

# School uniforms and dress codes – policy

This document should be read in conjunction with the Sun safety in schools policy.

## Policy

All Northern Territory Government schools must develop a school based dress code in line with this policy and in consultation with the school community.

It is compulsory for all students from transition to year 9 (T-9), enrolled in a Northern Territory Government school, to wear a school uniform whilst attending school and official school activities, both during and after school hours. Schools are required to offer uniform options that are similar for all students and include shorts and long trousers for girls, available as everyday wear.

Northern Territory Government senior school and preschool students are required to adhere to their school's dress code. All school dress codes must align with the Sun safety in schools policy. Whilst school uniforms are not compulsory for senior schools and preschools, principals are encouraged to consult with their school community regarding any proposed implementation of a school uniform.

A school dress code must consider:

- health and safety requirements, such as:
  - promoting sun smart behaviour
  - enclosed footwear and appropriate clothing for educational activities such as physical education, science and technical studies
- the cost to parents of providing compulsory uniforms.

A template is available for schools to use to guide the development of school dress codes. School dress codes must be communicated and readily available to staff, parents and students.

## Compulsory school uniform items

Compulsory school uniform items must be clearly described in the school's dress code.

If a student is unable to partake in educational activities due to health and safety concerns because of inappropriate clothing or footwear, alternative educational activities must be provided.

Primary and middle schools are encouraged to seek official SunSmart status and recognition through the Cancer Council National SunSmart Schools Program. When prescribing a school uniform or dress code, consideration should also be given to the Cancer Councils' advice regarding sun protective clothing.

## Optional school uniform items

Optional school uniform items must be clearly described in dress codes. This may include items such as, jumpers, hair ties or sport shirts.

## Support measures to assist parents in purchasing uniforms

Principals must implement support measures to assist parents in purchasing uniforms for their children. These measures may include offering second hand uniforms at a discounted price or allowing parents to pay for uniforms in instalments.

The Back to school payment scheme may also be used to pay for school uniform items.

## Non-compliance with school dress code

Principals must implement measures to manage student non-compliance with a dress code.

## Business need

The compulsory requirement for students to wear a uniform aims to promote a positive school identity and a safe, inclusive learning environment. The adoption of sun smart uniforms should be made in order to align with the department's Sun safety in schools policy.

## Scope

This policy applies to all Northern Territory Government schools, however compulsory school uniforms only apply to primary and middle school (T-9) students.

Distance learning schools and students are exempt from the requirements of this policy.

This policy does not apply to school staff.

## Roles and Responsibilities

### Principals

Principals are responsible for:

- developing, reviewing and communicating a dress code for their school, in consultation with their school communities
- implementing support measures to assist parents in purchasing uniforms for their children, as well as measures to manage non-compliance with a dress code
- ensuring that the compulsory school uniform aligns with the department's Sun safety in schools policy and SunSmart measures provided by the Cancer Council NT.

## Definitions

Term	Definition
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 customary law or tradition. The definition of a parent does not include a person standing in place of the parent on a temporary basis.
School communities	Principals, staff, students, school representative bodies, parents and community members with an interest in the efficient and successful operation of a school.

School uniform	Clothing that identifies a student as belonging to a particular school.
Sun Smart behaviour	<p>The understanding and practice of procedures which help to reduce the harmful risks associated with too much UV, including sunburn and skin cancer. Sun Smart behaviours include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sun protective hat: a wide brimmed hat that shades the head, face, neck and ears</li> <li>• sun protective uniform or clothing: includes cool, loose fitting clothing that covers as much skin as practical and has a densely woven fabric</li> <li>• sunscreen: SPF30 or higher broad-spectrum, water resistant sunscreen</li> <li>• sunglasses: wrap around style labelled AS1067</li> <li>• shade: built, natural or portable that creates densely shaded areas.</li> </ul>

## Related Legislation, policy and resources

### Legislation

- *Work Health and Safety (National Uniform Legislation) Act 2011* – <https://legislation.nt.gov.au/en/Legislation/WORK-HEALTH-AND-SAFETY-NATIONAL-UNIFORM-LEGISLATION-ACT-2011>

### Policy

- Sun safety in schools policy – <https://education.nt.gov.au/policies/health-safety/sun-safety>
- Complaints management in school policy and guidelines – <https://education.nt.gov.au/policies/complaints>

### Resources

- Back to school payment scheme – <https://nt.gov.au/learning/student-financial-help-and-scholarships/back-to-school-payment-scheme>
- Subsidised bus travel for NT Government primary and middle school students in school uniform – <https://nt.gov.au/learning/primary-and-secondary-students/getting-to-and-from-school>
- Cancer Council – National SunSmart Schools Program – <https://www.cancer.org.au/cancer-information/causes-and-prevention/sun-safety/be-sunsmart/sunsmart-in-schools>
- Cancer Council – Sun protective clothing – <https://www.cancer.org.au/cancer-information/causes-and-prevention/sun-safety/be-sunsmart/sun-protective-clothing>
- Cancer Council – SunSmart status and recognition for primary schools – <https://www.cancer.org.au/cancer-information/causes-and-prevention/sun-safety/be-sunsmart/sunsmart-in-schools>

Acronyms	Full form
AS	Australian Standard
NT	Northern Territory
SPF	Sun protection factor
UV	Ultraviolet

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3	October 2015	School Support Services	EDOC2015/24708
3.1	April 2016	Quality Systems and Support	EDOC2016/10999
4	October 2022	Quality Standards and Regulation – Operational Policy	Administrative amendments to align roles and responsibilities to the structural alignment in effect from 1 July 2022, including NTG template and minor formatting