

Political activities and promotion of materials

Policy

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Acronyms	Full form
NT	Northern Territory
QSSS	Quality Schools Systems and Support

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1. Scope

This policy provides rules for employees engaging in and/or subjected to political activities in schools and applies to all Department of Education schools, service and corporate staff.

2. Policy

The public service, including NT Government schools, early childhood services and corporate workplaces, must be politically neutral. At the same time, we are committed to transparency and openness and will support local members or members of parliament wherever possible to visit and engage with our schools and service.

NT 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, Members of Parliament or Political Candidates](#) fact sheet for protocols and useful department contacts in the event of member or ministerial office contact and visits.

It is important to note that the Talent Release Form is for NT Government purposes only. Any requests for the use of vision or audio of students or staff by an external party to government must be coordinated by the external party seeking its use.

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*.

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](#). The code of conduct stipulates that a Public Sector Officer must provide full support to the Government of the day regardless of which political party or parties are in office. Employees must be mindful of this when providing public comment (both in person and through online media) that could be considered to bring the government and the service into disrepute.

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

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

External party refers to a party external to the NT Government.

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 candidate is a person who has identified as intending to run in an election, on behalf of a political party or as an individual.

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 policy and funding commitments an incumbent government can lock an incoming government into giving the incoming government greater freedom to pursue its electoral mandate. Caretaker conventions do not apply in by-elections.

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

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

Public Sector Officer refers to individual Northern Territory Government employees.

Public service refers to all Northern Territory Government employees.

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.

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, Political candidate 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
- 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 including social media coverage or be related to an event, contact the department's Communications and Media.

5. Related policy, legislation and documents

- [Communicating with Ministers, Elected Members or Political Candidates fact sheet](#)
- [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

Schoolops.det@nt.gov.au

(08) 8999 5610

Unsure of who to contact

Secretariat

DETRMinisterialLiaison@nt.gov.au

(08) 8999 5762

Where there may be media coverage

Communications and Media

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

(08) 8936 5615