

# POLICY

## Political activities and promotion of materials

Responsibility of:	Secretariat	DET File: 50:F19:210
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Target Audience:	All school, including early childhood centres, and corporate staff	

### 1. SCOPE

This policy applies to all Department of Education school, service and corporate staff.

### 2. POLICY

Northern Territory (NT) Government schools, early childhood services and corporate workplaces are committed to transparency, openness and supporting local members or members of parliament to visit and engage with our schools and service.

At the same time, all departmental staff must provide the same level of professionalism, irrespective of political persuasion. Consequently, Northern Territory Government schools and corporate workplaces are apolitical and are **not** to be used to produce, disseminate or promote material or to facilitate the promotion of political activities. Corporate workplaces and school equipment must not be used to print, copy, or disseminate political information.

With the exception of schools and workplaces designated as official polling places, and then only on the day of and evening prior to polling taking place, no material is to be displayed or distributed which expresses the political views or position of any political party or individual(s) representing a political party. Refer to the [Community Use of School Facilities policy](#) and [guidelines](#) for detailed information.

Appropriate coordination and departmental protocols must be adhered to, to ensure that any visits do not disrupt the daily operations of schools and services and that the appropriate people are notified of the visit. Refer to the [Communicating with Ministers or Members of Parliament](#) fact sheet for protocols and useful department contacts in the event of member or ministerial office contact and visits.

Where media is expected during visits, principals must ensure parental consent is obtained for the use by the media of any vision or audio of students. Principals must also ensure that the school adheres to the Media Liaison Policy.

During government caretaker periods, employees must also comply with the [Guidance on Caretaker Conventions](#) booklet published by the Department of the Chief Minister, particularly section 3.9 *Use of Agency Premises*.

## DoE Policy: *Political activities and promotion of materials*

Further advice in relation to political awareness in the workplace can be found in the [Northern Territory Public Sector General Principles and Code of Conduct](#). It is a requirement that all departmental employees abide by these principles and code of conduct and should refer to them as a personal and regular source of reference.

### 3. DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this policy the below definitions apply.

**Employee** refers to any member of staff in schools, services or corporate who represent the Department of Education.

**Manager** is the designated person or role to which the employee reports for direction on day-to-day basis, and includes the person referred to as a supervisor.

**Political party** means an organisation, the object or activity, of which is the promotion of a view or the election of a candidate or candidates to a council, territory, state, or federal parliament.

**Caretaker government** is a convention in the lead up to an election following parliament dissolving allowing routine business of government to continue. The caretaker conventions reduce the policies and funding commitments an incumbent government can lock an incoming government into giving the incoming government greater freedom to pursue its electoral mandate.

**Member of Parliament** is a person formally elected by the people in a particular area to represent them in a council, territory, state or federal level to take part in debate and decision making on proposed laws and public policy.

**Minister** refers to a Member of Parliament who has been allocated an area of responsibility (also known as a portfolio).

### 4. RESPONSIBILITIES

**All corporate, service, school and school council staff are responsible for ensuring workplaces are not used to promote political parties or activities.**

**Employees who are unsure about their responsibilities or the application of this policy to a particular activity or situation should consult with their line manager**

**Managers** must be aware of this policy and its application. They are required to be aware of the obligations relating to political neutrality, the implications of non-compliance with these obligations and the implications for employees who disregard their obligations for political neutrality.

## DoE Policy: *Political activities and promotion of materials*

**Employees** must discuss their responsibilities and requirements in respect of being and remaining politically neutral, including any changes to their personal circumstances, e.g. intention to contest an election, with their Manager in the first instance.

### Support Services

Should an employee be contacted by a Member of Parliament or Minister of any level of government, the following Department contacts will be able to assist.

- Secretariat can provide information and support when employees are unsure of action required
- Quality Schools Systems and Support (QSSS) should be advised and can provide advice and support on processes via the Director of either North or South QSSS
- Where the contact may result in media coverage or be related to an event, contact the department's Communications and Media unit.

## 5. RELATED POLICY, LEGISLATION AND DOCUMENTS

- [Communicating with Ministers and Members of Parliament factsheet](#)
- [Community Use of School Facilities Policy](#) and [Guidelines](#)
- [Northern Territory Public Sector General Principles and Code of Conduct](#)
- [Guidance on Caretaker Conventions](#)
- [Media Liaison policy](#)
- [Advice to Principals on Student Consent Form and Media and Intellectual Property](#)

### Relevant contact information

Keep in the loop

**Quality School Systems and Support** (School Operations)

[Schoolops.det@nt.gov.au](mailto:Schoolops.det@nt.gov.au)

(08) 8999 5610

Where unsure of who to contact

**Secretariat**

[DETMinisterialLiaison@nt.gov.au](mailto:DETMinisterialLiaison@nt.gov.au)

(08) 8999 5762

Where contact may result in media coverage

**Communications and Media**

[icmm.det@nt.gov.au](mailto:icmm.det@nt.gov.au)

(08) 8901 4968

When a school visit is being organised

**Department Liaison Officer, Office for the Minister for Education**

[DLO.Education@nt.gov.au](mailto:DLO.Education@nt.gov.au)

(08) 8936 5615