

Child safety policy

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Acronyms	Full form
NT	Northern Territory
SNAICC	Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care
SRB	School Representative Body
TRM	Territory Records Manager

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Read this policy with the [National Principles for Child Safe Organisations](#) (national principles).

1. Policy

The Department of Education (the department) is committed to safeguarding children and does not tolerate harm to children. All allegations of harm to children and all safety concerns will be treated seriously and in accordance with department policies.

Every person involved in Northern Territory (NT) Government schools has a responsibility to provide environments that safeguard children from harm.

Child safety and wellbeing must be prioritised in every action and every decision made.

Consistent attendance at, and engagement with, education and care contribute highly to children's long-term health, safety and wellbeing. The [Northern Territory Education Engagement Strategy 2022-2031](#) (strategy) sets out a plan to maintain and increase engagement and attendance. The department's commitment to providing child safe environments complements this strategic focus to create better outcomes for children.

1.1. Commitment statement

The department is committed to adopting the 10 national principles which are:

1. Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.
2. Children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.
3. Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.
4. Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.
5. People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.
6. Processes to respond to complaints and concerns are child focused.
7. Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.
8. Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.
9. Implementation of the national child safe principles is regularly reviewed and improved.
10. Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.

The department will continuously improve its child safe environments by consciously and systematically:

- Creating environments where children's safety and wellbeing are prioritised in all thoughts, values and actions.
- Placing emphasis on genuine engagement with, and valuing of, children.
- Creating conditions that reduce the likelihood of harm to children.
- Creating conditions that increase the likelihood of identifying any harm.
- Responding to any concerns, disclosures, allegations or suspicions related to children's safety or wellbeing.

2. Business need

The national principles reflect the Child Safe Standards from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse but have a scope that goes beyond child sexual abuse to cover other forms of potential harm. In February 2019, the Prime Minister of Australia and all state and territory first ministers endorsed the national principles.

The department must ensure child safety by operating safe and supportive learning environments as required by section 3(d) of the [Education Act 2015](#) (the Act).

This policy is a key part of the department's adoption of the national principles and strengthens the department's alignment with the requirements of the Act.

3. Scope

This policy applies to everyone in NT Government schools, including independent public schools, and all corporate positions. It includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- people who work directly with children including staff, service providers, pre-service teachers and educators and volunteers
- people who work indirectly with children such as those in corporate roles, including working with children's data or in policy development
- school and corporate leaders who influence how the safeguarding of children is prioritised and managed.

It applies to all education and care activities from birth to year 12 undertaken in physical and online environments, on and off a school site.

4. Definitions

Child – means a person under the age of 18 years as defined at section 5 of the Act.

Child safety – encompasses matters related to protecting children from harm, managing the risk of harm to children and responding to incidents or allegations of harm to children.

Cultural safety – refers to providing children with safe, nurturing and positive environments where they are comfortable with being themselves, expressing their culture, spirituality and belief systems and they are supported by the people around them. This definition is courtesy of the [Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care](#).

Harm – refers to any detrimental effect caused by an act, omission or circumstance on the physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing or development of a child. Harm can be caused by physical, psychological or emotional abuse or neglect; sexual abuse or other exploitation; exposure to physical violence; or domestic or family violence. Harm is defined at section 15 of the [Care and Protection of Children Act 2007](#).

Policies relating to child safety and wellbeing – refers to any department or NT Government policy, including this policy, that provides guidance on how to safeguard children from harm and support their wellbeing.

Pre-service teacher or educator – is a person undertaking a practicum placement as part of a recognised teaching diploma or certificate level qualification.

Service providers – are companies or individuals including, but not limited to, contractors, sub-contractors, tradespersons, psychologists, nutritionists and sports development officers, or any other person engaged to provide a service or specialist support or to undertake work on school property, including maintenance, cleaning, renovations, repairs or building construction.

Staff – refers to Department of Education employees and school representative body (SRB) employees.

SRB members – refers to unpaid individuals, other than enrolled students, who are elected members of the SRB.

Volunteer – refers to an individual who supports educational programs and the business of schools either through direct contact with students or through school activities, without financial gain or reward, including SRB members.

Work with children – means working directly or indirectly with children. Working indirectly with children includes but is not limited to:

- working with children’s information
- working on policies, projects, programs or any other materials that affect children
- working on physical or online infrastructure for use by children.

5. Roles and responsibilities

5.1. Senior Directors, Education

Senior Directors, Education will support schools to:

- ensure compliance with legislative responsibilities that relate to child safety and wellbeing under the [Education and Care Services \(National Uniform Legislation\) Act 2011](#) and the [Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011](#), if the school operates a preschool regulated under the National Quality Framework
- adhere to policies relating to child safety and wellbeing.

5.2. Principals and corporate managers

Principals and corporate managers will:

- implement a child safe culture that regularly reinforces attitudes and behaviours that value children and shows a commitment to child safety and wellbeing, including cultural safety
- ensure compliance with legislative responsibilities that relate to child safety and wellbeing under the [Education and Care Services \(National Uniform Legislation\) Act 2011](#) and [Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011](#), if the school operates a preschool regulated under the National Quality Framework
- ensure that all people under their management adhere to policies relating to child safety and wellbeing and know, or are aware of, their responsibilities
- prioritise safeguarding children in line with the national principles when developing or reviewing policies and practices
- identify and act upon opportunities to improve child safety and wellbeing practices, child safe environments and a child safe culture

- ensure all staff, service providers, pre-service teachers and educators and volunteers complete an appropriate induction upon commencement of employment or service
- provide protective behaviours programs to children as part of the Australian Curriculum through the stages of schooling from the early years to year 12
- make child protection training and resources available to staff, and where appropriate, to service providers, pre-service teachers and educators and volunteers.
- actively support interagency efforts to improve child, family and community safety.

5.3. Staff and service providers who work with children

All staff and service providers who work with children will:

- implement a child safe culture that regularly reinforces attitudes and behaviours that value children and shows a commitment to child safety and wellbeing, including cultural safety
- comply with legislative responsibilities that relate to child safety and wellbeing under the [Education and Care Services \(National Uniform Legislation\) Act 2011](#) and [Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011](#), if the school operates a preschool regulated under the National Quality Framework
- adhere to department policies relating to child safety and wellbeing and know and understand their responsibilities
- adhere to the [Mandatory reporting of harm and exploitation of children guidelines](#) where there is a reasonable belief that a child may have been, or is at risk of being, harmed
- identify and mitigate risks to the safety and wellbeing of children in online environments and where necessary, inform the principal and relevant parents of issues and concerns
- identify and mitigate risks to the safety and wellbeing of children in physical environments and where necessary, inform the principal of issues and concerns
- give the safeguarding of children a higher weight when considering a child's right to privacy, access to information, social connections and learning opportunities during risk identification and mitigation. Seek advice from the principal if there is uncertainty if a risk should be addressed due to relevant children's rights
- provide opportunities for children to participate in decisions that affect them. Take consultations seriously by listening to what children have to say, respect their views where practicable and incorporate these views into practices
- complete an appropriate induction upon commencement of employment or service
- adhere to the requirements of the [Suitable text and media resources in schools guidelines](#) to ensure children are not exposed to highly offensive, obscene or overly controversial material and that their cultural backgrounds are respected

In addition to the above, staff will:

- follow the [External providers engaged for teaching and learning guidelines](#) to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children when procuring third party facilities and services
- support volunteers to meet the requirements of policies relating to child safety and wellbeing
- respond appropriately to any safety issues or concerns raised by service providers, pre-service teachers and educators and volunteers which may involve implementing risk mitigation strategies and making a report to the principal.

5.4. Pre-service teachers and educators and volunteers who work with children

Pre-service teachers and educators and volunteers will:

- follow the directions of staff to adhere to policies relating to child safety and wellbeing and will have an awareness of their responsibilities
- be alert to child safety and wellbeing risks in physical and online environments and notify their supervising staff member if there are any issues or concerns
- adhere to the [Mandatory reporting of harm and exploitation of children guidelines](#) where there is a reasonable belief that a child may have been, or is at risk of being, harmed
- adhere to the [External providers engaged for teaching and learning guidelines](#) if engaged as an external provider for teaching and learning purposes
- complete an appropriate induction upon commencement of service.

5.5. Staff, service providers and volunteers that do not work with children

Staff, service providers and volunteers that do not work with children will:

- have an awareness of the policies relating to child safety and wellbeing
- report any child safety and wellbeing issues or concerns to a department staff member
- adhere to the [Mandatory reporting of harm and exploitation of children guidelines](#) where there is a reasonable belief that a child may have been, or is at risk of being, harmed
- complete an appropriate induction upon commencement of service.

5.6. Families and community members

Families and community members will:

- adhere to the [Mandatory reporting of harm and exploitation of children guidelines](#) where there is a reasonable belief that a child may have been, or is at risk of being, harmed
- discuss child safety and wellbeing issues and concerns with a department staff member or make a complaint using the guidance provided on the Education internet at [Make a complaint about a school](#)
- act in accordance with the [Codes of conduct for education sites and workplace participants policy](#) when at a school premises or activity.

5.7. Children

Children will:

- know what it means to be safe and protect themselves and other children from harm
- report any safety issues or concerns to a department staff member or a trusted friend or family member who can make a report on their behalf
- adhere to their school's student code of conduct, acceptable use agreements and behavioural standards in the physical and online environments.

6. Related legislation, policies and resources

Legislation, policies and resources that support the Child safety policy.

6.1. Related legislation

[Education Act 2015](#)

[Care and Protection of Children Act 2007](#)

[Education and Care Services \(National Uniform Legislation\) Act 2011](#) which adopts the [Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010](#) (Vic)

[Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011](#)

6.2. Related policies

[Northern Territory Education Engagement Strategy 2022-2031](#)

[Student Wellbeing and Positive Behaviour policy](#)

[Safety management policy](#) (staff login required)

[Mandatory reporting of harm and exploitation of children guidelines](#)

[Codes of conduct for education sites and workplace participants policy](#)

[External providers engaged for teaching and learning guidelines](#)

6.3. Related resources for teachers, educators and parents

[National Principles for Child Safe Organisations](#)

[Make a complaint about a school](#)