# Teacher responsibilities guide

A guide for teachers and school leaders in Northern Territory Government schools



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## 1. Overview

The Department of Education and Training (the department) is committed to supporting the achievement of student outcomes and recognises that the quality of teacher practice is central to school performance and the achievement of those outcomes.

The Teacher responsibilities guide (TRG) outlines expectations and a shared understanding of teacher workload allocation and management for employees in Northern Territory (NT) Government schools, covered by the Northern Territory Public Sector Educators' 2024 – 2027 Enterprise Agreement (the Educators' EA). The TRG clarifies teacher responsibilities and the way in which they work with teaching colleagues; and aims to help teachers meet the needs of students, work with parents or caregivers and other employees, and liaise with the public. The provisions of the Educators' EA prevail if there is ambiguity.

Teachers are responsible for providing a quality educational experience to ensure every child in the NT has the best start in life and a bright future through early learning and school education. Teachers undertake this responsibility within the framework of the law and the lawful instructions of their employer.

Teachers are expected to meet the high standards of professional and ethical behaviour required by the department, the Teacher Registration Board of the Northern Territory (TRB NT), parents and the public. The TRB NT formalises teaching practice requirements through the Code of Ethics for Northern Territory Teachers and the Protective Practices Guideline: For teachers in their interactions with children and young people. Teachers in the NT must be able meet the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) Australian Professional Standards for Teachers, which includes an ongoing commitment to professional learning to maintain currency of practice.

Principals are responsible for the educational outcomes of their school. School leadership teams are best placed to know their work environment and decide how to deploy teachers at an operational level to deliver quality education. Principals will work together with their leadership teams, teachers and other school staff in a collaborative and consultative manner, enabling employees to actively contribute to the decision-making process to achieve outcomes aligned to the operational needs of the school.

Teachers should have the opportunity to perform all of their duties within a reasonable timeframe, and students should have ready access to their teachers within the ordinary hours of duty. To achieve this and to safeguard the wellbeing of teachers, work will be distributed as equitably and practicable across all teachers in a school, providing fair and reasonable workloads.

# 2. Hours of work

#### 2.1. Ordinary hours of duty

The ordinary hours of duty for a full-time teacher is 36 hours and 45 minutes per week, consistent with other Northern Territory Public Sector employees.

The agreed hours of duty for a part-time teacher may be no less than 0.2 Full-Time Equivalent (FTE), equivalent to 14 hours and 42 minutes; or greater than 0.8 FTE, equivalent to 58 hours and 48 minutes, of the full-time hours of duty over a fortnightly period, as per Determination 9 of 2012.

Where a teacher is required to travel between worksites, adequate time will be allowed for the travel and associated logistical requirements. Such travel may on occasion be outside the normal workday. However,

where travel is regularly outside the normal workday, the principal and teacher will negotiate a fair time in lieu arrangement.

Where an absence from the workplace does not interfere with professional obligations, principals should determine the most appropriate course of action, which may include a flexible approach to working hours to assist with balancing personal and work commitments, subject to operational requirements. Accessing leave entitlements may be appropriate in some instances, which should be recorded and approved through myHR.

Example: Personal appointments should be prioritised outside school hours. If a teacher cannot avoid a personal appointment being scheduled to overlap with school hours, the appointment should be scheduled when there is no requirement to supervise students, for example non-contact time, to ensure that it does not interfere with their professional obligations or disrupt student learning. To make up for the time missed, the teacher adjusts their workday to complete required duties in a timely manner. This arrangement should not require a leave application if the time missed can be made up as described; however, the teacher must receive prior approval and record their movements during the workday for workplace, health and safety purposes through any internal sign in - out procedure.

#### 2.2. Meal break

A teacher's day is required to include a meal break of at least 30 minutes without the need to supervise students, noting that a level of duty of care is still owed to those around them. This break is separate from normal release time but arrangements can vary from school to school taking into account operational requirements.

If necessary, the 30 minutes may be spread over more than one break in consultation with the teacher, or a teacher may choose to do this. The lunch break does not necessarily need to coincide with the student lunch break.

Where professional responsibilities include supervision of students eating or yard duty, these activities will be taken into consideration by the principal in the allocation of teacher work.

#### 2.3. Student supervision

Principals will ensure that the school's work-day schedule, including the span of hours when active duty supervision is available at the school, is communicated to all employees, other staff and the school community.

Notwithstanding arrangements to roster teachers on duty before school, it is expected that teaching staff will arrive at school at least ten minutes prior to morning sessions.

Principals are required to advise all parents and teachers of the time when teachers are on active duty at the school to supervise students, noting that student supervision forms part of the allocation of teacher responsibilities during, for example face to face teaching, or as assigned as part of other professional responsibilities. Parents and caregivers must be aware that if students are on the school grounds outside of these times, supervision is not provided.

Regular reminders should be issued to parents to mitigate the risk of injury to a student on school grounds without adequate supervision.

#### 2.4. Recreation leave and stand down

Recreation leave occurs on and from the first working day succeeding the last day on which the employee's school is open in a calendar year, and the period of leave will be to the limit of available recreation leave credits or to the day preceding the first day on which the school is open in the next calendar year. Recreation leave typically occurs over December and January.

Stand down is any period when schools are otherwise not open to accept students; and employees are not required to attend the workplace; or have not been directed to use their accrued recreation leave; subject to the needs of the employer with regards to professional development, student free days and other activities that would require employees to attend the workplace.

Stand down typically occurs in April, June, July and October each year. During stand down, an employee on school-based conditions will receive payment of stand down salary provided the employee has employment that extends into the following school term and subject to the following:

- Any recreation leave remaining from the end of year school break must be utilised prior to stand down salary being paid.
- The payment of stand down salary will not apply where periods of paid leave are taken immediately before and after stand down. The employee will continue on the form of leave throughout stand down.
- Employees on any form of leave without pay, such as parental leave personal leave, equal to or greater than 15 working days in the preceding term will receive a pro-rata payment, calculated in accordance with the number of hours worked per week in that term.
- The payment of stand down salary shall not apply in cases where personal leave is appropriate.

Stand down is not equivalent to recreation leave and payment of entitlements may vary between employees depending on their personal circumstances.

It is strongly encouraged that employees speak to their principal or contact Workforce Relations Support for further information.

## 3. Allocation of teacher work

#### 3.1. Overview

Consideration should distinguish between work that can be required of a teacher and work that a teacher may choose to undertake.

Principals will first allocate classes to teachers in accordance with the parameters of the Educators' EA.

Where a teacher undertakes an increase of professional duties or activities involving voluntary or discretionary effort, the principal may reduce the face to face teaching component. Similarly, where a teacher has a lower face to face teaching component, for example no home group, reasonable additional duties may be assigned by the principal, which may include pastoral care.

Activities associated with the supervision or management of other staff may be undertaken as part of other professional responsibilities, for example performance evaluation and reporting. Principals will have consideration towards these activities in the allocation of teacher work.

Three sections are to be considered in determining the distribution of work:

• face to face teaching

- non-contact time
- professional duties.

### 3.2. Face to face teaching

Face to face teaching includes timetabled classes, relief classes, Vocational Education and Training (VET) delivery or supervision, pastoral care sessions and assemblies, including lessons delivered through virtual learning, tutoring or special needs support.

In determining actual face to face teaching in the school, the principal consults with teachers at the school. A teacher's face to face commitment will not exceed the maximum instruction time specified, except with the teacher's agreement.

Position	Stage of Schooling	Teaching time		
		2024-2025	2026	2027
Classroom teacher	Preschool and Primary years <sup>*</sup>	23h 40min	22h 40min	22h 10min
	Middle and Senior years	21h 20min	21h 20min	21h 20min
Senior teacher - 0.75 of a	Primary years	17h 30min		
classroom teacher load	Middle and Senior years	16h	16h	16h
Assistant principal -	Primary years	11h 40min		
0.5 of a classroom teacher load	Middle and Senior years	10h 40min	10h 40m	10h 40m
*face to face teaching time for preschool and primary years also apply to teachers with full time teaching loads performing duties in special schools and their annexes; intensive English units; special education				

The maximum face to face teaching time per week for teachers are as follows:

units, and special and specific purpose units and classes. Face to face teaching time may be averaged over a fortnightly period for increased flexibility. In determining the face to face teaching time of a teacher employed part-time, the arrangements outlined in

this section apply on a pro-rata basis. Pro-rata face to face teaching time example:

Full Time Equivalent x maximum teaching time = Pro-rata teaching time 0.4 (14 hours and 25 minutes) x 21.33 (21 hours and 20 minutes) = 8.532 (8 hours and 31 minutes)

Principals need to consider the face to face teaching commitments of all teachers. Principals can allocate a full range of duties and responsibilities, as the need arises, provided that the overall work commitment is neither excessive or unreasonable. It is acknowledged that principals may also conduct face to face teaching.

The allocation of relief classes is agreed at the school level as part of the consultation on the allocation of teacher work. A range of options are available and the option that is most appropriate to the context should be implemented to ensure that all teachers access the non-contact time to which they are entitled. Options include having a designated non-contact teacher, roving relief, engagement of relief teachers, internal relief, and timetabling off of teachers.

Relief classes should be allocated in an equitable manner and in the context of the total work of the teacher. Casual relief teachers should be engaged by the school where it is likely that the allocation of a relief class will result in a teacher being required to undertake an unreasonable or excessive workload.

Splitting of classes to cover teacher absences is to be avoided except as a last resort.

#### 3.3. Non-contact time

In addition to face to face teaching time, teachers are allocated non-contact time for the purpose of preparation, planning either individually or with other colleagues, assessment and correction of a teacher's allocated classes and other professional responsibilities. Non-contact time enables teachers to meet their responsibility to apply professional knowledge and achieve the professional practice requirements under the AITSL Professional Teacher Standards.

In all circumstances a teacher's face to face teaching hours must not exceed the maximum allocation. If a teacher's assigned classes operate for longer than the sum of maximum face to face teaching times and prescribed non-contact time allocations, non-contact time should be increased accordingly. Non-contact time is to be allocated in a minimum 30-minute block, which is intended to occur within the school day.

		Non-Contact Time Per Week		
Position	Stage of Schooling	2024- 2025	2026	2027
Classroom teacher	Preschool and Primary years*	3h	4h	4h 30min
	Middle and Senior years	5h 20min	5h 20min	5h 20min
Aboriginal team teacher		2h	2h	2h
Teaching principal5h5h5h 20min20min20min20min20min		5h 20min		
*non-contact time for preschool and primary years also apply to teachers with full time teaching loads performing duties in special schools and their annexes; intensive English units; special education units, and special and specific purpose units and classes.				

Allocated non-contact time per week is as follows:

Graduate teachers in their first year of teaching will have an additional hour of non-contact time per week.

Non-contact time for Senior Teachers is allocated pro-rata to their allocated teaching time.

Principals with allocated teaching time are provided with the equivalent of one day per week without classes to meet administrative responsibilities.

Teachers who are assigned to be a mentor for a graduate teacher will have up to 5 corresponding hours of non-contact time per semester, wherever possible, to facilitate graduate teachers meeting with their mentors.

Where an employee does not receive their full non-contact time over the course of a fortnight, due to taking on extra classes or a relief teacher not being available, the employee may elect to either:

- receive payment at their hourly rate in lieu of not receiving an equivalent amount of non-contact time or
- take the equivalent amount of non-contact time at a later agreed date.

#### 3.4. Professional duties

In addition to face to face teaching, teachers have a range of other professional responsibilities. The ordinary hours of duty of a teacher include the maximum face to face teaching time, non-contact time for their stage of schooling, and a further 10 hours and 5 minutes. Teachers may use professional judgment, where flexibility exists, to undertake some of their duties outside of the normal school day.

Professional duties include, but are not limited to:

- behaviour management, including documentation and follow up, and implementation of relevant policies
- online learning management system documentation, data entry and chronical entries
- purchase orders, budgets and administrative work around funding for learning activities
- excursion planning, associated forms and paperwork, and risk assessments
- conferencing and providing additional support to students outside of class time
- mentoring
- lesson observations and feedback cycles
- pastoral care and wellbeing follow up
- Professional Growth Plan (PGP) meetings and continuous improvement aligned with Annual School Improvement Plan (ASIP), probation meetings, performance planning and management as may be required for individuals.
- yard duties, usually not more than 60 minutes per week in total in a standard primary, middle and senior setting.
- activities associated with student assessment and development of programs of work
- development and evaluation of curriculum and assessment material
- development and evaluation of programs in conjunction with colleagues aligned with the school's educational priorities
- professional learning activities in which the teacher is involved, and discussions with the principal or supervisor
- scheduled professional learning and development
- professional reading and research for professional learning activities
- development of resource materials for class or school use taking into account the availability of resources and the location of the teacher to the resources.

Principals have the responsibility for leading and managing schools and may allocate specific professional responsibilities to teachers. In the distribution of professional duties, as far as practicable, the following factors will be taken into account:

• equitable distribution of other duties within the school

- relative importance of the various duties to be undertaken
- time required to perform the duty
- range and frequency of tasks to be performed
- classification, qualifications, training and experience of the teacher
- the particular context and needs of the school, noting that allocations in a very remote school could be quite different to those in an urban school.

#### 3.5. Class sizes

It is recognised that a teacher's overall work commitment is influenced by a number of factors including:

- class size
- curriculum mix, the year level and subjects taught
- range of ability and age of students
- resources available, including in-class support.

In allocating work equitably across all teachers in a school, the principal will consider areas of learning which may require specific attention. Where there is a safety issue, the teacher has an obligation to raise it with the principal in the first instance.

Class sizes will not exceed 27 students. Smaller class sizes apply to particular cohorts and settings:

- Preschool classes need to work within the ratio requirements of the National Quality Standards for early childhood education and care and have no more than 22 enrolled students per teacher.
- Transition classes an average of 25 students.
- Year 11 and 12 an average of 25 students per class.
- Intensive English classes will have an average of 16 students.
- Special education centre and satellite classrooms will have classroom maximums based on students' needs and will ensure the workplace health and safety of students, teachers and classroom support staff.

Average class sizes refer to the average of the total number of students enrolled within a particular school in the relevant year level, cohort or setting.

There may be circumstances where additional students in excess of the class size specified above, need to be placed temporarily on a class roll. Where this is necessary, the principal will consult with the teacher and agree in writing to how any additional workload will be managed. This may include but is not limited to:

- additional classroom support
- increase in non-contact time
- reduction in other professional duties.

If, after four weeks, class enrolments continue to exceed the class size limit specified above, this agreement will be reviewed.

## 3.6. Voluntary and discretionary effort

Voluntary or discretionary effort includes school camps, concerts, excursions, fundraising, community events, and activities with students before and after school such as breakfast programs, after school sport and supporting Aboriginal team teachers undertaking accredited study in the field of education.

When considering allocation of work to teachers, principals should distinguish between work that is required of a teacher and work that a teacher may choose to undertake.

The sharing of voluntary or discretionary effort should be encouraged and such effort should be considered when determining the overall allocation of teacher work.

Teachers may volunteer to participate in the following activities:

- supervision and support for pre-service teachers notwithstanding that they may enter into separate financial arrangements with universities to mentor and assist these preservice teachers
- activities reasonably designed to foster school and community relationships
- reasonable additional communication with parents, which may include teachers meeting with parents off the school grounds where appropriate
- additional support for students with disabilities and students at risk, which excludes teachers employed for the purpose of providing support for students with disabilities and students at risk
- outside school and out of hours student activities such as excursions and camps
- providing support to Aboriginal team teachers undertaking accredited study in the field of education.

#### 3.7. Meetings

The timing and frequency of regular meetings need to be determined at the school level in a consultative manner.

Reasonable notice should be provided of meetings and other activities at which teacher attendance is required. Meeting dates should be included on the school calendar at the start of the year wherever possible.

It is recognised that meetings may sometimes be scheduled outside the normal workday. However, it is also recognised that teachers must attend to personal obligations, and it is in the school community's interest that they achieve an appropriate worklife balance.

When planning personal commitments, teachers are expected to take account of their professional obligations. Principals are also expected to consider professional and personal obligations in scheduling meetings and other activities at which teacher attendance is required.

Meetings may include but are not limited to:

- meetings with parents and carers or line managers
- general staff meetings, which would not usually exceed one hour in total per week within the workday
- parent and teacher evenings, occurring once per semester
- essential collaborative planning.

It is acknowledged that some flexibility may be required from time to time. If compulsory meetings are to be increased in duration or number, there needs to be a suitable process for employee consultation and negotiation of appropriate offset arrangements. The need for extraordinary meetings may also arise from time to time, for example due to critical incidents.

## 4. Workloads

Employees should be able to achieve an appropriate balance between their work and personal lives:

- contributes toward healthy and productive workplaces
- helps build a positive morale in the workplace
- assists in strengthening an individual's social and family relationships.

In accordance with the Educators' EA, principals will:

- ensure employees have sufficient and appropriate resources to undertake their jobs
- ensure the tasks allocated to employees can reasonably be performed in the hours for which they are employed, including reasonable additional hours
- monitor employee workloads, work patterns, priorities, staffing classifications, use of worklife balance arrangements, and any other relevant indicators within the workplace
- implement strategies to ensure workloads remain reasonable
- monitor vacant positions and fill vacancies in a timely manner
- consult with employees and their nominated representatives over workload issues.

## 5. Resolving teacher workload issues

The Educators' EA endorses the principle that employees should be able to achieve an appropriate balance between their work and personal lives, and confirms that department management, teachers and teacher representatives play a positive role in ensuring that workloads are reasonable.

The parties to the Educators' EA recognise that there may be unavoidable peak work periods where teacher workloads increase. However, this is the exception rather than the norm.

It is expected that every effort will be made to resolve issues in relation to the allocation of teacher work at the local level, and that local resolution will be achieved if the process has involved genuine consultation and communication based on mutual respect.

In the event of a dispute, teachers should endeavor to resolve the matter internally as outlined in the Dispute settling procedures in the Educators' EA.

Where matters relating to allocation of teacher work cannot be resolved internally, an aggrieved employee may request a review of their treatment in employment in accordance with Employment Instruction Number 8 – Internal agency complaints and section 59 grievance reviews. An employee may nominate to have a union representative represent them in a dispute or significant workplace matter and make representations on their behalf.

## 6. Consultation

It is expected that principals will consult with employees on matters that affect them to an extent that is proportional to the issue and the impact that it has on both the employee and the school.

Management of change provisions under the Educators' EA apply where major change or a change to the regular roster pattern or ordinary hours of work is proposed.

Consultation is a process which enables opportunities for employees to put forward views and suggestions which are genuinely considered, with final decisions outlining how those views were taken into account.

Where a number of options are available, effective consultation is in everyone's interests so that employees are able to contribute and ensure that the best outcome is achieved.

Consultation should not be so extensive that it impinges on a principal's capacity to manage the daily operations of the school necessary to deliver the expected educational services to the school community.

# 7. Definitions

Term	Definition		
Aboriginal team teacher	An employee of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent who is employed in a team-teaching capacity in an education institution, in a school, or a Homeland Learning Centre, in all regions and locations across the Northern Territory.		
Authorised persons	An employee that holds a current certificate of authorisation issued in accordance with part 5 of the <i>Teacher Registration (Northern Territory)</i> Act 2004		
Child	A child of a person, including a child by birth, an adopted child or stepchild. It does not matter whether the child is an adult.		
Classroom teacher	An employee with a recognised teaching qualification.		
Employee	<ul> <li>An employee or employees of the Northern Territory Public Sector employed under the Public Sector Employment and Management Act 1993 and holding a classification as specified in Schedule 4 of the Educators' EA. These are: <ul> <li>Aboriginal team teachers</li> <li>authorised persons</li> <li>classroom teachers</li> <li>senior teachers</li> <li>principals.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		
Graduate teacher	A teacher who is in their first year of teaching after attaining their teaching qualifications.		
Parent	A child's father, mother or any other person who has parental responsibility for that child, including a person who is regarded as a parent of the child under Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander customary law or tradition. The definition of a parent does not include a person standing in place of the parent on a temporary basis.		
Principal	An employee who is classified PLO1 to PLO7 whose duties primarily include the strategic and operational leadership of a NT Government school.		
Relief teacher	A teacher employed on a casual basis, who is engaged as and when required to perform general teaching duties.		

Term	Definition
Senior teacher	A teacher in a senior leadership position which includes educational administrative duties.;
Stand down	Periods of non-term time when schools are otherwise not open to accept students; and employees are not required to attend the workplace; or have not been directed to use their accrued recreation leave; subject to the needs of the employer with regards to professional development, student free days and other activities that would require employees to attend the workplace.
Teachers	Authorised persons; classroom teachers, CT levels 1 to 9; and senior teachers, ST levels 1 to 8 who perform teaching and learning support and education related tasks in schools and education offices.
Teaching principal	Principal who has timetabled lessons in which students are instructed.

# 8. Related legislation and resources

#### 8.1. Legislation

Public Sector Employment and Management Act 1993 - <u>https://legislation.nt.gov.au/en/Legislation/PUBLIC-</u> SECTOR-EMPLOYMENT-AND-MANAGEMENT-ACT-1993

Teacher Registration (Northern Territory) Act 2004 - <u>https://legislation.nt.gov.au/en/Legislation/TEACHER-</u> <u>REGISTRATION-NORTHERN-TERRITORY-ACT-2004</u>

#### 8.2. Resources

Northern Territory Public Sector Educators' 2024 – 2027 Enterprise Agreement - <u>Northern Territory</u> <u>Public Sector Educators 2024-2027 Enterprise Agreement</u>.

Australian Children's Education and Care Authority – National Quality Standard - <u>https://www.acecqa.gov.au/nqf/national-quality-standard</u>

Code of Ethics for Northern Territory Teachers https://www.trb.nt.gov.au/system/files/uploads/files/2019/CodeOfEthics.pdf

Protective Practices Guideline: For teachers in their interactions with children and young people https://www.trb.nt.gov.au/system/files/uploads/files/2020/Protective%20Practices%20Guideline%20%2 Ofor%20Teachers.pdf

Australian Professional Standards for Teachers - https://www.aitsl.edu.au/standards

Determination 9 of 2012 - https://ocpe.nt.gov.au/\_\_data/assets/pdf\_file/0003/245325/2012-9.pdf

Employment Instruction Number 8 – Internal agency complaints and section 59 grievance reviews - <u>https://ocpe.nt.gov.au/\_\_data/assets/pdf\_file/0007/379321/ei-8-internal-agency-complaints-and-</u> <u>section-59-grievance-reviews.pdf</u>

# 9. Further information

If you require further information or assistance or wish to clarify any matters related to the management of teacher work, please contact the Department of Corporate and Digital Development:

Workforce services through either <u>HR Services portal</u>, phone 1800 225 547 or email - <u>Workforce Services</u>

Acronyms	Full form
AITSL	Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership
FTE	Full Time Equivalent
NT	Northern Territory
TRB NT	Teacher Registration Board Northern Territory
TRG	Teacher Responsibilities Guide
VET	Vocational Education and Training

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