

Pastoral and Spiritual Care

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• 1. Policy statement

It is the policy of The Royal Children's Hospital (RCH) that patients, their families, and members of staff have access to pastoral and spiritual care as required.

The mission of the [Department of Pastoral and Spiritual Care](#) (hereafter referred to as "the Department") is to ensure the delivery of appropriate spiritual care services throughout the hospital.

The Department of Pastoral and Spiritual Care operates within the confidentiality parameters as set out in the following RCH Policy Documents:

- [Privacy Policy](#)
- [Personal Information - Use and Disclosure](#)
- [Personal Information - Access](#)
- [Personal Information - Confidentiality](#)
- [Personal Information - Security](#)
- [Requesting Privacy](#)

2. Mission

"The Pastoral and Spiritual Care Department of the RCH offers emotional and spiritual care within the hospital community through respectful engagement, compassionate presence, family focused care and ritual."

Bringing a child to hospital, whether it be for tests or treatment, can be a stressful and often very challenging experience. Facing bad news regarding a diagnosis, making painful decisions about care, dealing with traumatic events, facing stress in the family system, and grieving are times when it is especially appropriate to refer to Pastoral and Spiritual Care.

Pastoral and Spiritual Care staff are available to support patients, families, and staff.

Pastoral and Spiritual Care is offered using a person-centred approach which focuses on the needs and concerns of the patient, family or staff person.

Spiritual support is likely to be of benefit whether or not a family is "religious" or if they belong to a church, mosque, or religious tradition.

Chaplains support patients and family in various ways and may include:

- Providing respectful and non-judgmental listening
- Assisting in recognising, naming and reflecting upon feelings and considering options to address issues that are identified
- Journeying with patients, families and or staff during times of stress, loss, and grief
- Connecting people with spiritual resources consistent with their beliefs and values
- Assisting individuals, families and staff to connect with their inner resources

Pastoral and Spiritual Care staff are committed to ensuring the delivery of spiritual care services to the hospital community in an atmosphere that recognizes and honours diversity and difference.

The Pastoral and Spiritual Care team are committed to work collaboratively and collegially with other healthcare professionals.

3. Persons Affected

- Patients, their families, and carers
- Staff
- Visitors to the Hospital
- Religious / Faith communities

4. Definition of terms

Professional Chaplain :- is a person who is appointed and recognised as a specialist in the provision of pastoral and spiritual care. Professional Chaplains are expected to meet the criteria and requirements for ongoing membership of Spiritual Care Australia, the Association of Pastoral and Spiritual Care Practitioners in Australia. Pastoral and Spiritual Care practitioners such as chaplains are usually endorsed for this specialised ministry by a recognised religious or faith community.

Staff Chaplain : is a professional chaplain employed by their faith community to work within the RCH community. Staff Chaplains work with The Royal Children's Hospital under a service agreement between the RCH and the Faith Community.

Visiting Chaplains : are appointed by their respective churches or faith communities and approved by RCH to visit specific patients and families who indicate membership in that specific religious group. Visiting chaplains are governed by Memorandums of Understanding between the RCH and the faith community.

Pastoral Care Intern/CPE Students : are students undertaking a unit of Clinical Pastoral Education, who deliver their clinical work at RCH under the supervision of a certified supervisor (who may or may not be based at RCH) and a pastoral administrator, who is member of the Pastoral and Spiritual Care Department.

Coordinator of Pastoral and Spiritual Care (Coordinator): is a Staff Chaplain employed by the RCH serving as Coordinator of the department who reports to the Manager of Social Work, Aboriginal Health and Pastoral Care Services. The Coordinator is accountable to the CEO and the RCH Board through its Executive. The Coordinator administers RCH policy and procedures, ensures good governance and supervises the work of staff in the department.

5. Responsibility

RCH Staff Chaplains and Co-ordinator, individually and collectively, will;

- Ensure that all patients, their families and staff have access to spiritual care;
- Offer spiritual care in a way which honours and respects each person's religious (or non-religious) and cultural traditions;
- Maintain and staff a 24-hour roster including On-Call Duty cover out of normal business hours (1630 hours to 0830 hours weekdays, Weekends and Public Holidays)
- Demonstrate a commitment to ongoing professional development and training by developing an annual Development plan in accordance with the RCH PDAP process;
- Undertake regular professional supervision with a focus upon Pastoral and Spiritual Care practice;
- Be a resource to staff on religious, spiritual and ethical issues;
- Be a paediatric spiritual care education resource to staff and to the wider community;
- Be a link between patients/families and their faith communities and maintain positive relationships with local clergy and other leaders of faith communities;
- Provide rituals, worship and other services to support patients, families and staff as appropriate;
- Maintain the Murrup Biik precinct in good order;
- Promote the work of Pastoral and Spiritual Care and the work of RCH within the wider community of Melbourne and Victoria

Visiting Chaplains

- Visit and minister only to patients and their families who indicate they are members of that specific religious or faith community and request a visit.

Pastoral Care Intern/Clinical Pastoral Education Intern

- Offer spiritual care on wards and participate in the life of the department as directed by their supervisor and pastoral administrator to whom they are directly accountable, as well as the Coordinator, Pastoral and Spiritual Care.

6. Criteria

- **Working with ChildrenCard** and **National Police Check** - All personnel working in the department are required to hold a current Working with Children Card and produce a current Police Check Certificate (no less than three months old) in accordance with current RCH Policy.
- **Security/Identity Badge** - Each member of the Spiritual Care Team must wear his / her RCH identity badge whenever on RCH premises, especially when visiting wards or outpatient areas.
- **RCH Policies** - Each member of the Department is expected to know and abide by all current RCH policies, guidelines, and procedures.
- **Membership of a Professional Association** such as Spiritual Care Australia is encouraged.

7. Bibliography

The following documents inform and extend the scope of this document:

Capabilities Framework for Pastoral Care and Chaplaincy 2009: [Health Care Chaplaincy Council of Victoria Inc.](#) 2009

Organisations:

Standards of Practice, Spiritual Care Australia, 2014

Code of Conduct, Spiritual Care Australia, 2013

Ethics Document (Draft), Spiritual Care Australia, 2014

Associated Organisations:

- [Spiritual Care Australia](#)
- [Spiritual Health Victoria](#) formerly Healthcare Chaplaincy Council of Victoria Incorporated
- [Association for Supervised Pastoral Education in Australia](#)