with issues and events as part of RO. RO takes different forms and educational establishments are well placed to take account of their own particular contexts when planning RO. This includes making local decisions about whether the term “Time for Reflection” is suitable or not or perhaps, for example in denominational schools, the term “worship” may be considered more appropriate.

Curriculum for Excellence ed 16 point 1
14 Resources - Steve Younger

Internet Resources for Chaplains
www.afan.uk.net - All Faiths and None (AFAN) inter-faith materials for 14-19 year olds.

www.assemblies.org.uk - SPCK provided and monitored. Assemblies for Primary and Secondary, linked to the English Schools’ ‘Key Stages’.

www.assemblybox.co.uk - English based, Key Stage linked. Over 350 fully scripted assembly ideas, mostly for primary school.

www.assemblytube.com - Video based resources from all over the world but the majority of contributors are British.

www.calderside.org.uk - Calderside Learning Community Chaplaincy Team (Blantyre) produced two special programmes focused on Christmas and Easter for linking local churches and schools. ‘Bubblegum ’n’ Fluff’ is aimed at P6 and ‘Easter Code’ at P7. Guide books and Resources can be purchased from the site.

www.chaplaincycentral.co.uk/chaplains/ - “a central point for chaplaincy in Education”.

www.character-scotland.org.uk - A superb project on values and character formation that is ideal for chaplaincy teams to collaborate with and implement.

www.childrenspirituality.org - The International Association for Children’s Spirituality promotes research and practice around children’s spirituality. Has a regular publication with articles on Children’s spirituality by practitioners and academics.

www.cve-scotland.org.uk - Christian Values in Education: a growing, developing site with RO events being added and guidance for parents, teachers and chaplains.

www.connectingpoints.org.uk/youth/category/school-chaplaincy - That rarity you have been searching for: assemblies from Scottish practitioners, linked to Curriculum for Excellence and often with Religious Observance templates attached.

www.irishchaplains.org - (School Chaplains’ Association of Ireland) from an Irish setting. Some excellent articles and thoughtful reflections on school chaplaincy in their archived newsletter (‘Chaplain Today’).

www.methodistchildrencreativeministry.org

www.myfishbites.com/assemblies.php - English Key Stage based but great ideas to plunder.

www.prayerspacesinschools.com

www.primaryresources.co.uk/assembly/assembly.htm - Sponsored by RM (suppliers of computers to many schools). A depository of assemblies on all subject areas. Key Stage linked. Something to trawl through for ideas to adapt.

www.reonline.org.uk


www.scala.uk.net - SCALA (School Chaplains and Leaders Association).

www.sces.uk.com - The Scottish Catholic Education Service has useful guidance and exemplars for Denominational schools on Religious and Moral Education/Religious Observance/Chaplaincy. There is much that can be adapted and applied in the nondenominational setting too.

www.smsc.org.uk - website of the Bloxham Project. Resources and support materials for English schools on spiritual, moral, social and cultural values. A wealth of practical resources for adaptation.

www.tes.com/teaching-resources/search/whole-school/assemblies - Times Educational Supplement depository of assemblies (not all on ‘religious’ themes). Useful, adaptable stuff on Values and Citizenship, Religious Education, Special occasions (Remembrance, Christmas, etc.).
www.topmarks.co.uk - A hub with links to many other sites offering material for use in schools (e.g. CAFOD, Oxfam, etc.).

www.truetube.co.uk - “Videos, Lesson Plans & Assemblies for RE, PSHE & Citizenship”.

www.unicef.org.uk/Documents/Education-Documents/Resources-Documents/primary_assemblies_unicef.pdf - 21 Assemblies for Primary Schools on major UNICEF sponsored days and events.

www.unicef.org.uk/rights-respecting-schools - An excellent programme on values and character that is ideal for chaplaincy initiative and involvement.

www.worshipworkshop.org.uk - “Helping Schools build better worship”.

Serve Your Local School - useful advice and training for chaplains and churches wanting to support a local school. As well as a whole range of ideas for making a real difference to your local school. This site has excellent practical advice about the Do’s and Don’ts of working in partnership with schools in Scotland. Training and advice for chaplains and churches http://www.syls.org.uk/.

Schoolswork http://www.schoolswork.co.uk/home/ is a rich source of advice for all Schools Workers. You may well find useful material here if you want to extend your chaplaincy beyond taking School Religious Observance Assemblies. Though based in England, most of what is on the site applies just as well north of the border. Check out www.schoolswork.co.uk/inedeto/ and www.schoolswork.co.uk/training/.

A useful case study on the development of a new chaplaincy team at Rosshall Academy in Glasgow http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/.

www.chaplaincycentral.co.uk/chaplains/ - Offers some short, ready-made assemblies for schools. All by practitioners. Plenty of ideas to plunder.

www.bibleworld.co.uk - an educational resource designed to support the Curriculum for Excellence for RME. It offers P5-S1 pupils a lively and stimulating introduction to the Bible and aspects of the story of Christianity.

https://tenbiblestories.org: This is a collaborative project between St Columba’s Church and Middleton Park School. This partnership approach between teachers and a local church has resulted in a pioneering programme to explore delivering 10 Bible Stories as contexts for learning across the curriculum. This approach has been endorsed by HMIE as excellent.

http://www.storyandreligion.div.ed.ac.uk/schools/resources - Approaching Religion through Story: Stories from Buddhist, Christian and Hindu Traditions by Dr Alison Jack and Dr. Naomi Appleton, University of Edinburgh. This book contains stories from Christian and Buddhist traditions for use in schools. Introductory material is included to help give the teacher confidence and context for using the story. Suggested questions are provided to prompt reflection on the most suitable uses for the story. However, the resources will need to be adjusted as necessary to different levels and learners.

Videos discussing aspects of chaplaincy:

http://www.ceas.org.uk/school-chaplaincy.html

Some useful Books: some deeper thinking on Schools/Churches links

Argyll & Bute 2010 The Role of chaplains in non-denominational Schools Education Management Circular 1.43

Australian Government 2012 National School Chaplaincy and Student Welfare Program Guidelines

Ballard, P. 2009 Locating Chaplaincy: A Theological Note Crucible

Buckley, Anthony 2013 Help, There’s a School in my Parish Grove Books


Caperon, J. 2015 Education Chaplaincy, Church Policy and Schools’ Chaplaincy in Swift/Cobb/Todd A Handbook of Chaplaincy Studies: Understanding Spiritual Care in Public Places, Ashgate Publishing

Chaplaincy: An Overview 2015 The Message Trust


Guidance for Schools Regarding Chaplains and Chaplaincy Teams in Non-denominational Schools 2014, South Lanarkshire Council, Education Committee


Heischman, Daniel R. 2012 So What Does a Chaplain Do, Anyway? National Association of Episcopal Schools


Norman/Martin/Lewis/Pimlott 2014 Education Matters: Readings in Pastoral Care for School Chaplains, Guidance Counsellors and Teachers Veritas

Pirrie, A./Lowden, K./Quinn, J. 2004 Religious Observance in Scottish Schools SCRE Centre, University of Glasgow

Pohlmann, David 2013 School Chaplaincy: An Introduction Wipf & Stock


Reiher, Jim 2015 So, you’re thinking about becoming a School Chaplain? Crucible Theology and Ministry [www.crucible.org.au 6:3]

Religious and Moral Education: Religious Observance East Dunbartonshire

Religious Observance Policy 2009 Glasgow City Council, Education Resources

Religious Observance Policy/ A Role for the School Chaplain Scottish Borders Council: Education and Lifelong Learning, Appendix 2

Religious Observance and Chaplaincy Scripture Union Scotland

Role of the School Chaplain, The Education Representatives Handbook, Church of Scotland

Russi, Judith 2015 School Chaplaincy: A New Model for a New Time Networking Catholic Education Today Vol.17:1 October

Ryan, B. 2015 A Very Modern Ministry: Chaplaincy in the UK Theos/ Cardiff Centre for Chaplaincy Studies

Tregale, D. 2011 Fresh Experiences of School Chaplaincy Grove Books


Withers, M. 2010 Local Church, Local School The Bible Reading Fellowship (wide ranging advice on church/school relationships including chaplaincy)

Worsley, H. 2010 Churches Linking with Schools Grove Books
To find out more information on...

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