



Buddhist Council of NSW
Working for the Buddhist Community

Buddhist SRE Information for Parents and Caregivers

What Is The Buddhist SRE Program?

Every government school is required to allow from 30 to 60 minutes per week for special religious education (SRE) for children from years Kindergarten (Stage 1) to Year 10 (stage 5). SRE is not taught by school staff, but instead by volunteers from authorised providers.

Each week, SRE teachers trained and supported by the Buddhist Council help thousands of young people to live better lives.

Who is the Buddhist Council?

The Buddhist Council of New South Wales is the peak body representing more than 120 Buddhist temples and societies. The Buddhist Council represents the Buddhist community to government, media and other religious faith groups, operates the largest and most comprehensive Buddhist SRE program, runs chaplaincy programs in hospitals and prisons, and provides support and advice for member organisations

Each week, SRE teachers trained and supported by the Buddhist Council help thousands of young people to live better lives. The Buddhist Council's SRE Program has these features:

- The syllabus represents the core teachings of all Buddhist traditions
- The training of SRE teachers is inclusive of all Buddhist traditions
- The syllabus uses a multi-dimensional pedagogy based on four strands (see below)
- It is the largest Buddhist SRE program in Australia (many times larger than the others combined)

How is it Taught?

Buddhist SRE is *not* taught so that students remember what's in a textbook. The Buddhist SRE Syllabus aims to help children lead happy and healthy lives by instilling values and life skills based on the teachings of the Buddha. The emphasis on values and life skills does not exclude learning about the Buddha's life, or his original teachings, as these are also included in the Buddhist SRE Syllabus. In the long run, values and life skills will help to build self-confidence and purpose. Life skills in particular will help a child to be more resilient to the ups and downs of life. The Buddhist SRE Syllabus therefore aims to:

- Instill values and attitudes which are consistent with the Buddha's teachings
- Help children to understand Buddhist teachings and how to practice them
- Enable children to learn practical life skills

Buddhist teachers are trained by the Buddhist Council to run SRE classes in ways which help young people to understand and practice the essence of the Buddha's teachings using stories, mindfulness exercises, games, plays, lively discussions, arts and crafts and other activities that children enjoy.

What will my child learn?

The Buddhist SRE Syllabus aims to help children to lead happy and healthy lives and to instill values and life skills based on the understanding and practice of the teachings of the Buddha. This emphasis on values and life skills does not exclude learning facts about the Buddha's life or the key teachings, as these are also included in the Buddhist SRE Syllabus.

The Buddhist SRE Syllabus is structured into four parallel strands of topics graduated from Stage 1 (K-2) through to Stage 5 (years 9 and 10), with age appropriate topics at each stage.

- **Being a Buddhist:** The understanding and practice of the Buddha's teachings from an individual perspective.
- **Buddhism in Society.** The context of Buddhism, how it has evolved, how Buddhism and society interact and the forms it takes.
- **Values and Attitudes.** The values which underpin the Buddha's teachings, exemplified by the virtues of the Buddha, such as compassion and generosity.
- **Life Skills:** Effective ways to manage life such as managing negative emotions, developing good friendships and being mindful.

How Will My Child Benefit?

Buddhist SRE teachers are reminded to remain "grounded" in their own Buddhist practice, because teaching by example is always more effective. But even more convincing, are the comments noted by our SRE teachers directly from **students**:

"Buddhism is about understanding others." (year 3)

"I asked everyone to give money to charity instead of getting birthday presents and felt good about it." (year 2)

"I have learned ways to deal with anger." (year 5)

"Being mean sometimes makes you happy, but only for a short time, and then you feel bad. But when you are kind, you get a good feeling that lasts much longer." (year 4)

"I have learned how to be relaxed and always trust yourself in peace, how to be calm." (year 3)

"I have learned how to rest my mind." (year 1)

"Buddhism is about peace in your life." (year 3)

Further Information

More information is available from the SRE Support Team at the Buddhist Council of New South Wales.

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