

Drones in schools – Use of remotely piloted aircraft (RPA) for educational purposes

Policy

Document title	Drones in schools – Use of remotely piloted aircraft (RPA) for educational purposes
Contact details	Education Policy and Programs: Quality Teaching and Learning
Approved by	General Manager Quality Teaching and Learning
Date approved	Operational Policy Subcommittee approved 7 May 2019
Document review	May 2022
TRM number	Policy - 50:D19:94868 Risk Assessment form– 50:D19:23087

Version	Date	Author	Changes made
1.0	7 May 2019	Teaching and Learning T-6	First version

Acronyms	Full form
ARN	Aviation reference number
CASA	Civil Aviation Safety Authority
HLS	Helicopter landing site
NTG	Northern Territory Government
RPA	Remotely Piloted Aircraft

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1. Introduction

All users of drones must abide by civil aviation legislation and regulations when operating their aircraft. These legislative and regulatory requirements facilitate the safe use of drones, mitigate personal health and safety requirements and address privacy regulations.

This policy provides a consistent approach to drone management and use in or by Northern Territory Government (NTG) schools. All school staff must have sound knowledge of the regulatory, safety and privacy obligations attached to the use of drones in schools or for educational purposes. Breaches of the Civil Aviation Act 1988¹ or the Civil Aviation Safety Regulations 1998² can result in significant fines and/or imprisonment.

This policy is to be used in conjunction with the *Drones in Schools – Risk Assessment for Educational Activity form*³.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- all NTG schools and educational settings, including preschools
- drone use by NTG staff or students on school grounds or for educational purposes.

3. Drone requirements

3.1. Aviation regulation

The Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) regulates the use of drones in Australia. Rules imposed by CASA are designed to prevent accidents involving aircraft, property or people. The Civil Aviation Safety Regulations 1998⁴ prescribe operating conditions for all unmanned aircraft, including drones. Drone operators are also obliged to meet any requirements of drone usage stipulated in local, state and federal laws and to check for CASA directives as they are released.

CASA regulations⁵ regarding drone usage will differ depending on the following.

3.2. Purpose of use

The law relating to use of drones distinguishes between recreational or commercial purposes. CASA recognises that drones for educational purposes are categorised as recreational use unless the operator is intending to receive money or economic gain.

¹ <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2016C01097>

² <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2016C00889>

³ <https://education.nt.gov.au/policies>

⁴ <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2016C00889>

⁵ <https://www.casa.gov.au/aircraft/landing-page/flying-drones-australia>

3.3. Weight of the drone (RPA)

Different drone weight categories determine where they may be flown. A drone's weight includes any fittings or camera attached to the drone.

Micro RPA:

- may fly within 5.5km of a controlled aerodrome with height limitations.

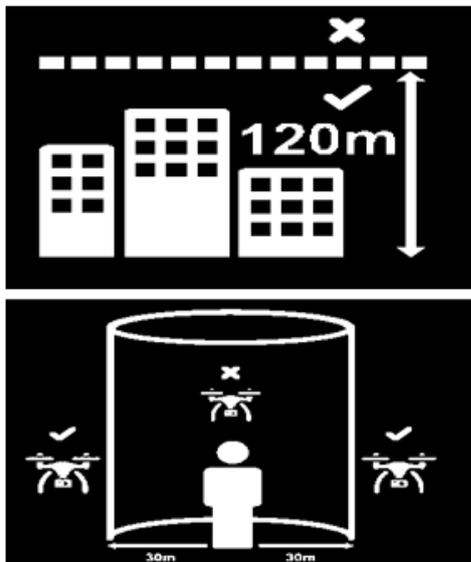
Drones larger than Micro RPA:

- must not fly within 5.5km of a [controlled](#) aerodrome without approval from CASA
- may fly within 5.5km of a [uncontrolled](#) aerodrome or helicopter landing site (HLS) only if manned aircraft are not operating to or from the aerodrome.

3.3.1. Where the drone is flown

The 'Can I fly there? - Drone safety app'⁶, must be consulted before flying a drone. There are a number of rules affecting where a drone can be flown including:

- proximity to controlled air space, controlled and uncontrolled aerodromes
- proximity to prohibited, restricted and danger areas that have additional requirements
- the drone remaining within visual line-of-sight of the operator
- not over or above people
- not higher than 120 metres above the ground
- at least 30 metres away from other people unless the other person is part of controlling or navigating the drone, measured from a point on the ground directly underneath the drone
- not over or near areas affecting public safety or where emergency operations are underway.



Source: <https://www.casa.gov.au>

⁶ <http://www.casa.gov.au/aircraft/standard-page/can-i-fly-there-drone-safety-app>

To operate outside these conditions it is necessary to acquire authorisation or exemption from CASA and either secure a remote pilot licence (RPL), or obtain an aviation reference number (ARN).

Schools must determine if they are subject to additional federal, state, local council, Northern Territory (NT) parks and reserves⁷, or national park rules or laws prohibiting or restricting drone use in certain areas.

3.3.2. Safety

The department has a duty of care to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of workers and to ensure that others, including students within learning environments, are not put at risk. There is potential for a drone, even a small drone, to cause damage or injury to the operator or others. As well as CASA regulations, safety requirements contained within the Work Health and Safety Act 2011⁸ and the Work Health and Safety Regulations 2011⁹ must also be adhered to.

3.3.3. Recommendation

Schools or teachers implementing drone programs could consider obtaining an Aviation Reference Number (ARN)¹⁰. You need an ARN if you intend holding any sort of authorisation (permissions or licence). Schools considering investing in drones must research the types and attributes of potential drones as some are not suitable for school use.

3.3.4. Privacy

Schools must consider the impact of drones on neighbours or those near the area of operation. Drones can be considered intrusive and noisy. Flying drones can give rise to complaints and liability even if no injury occurs or is likely to occur. Schools must ensure they comply with their obligations under the Privacy Act 1988¹¹.

4. Roles and accountabilities

School principals are accountable for ensuring:

- school operated drones comply with this policy and all statutory requirements
- the school has established operating protocols that must include:
 - identifying specific drone safe flying areas
 - all participants must wear safety glasses
 - long hair is to be tied back
- a risk assessment has been completed; including consideration of the proposed use of the drone, the location of the school and the age of the proposed users.

⁷ <https://nt.gov.au/leisure/parks-reserves/flying-drones-in-parks>

⁸ <https://legislation.nt.gov.au/Legislation/WORK-HEALTH-AND-SAFETY-NATIONAL-UNIFORM-LEGISLATION-ACT-2011>

⁹ <https://legislation.nt.gov.au/Legislation/WORK-HEALTH-AND-SAFETY-NATIONAL-UNIFORM-LEGISLATION-REGULATIONS-2011>

¹⁰ <https://www.casa.gov.au/licences-and-certification/standard-page/aviation-reference-number-frequently-asked-questions>

¹¹ <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2018C00034/Html/Text>

Teachers/instructors/trainers must:

- inform the school principal of intention to fly a drone
- check the CASA website for changes to regulations before using a drone
- understand the implications of noncompliance with all rules and regulations
- complete a Risk Assessment Form
- make the expectations and rules relating to flying drones clear to students
- complete pre and post flight checks and ongoing maintenance of the drone
- be aware of any cultural or privacy concerns in relation to photography of students or property.

5. Definitions

Term	Definition
Aviation Reference Number (ARN)	A unique identifier to be quoted whenever you call CASA. If you hold a licence or permission, you will find in most cases that the number on the licence or permission is the ARN belonging to the entity that holds that licence or permission.
Commercial drone use	Flying a drone for money or economic gain, for a fee, rate, charge or other consideration, or directly or indirectly in connection with any business, or other undertaking intended for profit. This includes organisations delivering lessons or demonstrations to students for a fee.
Controlled aerodrome	Within a 5.5km radius of an aerodrome with a manned control tower.
Drone / Remotely Piloted Aircraft (RPA)	Drone is a colloquial term for an unmanned aircraft, other than a balloon or kite, where the pilot flying is not on board the aircraft. RPA's are commonly known as drones.
Micro RPA	An RPA with a gross weight of 100g or less. This weight to be reviewed by CASA in July 2019.
Operator	The person who manipulates the flight controls of a remotely piloted aircraft or who initiates and monitors the flight and is responsible for its safe conduct during flight time.
Operating a drone for educational purposes	The operation of a drone for educational purposes in an NTG school is classified by CASA as recreational, as long as it is not operated to advertise or promote the school or to receive money.
Recreational drone use	Flying a drone for fun, pleasure or enjoyment (i.e. not for money or economic gain).
Regulator	The regulator referred to in this policy is the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA).
Uncontrolled aerodrome	Aerodrome without a manned control tower.

6. Related policy, legislation and documents

Policy / Legislation / Document title	Link
Civil Aviation Act 1988	https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2016C01097
Civil Aviation Safety Regulations 1998	https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2018C00211
Copyright Act 1968	https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2017C00414
Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999	https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2018C00440
Northern Territory (NT) parks and reserves	https://nt.gov.au/leisure/parks-reserves/flying-drones-in-parks
Privacy Act 1988	https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2018C00034/Html/Text
Work Health and Safety (National Uniform Legislation) Act 2011	https://legislation.nt.gov.au/Legislation/WORK-HEALTH-AND-SAFETY-NATIONAL-UNIFORM-LEGISLATION-ACT-2011
Work Health and Safety (National Uniform Legislation) Regulations 2011	https://legislation.nt.gov.au/Legislation/WORK-HEALTH-AND-SAFETY-NATIONAL-UNIFORM-LEGISLATION-REGULATIONS-2011

7. Evaluation

This policy will be evaluated on a yearly basis or in the event of changes to regulatory, safety or privacy requirements. It is important to note teachers and schools need to check the latest regulations available at the CASA website¹².

8. Acknowledgements

The authors of this document have largely drawn on the information publicly available on the CASA website¹¹ for drone operators.

¹² <https://www.casa.gov.au/aircraft/landing-page/flying-drones-australia>