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|  | Changes to Special Religious Instruction, 2016 |
|  | Overview of Changes | November 2015 |

Special Religious Instruction (SRI) has had a long history in Victorian government schools. These changes do not seek to downplay the important place it holds in many school communities. Moving SRI to non-curriculum time strikes the balance between ensuring that SRI is still able to be delivered in schools where there is parent demand and available resources, and giving all children and young people full access to the full amount of curriculum delivery time, which is critical for Victoria as the Education State.

**What are the significant changes to SRI from Term, 1, 2016?**

* SRI may be delivered during lunchtime, or in the hour before or after school.
* Principals have the decision-making responsibilities around SRI in their schools. However, it is important that they carefully consider the circumstances of their school and the views of all the school community when making the decision about whether to deliver SRI.
* The administrative burden has been reduced and Principals are no longer required to seek parental interest each time an instructor approaches the school to deliver SRI.
* To increase flexibility within the new policy, where an instructor is willing, SRI may now be delivered to multi-age groupings of students rather than being limited to ‘normal class organisation’.
* To increase transparency in the decision-making process, the new Ministerial Direction expressly provides that Principals must not have regard to their own personal views about religion or their personal religious beliefs or practices in making a decision to deliver, or not to deliver, or to cease delivering SRI.

**What significant requirements will be the same as 2015?**

* SRI is not compulsory for any student.
* SRI must operate as an ‘opt-in’ extra-curricular activity that students may only attend with their parents’ informed consent obtained using the prescribed consent form CFMD145.
* All SRI program activities must be supervised by at least one school teacher.
* A school delivering SRI must provide a suitable place for the instruction to occur.
* SRI can only be provided by accredited instructors who are approved by the Minister for Education.
* Only program materials that are approved by the instructor’s organisation and are available for parents to access online can be used as part of SRI.
* SRI instructors are visitors to schools and must comply with the Department of Education and Training’s policies on [Volunteer Workers](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/governance/Pages/volunteers.aspx) and [Visitors in Schools](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/Pages/visitorsinschool.aspx).
* Students who attend SRI must not be offered any enticement or other benefit of a tangible nature.
* Students in government schools may only attend SRI for a maximum of 30 minutes per week.
* SRI instructors must not attempt to convert students to a particular religion or invite students to attend activities outside of SRI.