BACKGROUND
The Department of Education’s Religious Education Policy states that ‘the curriculum and teaching in public schools is not to promote any particular religious practice, denomination or sect.’ The policy further requires the school Principal to consult the School Council regarding the implementation of Special Religious Education and ‘a general policy concerning the use of prayers, songs and other material based on religious, spiritual or moral values to be used in a school activity as part of General Religious Education’.

DEFINITIONS
General Religious Education (GRE) is about the major forms of religious thought and expression characteristic of Australian society and other societies and may be provided in public schools as part of the general school curriculum. The focus of General Religious Education (GRE) is on the sociological based study of various religious traditions rather than on the encouragement of personal commitment by students to a particular set of religious beliefs.

Special Religious Education (SRE) is based on distinctive religious tenets or beliefs and may be provided in public schools by persons authorized to deliver SRE.

POLICY STATEMENT
North Perth Primary School acknowledges and values the diversity of our school community, including the cultural and religious backgrounds of our students. Following consultation with the school community, School Council resolved that:

1. Special Religious Education will not be offered.
2. Prayers and religious songs will not be used in assemblies.
3. As we are a school that upholds the values of respect and inclusivity, a variety of religious and cultural events will be acknowledged during the school year. Teachers may integrate activities associated with these events as part of GRE within the curriculum or as optional activities.

EXEMPTIONS
The school aims to minimize or avoid circumstances where parents feel compelled to seek to exempt their child from attendance at classes or events because of religious content or values.

Parents may request in writing for their child to be exempted from participating in an activity based on religious, spiritual or moral values on the grounds of conscientious objection.

Notification to the Principal must include the child’s name, activity to be exempted and reason for request.

The Principal will on receipt of the exemption notification from a parent

• seek clarification regarding the request (if required);

• provide advice to all staff involved with the student;
• maintain a record of all notifications received from parents/guardians;
• instruct teaching staff to provide an appropriate learning program for students withdrawn from particular activities;

REVIEW
Any concerns in relation to the implementation of this policy should be raised in writing with School Council.

This policy will be reviewed within three years of initial implementation.

REFERENCES
• Religious Education Policy, Department of Education: www.det.wa.edu.au/policies
• Religious Education Website, Department of Education:
  http://det.wa.edu.au/curriculumsupport/religiouseducation/detcms/portal/

Policy developed in 2014
Endorsed by School Council on … (DATE)