

Naming of Northern Territory Government schools and places in schools – policy and procedures

Naming or changing the name of schools and places
within schools

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1. Policy

The Department of Education (the department) recognises the importance of having clear and consistent processes for the naming of Northern Territory (NT) Government schools and places within schools.

This policy and procedures outline the conventions and processes for naming of schools and places within schools.

The *Education Act 2015* (the Act) is to be followed when creating new or changing existing school names in addition to feedback that is received when undertaking community consultation.

Use of standard naming conventions ensure that schools are named consistently. This simplifies record keeping, data management and prevents confusion for NT Police, Fire and Emergency Services when locating schools during emergencies.

All applications for the naming of a school or school name changes require the approval of the Minister for Education.

All applications for the naming of a building, asset or place of significance within a school require the approval of the Chief Executive.

For guidance on naming a building, asset or a place of significance within a school refer to section 5, Naming buildings, assets or places of significance within schools.

2. Scope

This policy and procedures apply to the naming and renaming of all NT Government schools and any other place of significance within a school, such as a building or oval.

3. Procedures

3.1. Naming of schools

3.1.1. Naming of a new school

A principal appointed to a new school will work with School Operations and parents of proposed new students to identify a name for the school.

3.1.2. Changing a school name

Principals must first discuss the naming process with School Operations (see section 4 for temporary school name changes).

3.1.3. Choosing or changing a school name

The principal will work with parents of students who are enrolled to attend a new school or the School Representative Body (SRB) of an existing school to initiate options for the new name. The proposed school name must comply with the NT Rules of Nomenclature and include:

- a unique descriptor
- a function descriptor.

3.1.4. Unique descriptors

The geographic location of a school is often used as the unique descriptor. As a general rule, preference should be given to the original or first published geographic name of the area. However, other names may be considered, provided they are consistent with the Guidelines for NT place naming and have sufficient community support.

Schools that wish to use Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander names should consult with traditional owners, the relevant Land Council of the area and follow the Principles for the Consistent Use of Place Names, which also includes the Dual Naming Depiction Principles.

The unique descriptor should be determined through extensive consultations with all relevant stakeholders, including the SRB, school community, the wider community and senior department staff.

3.1.5. Function descriptors

School Operations will provide advice and information about function descriptors.

The function descriptor should reflect the approved educational services provided by the school and be consistent with those used by other government schools in the NT. However, from time to time, use of alternative function descriptors may be necessary. In such cases, the principal should seek advice from their relevant Director School Operations and the use of the alternative function descriptor must be endorsed by the Deputy Chief Executive Regional Services.

Function descriptors currently in use by the department for naming schools are:

- School
- Primary School
- Middle School
- High School
- Senior College.

Specific function descriptors for naming special purpose schools may be used where appropriate. Common function descriptors for special purpose schools include:

- Inclusive School
- Inclusive Centre
- School of Distance Education.

3.2. Consultation

School principals must be able to demonstrate that they have conducted extensive consultations with all relevant stakeholders including the SRB, school community, wider community and senior department staff. This would be demonstrated by the provision of the SRB minutes which record the consultation process and outcomes.

Principals should also contact the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics, Place Names Unit via email at place.names@nt.gov.au to check that the proposed school name does not conflict with the name of another place.

3.3. Formal application

The principal must prepare a memorandum to the Director School Operations seeking approval of the proposed name under section 15(5)(c) of the Act. The memorandum must include the following information:

- the school's geographical location including a map showing the location of the school site within the community or town, including lot or site number and street address
- the reasons for choosing the particular name, including relevant history or significance of the name or, if applicable, the reasons for changing the school name
- details of consultation that has occurred with the school community, including information about any objections received about the name and how these have been taken into consideration
- confirmation that the Place Names Unit has been consulted to ensure that the proposed name does not conflict with the name of another place.

School Operations through the Office of Parliamentary Counsel will draft an instrument for the minister's signature.

3.4. Approval

On receipt of ministerial approval, School Operations will arrange for the new name to be published in the government *Gazette* and send a copy of the *Gazette* notice to the Place Names Unit via email to place.names@nt.gov.au.

3.5. Publication

The Place Names Unit will add the new name to the NT Place Names Register.

3.6. Implementation

The school negotiates with School Operations about requirements for changing signage, stationery, uniforms and the SRB constitution and then implements the required changes.

4. Temporary changes to a school name

There may be instances where a school or community may temporarily change its name as part of cultural respective practices.

Where community authorities have advised of a temporary school name change, principals must consult with School Operations so that information can be updated and communicated appropriately.

If the temporary name will be used for over 12 months, then the procedures for changing a school name must be followed.

5. Naming buildings, assets, or places of significance within schools

When naming buildings, assets or places of significance within a school, principals should adopt general procedures for naming such as consultation as well as consider items listed in section 6, Considerations.

Principals, with the support of their SRB, may propose a name for a building, asset, or place of significance within their school. School Operations will assist the principal in preparing a memorandum for the Chief Executive's approval.

6. Considerations

The naming of buildings, assets or places of significance within the school should promote the location while reflecting stakeholder and community considerations.

Careful consideration must be given when choosing a name to ensure there are no limitations or restrictions that might apply in the future.

Appropriate names may include:

- local flora and fauna
- local names of geographical significance
- names that reflect cultural or heritage significance
- name of a person who:
 - achieved outstanding success on behalf of the school or community
 - has notable connections to the school or asset
 - is widely known and respected within the school or community
 - made outstanding contributions to the school or community
 - has community and stakeholder support and consent to use name.

Schools that wish to use Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander names must consult with traditional owners of the area.

Schools that wish to use a person's name should demonstrate support from family or next of kin. Multiple commemorations of the same person are discouraged but may be recognised as appropriate in some circumstances.

Be mindful that names should not:

- be discriminatory or derogatory
- create duplications in either sound or spelling, where it may cause confusion with other buildings.

7. Roles and responsibilities

7.1. Chief Executive

The Chief Executive will:

- review applications to name or change a school name and provide a recommendation to the Minister for Education to name or change a school name
- review and approve applications to name a building, asset, or place of significance within a school.

7.2. Deputy Chief Executive Regional Services

The Deputy Chief Executive Regional Services will:

- review and endorse any application that uses an alternative function descriptor.

7.3. School Operations

School Operations will:

- provide guidance and support schools to prepare and progress applications to name or change a school name, including:
 - coordinate advice of the name changes to other sections of the department as appropriate
 - recommend the function descriptor which reflects the approved educational services that the school provides
 - apply for an instrument for the minister's approval of the new or changed name
 - arrange gazettal of the new name when ministerial approval is received
 - send a copy of the *Gazette* notice to the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics, Place Names Unit to advise about the name change for inclusion in the NT Place Names Register
- provide guidance and support schools to prepare and progress applications to name a building, asset, or place of significance within a school.

7.4. Principals

Principals will:

- work with the SRB to initiate options for the proposed new or changed name
- discuss the initial naming proposal with School Operations before commencing community consultation
- coordinate the community consultation process in conjunction with the SRB
- on completion of community consultation for creation of a new name or for changing an existing school name, prepare a memorandum to the Director School Operations to seek ministerial approval
- on approval of the new or changed name, arrange for related changes such as signage, stationery and uniforms as required and negotiated with School Operations
- on completion of community consultation for the name of a building or asset or significant place within a school, prepare a memorandum to the Director School Operations to seek Chief Executive approval.

7.5. School representative bodies

School representative bodies will:

- work with the principal to initiate options for the proposed new or changed name
- support the community consultation process in conjunction with the principal
- endorse the unique descriptor to be used in the school name
- endorse the proposed name for a building, asset or place of significance within a school.

8. Definitions

Term	Definition
Approved names	Names approved by the Minister for Education under section 15(5)(c) of the Act and subsequently published by way of <i>Gazette</i> notice.
Function descriptor	The second part of a school's name that indicates the type and scope of educational programs offered.
NT Place Names Register	The official register of place names in the NT administered by the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics.
School	A school declared to be an NT Government school under section 73(1) of the Act.
School Representative Body (SRB)	An incorporated body under the Act and includes independent public school boards, school councils and joint school representative bodies.
Unique descriptor	The first part of a school's name that provides a unique identity and distinguishes it from other schools in the NT. The unique descriptor may reflect the school's location.

9. Related policy, legislation and documents

Education Act 2015 – <https://legislation.nt.gov.au/en/Legislation/EDUCATION-ACT-2015>

Guidelines for NT place naming – <https://placenames.nt.gov.au/guidelines>

Place Names Act 1967 – <https://legislation.nt.gov.au/Legislation/PLACE-NAMES-ACT-1967>

Principles for the Consistent Use of Place Names – <https://www.icsm.gov.au/publications/principles-consistent-use-place-names>

Acronym	Full form
NT	Northern Territory
SRB	School Representative Body

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