

# Overseas Teacher Exchange Policy

## 1.0 Preamble

The Catholic Education Office supports overseas teacher exchange programs for the purposes of teacher professional renewal. The exchange offers teachers an opportunity to experience different school environments, life in a different community and a chance for personal and professional renewal.

It is important that in arranging overseas teacher exchange that regard is had to the teaching, personal and social requirements of the individual and the exchange partner. Clear communication and thorough preparation are required by all parties to ensure that work and living conditions are clearly understood and agreed, and professional standards and requirements known and adhered to.

## 2.0 Definitions

**Host Authority:** The Catholic Education Office Diocese of Wollongong (CEO Wollongong) is the host authority for an overseas teacher on exchange in one of the Diocesan systemic schools.

**Employing Authority:** The organisation with which the employee has their ongoing contract of employment. i.e. in the case of an overseas teacher, the employing authority is their overseas employer.

**The agency:** The third party organisation who brokers the teacher exchange. In the majority of cases, the Independent Education Union (IEU) is the chief agent for overseas teacher exchange in Australia.

## 3.0 General

- 3.1. Approval for the exchange of teachers will be given by the Head of Employee Services, but only after consultation with the relevant Head of School Services, and the Principal concerned.
- 3.2. In the case of overseas exchange, discussions with the Principal must occur twelve months prior to the exchange. The Principal in turn will inform the Head of Employee Services. All arrangements and agreements must be finalised at least six months before exchange teaching begins. Normally, in the Wollongong Diocese, this will be by 31 July, prior to the next teaching year.

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- 3.3. Once an application is received and before the arrangement is confirmed, Employee Services will contact the overseas teacher to ascertain their suitability for the exchange. Consideration will be given to the relevant teaching qualifications, experience with school students and acceptability and suitability of the foreign teacher to assume the teaching load of the exchange partner. Regard will also be had to the personal circumstances of the overseas teacher as relevant to the possibility of the exchange breaking down. Should questions of suitability arise the host authority may request the consent of the overseas teacher to access relevant reports or materials.

The Principal should also contact the overseas teacher as part of the approval process to determine whether the overseas teacher is likely to make a positive contribution to the school community during the period of the exchange.

The overseas employee is not an employee of the Catholic Education Office, but is an external contractor, where the contract is between the Australian agent and the overseas employer.

- 3.4 The agent is to provide all executed forms for the overseas teacher to the CEO Wollongong. The agency is to brief fully the Catholic Education Office and the Principal of the Wollongong Diocese

All forms must be endorsed by Employee Services and the Principal before the exchange can proceed. The following must be provided:

*3.4.1 Child Protection Declarations –*

Protection of Children Disclosure.

Prohibited Employment Declaration (PED).

The agency is to ensure that all child protection declaration forms are sent to CCER and copies to the CEO Wollongong. Child protection checks are completed by CCER and the police for the foreign teacher.

*3.4.2 Teacher Exchange Agreement including:*

Teacher's profile page.

Medical Certificate.

*3.4.3 Application Form:*

The exchange agent is to complete the exchange application form. The overseas principal / school system is to finalise acceptance letter and references.

*3.4.5 Notification of Sick Leave of the Overseas Teacher:*

This must be forwarded to the CEO / IEU at the appropriate time. Exchange teachers are entitled to their current sick leave and accumulated leave, and they are paid by their employing authority. At the end of the exchange year, the host employer must complete a sick leave notification form and forward it to the authorised employer.

The pay of a replacement teacher is met by the host authority for the first 15 days.

For leave in excess of 15 days the salary costs would be covered by the teacher's employing authority.

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## **4.0. Catholic Education Approved Leave**

The Diocesan teacher must make application for leave for the period of the exchange. An employee who is on an authorised overseas teacher exchange is granted approved leave with pay for the period of the engagement until the engagement is concluded, either by the passage of time or by mutual termination. The CEO employee continues to be paid by the Catholic Education Office Wollongong. Tax is determined by the Australian Tax Department.

## **5.0. Miscellaneous Processes**

It is the responsibility of the exchange partners to finalise personal arrangements pursuant to the exchange:

- 5.1. The use of one's car, gas, electricity, house and household appliances are by mutual agreement.
- 5.2. Travel insurance should be taken out to cover medical expenses.
- 5.3. Support personnel need to be arranged before departure.

## **6.0 Breakdown of the Exchange**

The specific conditions regarding the exchange must be understood. Generally the following conditions apply:

- 6.1 If one of the exchange teachers requires long term sick leave, the arrangement will be declared null and void.
- 6.2 If one of the exchange teachers cannot complete the exchange on compassionate grounds, the arrangement will be declared null and void.
- 6.3 If a teacher wishes to return home on non-compassionate grounds or has demonstrated professional incompetence, the exchange partner will be given the choice of remaining in the exchange position, including the accommodation. The teacher returning on non-compassionate grounds would be on leave without pay and the employing authority of that teacher would be required to finance a replacement teacher in the overseas school for the remainder of the exchange period. In circumstances where the engagement has been terminated by the overseas employer, the employee will provide a full explanation of the termination reasons to the Catholic Education Office.
- 6.4 The Catholic Education Office will advise the overseas employer of any allegations of misconduct by the overseas teacher. The CEO may initiate its own investigation should circumstances require.