

Frequently Asked Question regarding Schools Work
**SCHOOL CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP (SCF)
IN OUR SCHOOLS**

PRELIMINARIES

1. This document addresses various frequently asked questions about the SCF and schools work. The list of questions in this document is not exhaustive, and mainly focus on issues related to the formation and continual existence of SCF in our schools.
2. It is important to understand that there are no standard answers and solutions as the situations and people involved can be very different. Schools work remains a delicate and evolving ministry with diverse challenges arising at various times.
3. While not explicitly mentioned, it is obvious that prayer and dependence on the Lord form an important part of the overall effort to help teachers and students to be the salt and light of God in their schools.

Q1. What is a School Christian Fellowship (SCF)?

What are the "provisions or rationale" for the SCF to exist in our schools?

A School Christian Fellowship is basically a society or club in the school for Christian students to have fellowship and to learn more about their faith. It functions under guidelines and regulations set by the Ministry of Education.

Such religious clubs or societies are allowed to be formed and they function in line with the spirit of our Falsafah Pendidikan Kebangsaan (National Philosophy of Education) which emphasizes intellectual, emotional, physical, as well as spiritual development; the *Rukun Negara* which upholds belief in God, and above all, our Constitution which provides the freedom for citizens to practice one's religion.

The SCF exists fundamentally for the edification of Christian students in the school. This means that our main aim and purpose is to help Christian students to know and to love God, to love their neighbours and to love His Word. As students are guided to do so, this will lead them to live good and Godly lives, resulting in a strong Christian testimony in the school and eventually in society.

Q2. What is the 18 March 2011 circular from the Ministry of Education (MOE), and how does it affect the SCF?

This circular, current in force (please refer to the circular on) provides for the setting up of religious clubs or societies in Government schools as well as set out conditions under which they can be formed. The authorisation to set up such societies has been passed from the State Education Director to the School Head. There are conditions attached which need to be complied with. If these conditions are complied with, then the School Head should allow

for such a society to be set up. If she does not, then she must give the reasons for rejection in writing. Follow-up action or an appeal can then be taken. The circular makes the whole process transparent and orderly instead of vague and arbitrary like before.

Q3. What are the procedures involved in the application to start a SCF in a school?

Please refer to the flow-chart on page..... The initiative could be taken by a Christian teacher who is willing to be the CF advisor, or a concerned parent or Christian students interested to get together to learn more about their faith.

- Identify a Christian Teacher who is willing to be the CF advisor
- Identify at least 15 students/parents who would support such a CF to be formed.
- Get the necessary support documents ready – the constitution, “surat naungan”, the proposed program/activity for the CF, etc. (Samples are provided.)
- Write the application letter.
- Get the parents (representative) to sign the application letter and send the application to the School Head either through the teacher or parents. (Make supplementary copies of all documents to facilitate follow-up action if necessary).
- If there is no response, follow-up with a reminder after 2 weeks.
- If there is still no response, follow-up with an appeal and carbon copy this appeal to the State Director of Education (Pengarah).
- Contact SU or related organisations for advice and help.

Q4. I am a pastor/church leader. How can I be involved in helping to start school Christian Fellowships?

While a pastor or church leader has no *locus standi* with the school, he/she can encourage members in the congregation who are stakeholders to do so and mobilise prayer support for the initiative. Identify teachers and parents who have children in schools to support the Christian Fellowship there.

Q5. If an application to start an SCF is rejected, what could be the next course of action?

The rejection should be in writing with reasons, so that they can be answered explicitly or conditions complied with (if they were not). Meet the School Principal to seek clarification for the rejection. If no written reasons are given a formal request can be made to the Principal with a copy to the State Education Director. It is advisable to do all these in writing.

Another avenue is through the support of the PIBG. Parents and in particular those in the PIBG Exco can appeal to the Principal on behalf of the Christian parents and students.

Finally, if there is no satisfactory response bring the issue to the various Christian organizations – CFM, NECF, MCSC – which can bring it up to the right authorities. It is important to have records of all correspondence and communications.

Q6. If an existing official SCF faces the possibility of being closed down or is closed down, what can the parents, teachers and/or students do?

First of all, it is important to note that the current directive/policy specifically allows for existing SCFs to continue functioning in the schools. As such, technically such a scenario should not arise. Just make sure that the affairs of the SCF are in order.

In the event that an existing SCF is asked to stop functioning or is closed down, the first step by the parents, teachers and/or students concerned is to find out the reasons. Meet the School Principal or the Penolong Kanan Ko-Kurikulum (PK KoKo) to seek a clear understanding of the situation at hand. It is important to clarify who has given the instruction to close, and why. In almost all cases, such instructions are verbal. Request for a written copy of the instruction so that follow-up action can be taken. If there is none the CF advisor or parents should write in officially to ask for one. If the administration does not comply, the aggrieved parents can make the request in writing and copy this to the State Education Director. If there is still no response, follow this up by contacting other relevant Christian organizations. Continue to press for the cancellation of such an order which contradicts MOE/national policy.

Q7. My SCF is an existing official group. I have been asked to register the SCF again. What should I do?

An existing official SCF need not be registered again. To ask for registration is tantamount to closing the existing one down. It may be good to find out what the Principal or the person asking for the re-registration really wants. Is it a fresh application or to put certain matters regarding the club/society in order. Perhaps the school wants a copy of the SCF Constitution, or the SCF annual report, or statements of account, etc. If so, it is proper that we provide the school with these required documents.

Such instruction is usually passed on through the SCF advisor who is put in a very difficult situation. The Registration or re-registration requires the signatures of parents who can then ask (in writing) why this is necessary as the SCF has been functioning well and there is no such requirement in the 18 March 2011 circular.

This document can be downloaded from www.su.org.my and www.tcfmy.org