

# Police in Schools

## Interim Guidelines

**Responsibility of:** Student Wellbeing and Inclusion

**Effective Date:** October 2018

**Target Audience:** School staff, students, families

**File:** 2015/288

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These guidelines are interim and will be reviewed and updated in early 2019 after the initial implementation of the program in Term 4 2018, following feedback from key stakeholders.

### 1. POLICY STATEMENT

Schools and police work collaboratively to establish strong and positive relationships with students, families, schools and school communities, and maintain safe and supportive school environments. Police officers are based in schools to assist students and their families to develop a stronger understanding of, and respect for, police by increasing trust and building healthy relationships.

The school based policing program is based on preventative policing which has the potential to produce positive long-term impacts on school and community safety.

The focus of the program is engagement of, and support for, students and families, particularly those transitioning into middle school or at risk of contact with the youth justice system. School based police officers may also carry out day to day police operational duties and law enforcement.

### 2. DEFINITIONS

**Community Engagement Police Officers (CEPO)** Experienced sworn police officers whose role is to mentor and support local community members to improve community safety in partnership with local police and other service providers. CEPOs predominately work at remote locations.

**Conflict of Interest** A situation in which an individual has competing interests or loyalties. These are often, but not exclusively, interests of public duty versus private interests.

**Criminal Offence** An offence (or crime) against the Territory. It is often called 'breaking the law'.

**Responsible Adult** A responsible adult is a person who exercises parental responsibility for the youth. [Youth Justice Act](#), section 5.

**Support person** A support person, in relation to a youth, is one of the following:

- a responsible adult in respect of the youth
- a person nominated by the youth
- a legal practitioner acting for the youth.

**Unlawful behaviour** Any action taken by an individual or association, whether by committing an act or by words either spoken or written, that is prohibited by law, is illegal or criminal.

**Youth** A youth is:

- (a) a person under 18 years of age or
- (b) in the absence of proof as to age, a person apparently under 18 years of age. [Youth Justice Act](#), section 6(1)(a-b).

Note: these guidelines apply to all school students regardless of age. Youth is a definition used in relation to the *Youth Justice Act*.

### 3. SCHOOL BASED POLICING PROGRAM

The school based policing program is based on preventative policing and the development of strong relationships with the school community. School based police officers are located in central hub schools and work with staff, students and families of the hub school and surrounding schools.

#### 3.1. Role of school based police officers

School based police officers undertake a diverse range of roles and activities with a focus on prevention and maintaining safety in schools.

School based police are responsible for:

- developing and maintaining effective relationships with schools within their hub school and surrounding schools
- working in partnership with, and keeping school principals informed of their activities
- engaging and assisting in providing a joint safety net with schools to facilitate a smooth transition from primary into middle school
- sharing and acting on information identifying students and families for targeted support
- engaging and referring identified 'at risk' youth to appropriate support programs in partnership with schools
- developing and maintaining effective relationships with youth and community organisations
- participating in and supporting school events

- supporting youth programs and activities during school holidays
- managing and conducting educational policing presentations for young people
- identifying opportunities to present education programs as a crime prevention strategy
- monitoring school zones and bus exchanges
- participating with other non-school based police in emergency responses to incidents within schools.

School based police officers are not responsible for behaviour management of students.

School based police officers:

- wear full uniform and equipment including firearms during their shift. Officers choose how they wear their equipment, including wearing protective vests or camera
- are provided with a laptop by Northern Territory Police and general access to a Northern Territory Police vehicle during their shift
- report to and are managed by Northern Territory Police.

### **3.2. Role of school principals**

Principals are responsible for:

- providing school based police officers with a comprehensive orientation to their school
- providing space where the police officer is able to work and have confidential meetings or conversations with students, families or staff
- providing access to office resources such as stationery and the use of photocopiers (not including a phone or laptop)
- sharing information and working in partnership with school based police officers to support students and families and maintain a safe and supportive school environment, in line with the program focus areas (outlined in section 3.4).

### **3.3. Role of Department of Education and Northern Territory Police**

The Department of Education and Northern Territory Police are responsible for:

- collating and sharing information to identify students and families for targeted support
- providing relevant information to the school based police officers and school principals in order to maintain safe and supportive school environments.

### **3.4. Focus areas for school based police officers**

#### **a. Students transitioning to middle school**

Students moving from primary to middle school and their families receive focused effort and support to facilitate a smooth transition into middle school. Support will be targeted to students and their families who are identified through information shared between

schools and police. This information may include school attendance records, suspension records or behaviour incident reports.

## **b. Support for students at risk of contact with the youth justice system**

In collaboration with principals, school based police officers engage and refer students identified as at risk of contact with the youth justice system, to appropriate programs. There is a focus on using a restorative justice approach, with support provided to these students with the aim of:

- diverting them from 'at risk' behaviours
- stopping them entering the youth justice system.

## **c. Maintaining safe and supportive schools**

School based police officers educate and mentor students, families and school staff to maintain safe and supportive learning environments through:

1. supporting improvements in students' knowledge and quality of life through relationship building, curriculum and extracurricular activities and school events
2. maintaining the safety of young people using a restorative justice approach
3. working strategically with multiple government agencies on preventative programs including early prevention programs.

School based police officers can co-deliver education and awareness programs with class teachers on issues addressed through programs such as:

- 3 R's - recognise, react and report when personal safety is threatened
- Think U know - cyber safety and social media, technology and challenges
- Love Bites - respectful relationships, domestic and family violence and sexual assault
- Social and emotional learning programs
- Safety House – information about safe places for students in their neighbourhoods
- Choices – positively influencing students as road users
- Party Safe – safety information and tips for hosting or attending a party
- Road Safety and other safety presentations.

Principals can request education and awareness programs via:

 Email: [CommunityandYouthEngagement.PFES@pfes.nt.gov.au](mailto:CommunityandYouthEngagement.PFES@pfes.nt.gov.au)

 Telephone: Sergeant Community and Youth Engagement on (08) 8936 4827

Schools within remote and very remote communities may engage their regions' allocated Community Engagement Police Officers (CEPO) to assist in the delivery of youth targeted programs.

Attachment A lists the hub schools where police are based and their surrounding schools.

## 4. LAW ENFORCEMENT

### 4.1 Managing incidents in schools

Where there is an incident at a school that requires police assistance, schools should manage the situation and contact police as usual:

1. Where it is safe to do so, school staff should attempt to de-escalate/resolve a situation in line with school policy and procedures prior to calling for police assistance.
2. Principals should contact local police through normal channels where the alleged unlawful behaviour or criminal offences is committed by a student at school, travelling directly to or from school, or during school sponsored activities.

Schools and police must follow the law enforcement protocols for schools and school students set out in Attachment B.

### 4.2 Emergency/exceptional circumstances

Police officers may immediately enter a school without a warrant, search a person (including a student), their clothing and property in that person's immediate control, where they determine that a matter of such seriousness and/or urgency requires it or if they believe that delaying a search would create an unacceptable risk of harm and may cause the loss or destruction of evidence connected with an offence. Such circumstances can include, but are not limited to:

- bomb threats
- child protection matters
- possession of an offensive, controlled or prohibited weapon
- possession of explosives or ammunition
- dangerous drugs as prescribed in the *Misuse of Drugs Act*, Schedule 1 and 2.

## 5. RELATED LEGISLATION, POLICY AND DOCUMENTS

<b>Legislation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Education Act</b> The <a href="#">Act</a> provides a framework for delivering high-quality contemporary education to develop students' potential and maximise their educational achievement.</li><li>• <b>Care and Protection of Children Act</b> The <a href="#">Act</a> provides information regarding police powers to inquire or investigate concerns about a child's wellbeing.</li><li>• <b>Youth Justice Act</b> An <a href="#">Act</a> providing for justice in relation to youths who have committed or are alleged to have committed offences.</li></ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Criminal Code Act</b> The <a href="#">Act</a> establishes a code of criminal law.</li> <li>• <b>Police Administration Act</b> The <a href="#">Act</a> governs the Northern Territory Police Force.</li> <li>• <b>Misuse of Drugs Act</b> The <a href="#">Act</a> relates to the misuse of drugs and makes provisions for the prevention of the misuse of drugs, and for other purposes.</li> <li>• <b>Education and Care Services (National Uniform Legislation) Act</b> The <a href="#">Act</a> provides for a national law to regulate education and care services for children and related purposes.</li> </ul>
<b>Regulations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Weapons Control Regulations</b> The Regulations provides for governance and control of weapons in the Northern Territory.</li> </ul>
<b>Policy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drugs in Schools</li> <li>• Critical Incident Response Guidelines</li> <li>• Mandatory Reporting of Harm and Exploitation of Children</li> <li>• Recording and reporting student injuries</li> <li>• Sexual Behaviour in Children</li> </ul>

## 6. COMPLAINTS

Concerns about the operation of the school based policing program should be discussed with the school principal in the first instance. All complaints will be managed in accordance with the Department of Education [Complaints Management Policy](#) and [Guidelines](#).

Any complaints specifically regarding a member of the Northern Territory Police Force should be reported directly by the complainant to the officer in charge of the relevant school based police officer. Any complaint will be dealt with through the normal Northern Territory Police Force Complaint Resolution Process.

## School based police officer locations – hubs and surrounding schools

Hub School	Surrounding Schools
<b>Casuarina Senior College</b>	Henbury School Jingili Primary Moil Primary Wagaman Primary
<b>Centralian Middle School</b>	Bradshaw Primary Braitling Primary Sadadeen Primary
<b>Darwin Middle School</b>	Darwin High School Larrakeyah Primary Ludmilla Primary Parap Primary Stuart Park Primary
<b>Dripstone Middle School</b>	Alawa Primary Leanyer Primary Nakara Primary Nemarluk Wanguri Primary
<b>Katherine High School</b>	Casuarina Street Primary Clyde Fenton Primary Katherine South Primary MacFarlane Primary
<b>Nightcliff Middle School</b>	Millner Primary Nightcliff Primary
<b>Palmerston College (Rosebery Campus)</b>	Bakewell Primary Driver Primary Durack Primary Gray Primary Moulden Park Primary Palmerston High Roseberry Primary Woodroffe Primary
<b>Sanderson Middle School</b>	Anula Primary Karama Primary Malak Primary Manunda Tce Primary Wulagi Primary
<b>Taminmin High School</b>	Bees Creek Primary Girraween Primary Howard Springs Primary

**DoE Guidelines:** Police in Schools

<b>Hub School</b>	<b>Surrounding Schools</b>
	Humpty Doo Primary Middle Point Primary
<b>Tennant Creek High School</b>	Tennant Creek Primary

**Law Enforcement Protocols for schools and school students**

1. Police can undertake all necessary duties as required when in schools but such activities must not cause any unnecessary interruption of education or contravene legislative requirements.
2. Principals receiving reports of alleged unlawful or criminal behaviour by students must refer this information directly to police on ph. 131 444, and in the case of an emergency ph. 000.
3. Principals should contact the local police station's Officer in Charge to clarify concerns regarding police interaction with the school.
4. Police must speak with the principal or a member of the school's leadership team before conducting any police activity within the school. Police are empowered to immediately enter a school in emergency/exceptional circumstances.
5. Police must contact a student's parent prior to conducting enquiries where a student is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• suspected of being involved in an offence</li> <li>• a victim</li> <li>• a witness.</li> </ul>
6. Students will not be formally interviewed by police within school grounds except in the case of emergency/exceptional circumstance.
7. Where an emergency/exceptional circumstance necessitates a formal police interview: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• principals must provide a safe and private space to conduct the interview</li> <li>• police must organise a support person for the student.</li> </ul>
8. Students may request departmental or other school staff as support persons. This is not encouraged unless considered absolutely necessary. Principals must consider the professional relationship with the student prior to approving involvement.
9. Where the school is the complainant, department and other school staff cannot act as a student's support person as this may constitute a conflict of interest.
10. Principals must provide a private space for police to carry out a search of a student, their clothing and immediate personal belongings.
11. A police officer of the same gender is required to conduct a search of a student. If an officer is not available within a reasonable timeframe, a medical practitioner or staff member of the same gender may conduct the search under police direction. The student's support person must be present during the search.
12. Police may apprehend students at school only as an option of last resort.
13. Police must notify principals when a student has been charged with an offence: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• against another person who was the principal's responsibility at the time of the offence</li> <li>• against property the principal is responsible for.</li> </ul>
14. Police are to assist schools to safeguard student welfare by informing principals of:

**DoE Guidelines: Police in Schools**

- any action taken
- the result of information received.