

Respect and responsibility in schools - policy

Department of Education and Training

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Read this document with the Respect and responsibility in schools – guidelines – Parents, carers and visitors.

Additional guidelines for staff and students are currently in development.

1. Policy

The Department of Education and Training (department) is committed to delivering quality education in schools by creating learning and working environments where respect and responsibility form the foundation of clear expectations and safety for students, staff, families and visitors.

The department is committed to sustaining partnerships with students, parents, families and the wider community to create safe, inclusive environments that supports every student's wellbeing and learning.

Violence, aggression and abuse will not be tolerated in any Northern Territory (NT) Government school or within online environments connected to schools. The use of social media or online platforms to criticise, harass, intimidate or otherwise disrespect a school, its staff or its students is unacceptable.

All staff, students, parents, carers, visitors, volunteers and other school community members who enter or engage with the school, including through online platforms, are expected to comply with the Respect and responsibility in schools' framework, policy and guidelines including the expected standards of behaviours.

Breaches of this policy will be dealt with promptly and fairly by the department.

2. Purpose

The department is responsible for ensuring all NT Government schools provide safe, respectful, inclusive and supportive learning and working environments for students and staff. This responsibility is underpinned by a strong foundation of respect and responsibility and is supported by the *Education Act 2015* (the Act) and the *Work Health and Safety (National Uniform Legislation) Act 2011* and is aligned with the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations (2018).

3. Scope

This policy applies to all parties who enter or engage with NT Government schools, including:

- employees, including School body employees, volunteers and contractors of the school
- parents, carers, and visitors who engage with an NT Government school
- school students.

4. Our shared commitments

The framework outlines four shared commitments that apply in schools, during school-related activities, and across all school-related online and digital platforms where members of the school community interact.

- Safety and wellbeing - We act safely, follow instructions and report and respond to concerns early to protect the wellbeing of everyone in our schools.
- Respect - We show respect by treating everyone with dignity, kindness and fairness and consistently communicating in clear, calm and respectful ways.

- Responsibility - We show responsibility by taking ownership of our actions and choices, maintaining high yet achievable standards, acting with honesty and integrity and addressing concerns positively.
- Partnership - We work together to support learning, attendance and wellbeing, sharing information, supporting participation in our schools and collaborating to solve problems.

5. Unacceptable behaviours

Unacceptable behaviour in NT Government schools will not be tolerated. To maintain safe and respectful school environments, the following behaviours are prohibited:

- intimidating, aggressive, abusive, or humiliating behaviour
- harassing, victimising, or discriminating against anyone
- cultural, racial, or religious hate speech
- actions that put the health, safety, or wellbeing of others at risk
- damaging the reputation of the school, staff, or students
- misusing social media, phones, email, or other digital platforms
- sharing or using photos, videos, or recordings of students, staff, or the school community inappropriately
- sharing private information about staff or students gained through school activities
- coming onto school grounds under the influence of drugs or alcohol or trying to supply them to staff or students.

6. Roles and responsibilities

6.1. Principal

The principal is responsible for:

- implementing and promoting the Respect and responsibility in schools' policy and guidelines
- displaying Respect and responsibility in schools' posters across the school
- developing an environment of respect and responsibility tailored to their school community
- providing clear advice on roles and responsibilities in relation to this policy and guidelines
- taking appropriate action following a breach of the Respect and responsibility in schools'
- ensuring accurate documentation and record keeping for breaches of this policy.

6.2. Senior Director Education

Senior Directors Education are responsible for:

- supporting principals to promote and implement this policy and guidelines
- supporting principals to manage breaches of this policy.

6.3. Director School Operations

Directors School Operations are responsible for:

- supporting schools to implement this policy and guidelines
- supporting schools to manage breaches of this policy
- supporting schools with record keeping in line with department policy.

6.4. School Bodies

School bodies are responsible for:

- advising all school body staff employed under section 107(1)(k) or section 119(1)(g) of the Act that they must abide by the Respect and responsibility in schools' policy
- ensuring all school body committee members adopt and model behaviours that reflect the Respect and responsibility in schools shared commitments.

School bodies include: School representative bodies and School management councils.

6.5. Parents and carers, visitors, volunteers and contractors

Parents and carers, visitors and contractors are responsible for:

- demonstrating behaviours that align with the Respect and responsibility in schools' policy
- working proactively with schools to address and resolve any concerns
- report any breaches of the Respect and responsibility in schools' policy to the principal.

7. Definitions

Term	Definition
Breach	Any action or behaviour that violates the standards outlined in this policy or associated guidelines.
Parent	A child's father, mother or any other person who has parental responsibility for that child, including a person who is regarded as a parent of the child under Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander customary law or tradition. The definition of a parent does not include a person standing in place of the parent on a temporary basis.
School body	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a school representative body • a school management council • a multi-school management council.
School body employee	A person employed by a school representative body or school management council.
School community members	All school staff, families, and people who have direct involvement or interest in the school including all employees, visitors, volunteers and service providers, employed or engaged by the department, or by a school representative body or school management council to provide services to the school representative body, school management council or the school.
School management council	A school management council established under section 118(1)(a) of the Education Act 2015 and includes a multi-school management council established for more than one school.
School representative body	An incorporated body under the Education Act 2015 and includes independent public school boards, school councils and joint school representative bodies.
School representative body and school management council members	Individuals who are elected members of the school representative body or school management council, who are not enrolled students and teachers.
School	Includes early childhood settings, primary schools and secondary schools, and any other location external to the site premises where education is being provided as part of a school excursion or other activity organised by the education site including off-site venues used for school activities, and digital learning environments, for example: virtual classrooms, learning platforms, collaboration tools.
Student	A person enrolled at a school and children who attend Department of Education and Training early childhood services and programs delivered on school premises.
Teacher	A person employed to deliver an education program at a school and holding valid registration with the NT Teacher Registration Board.

8. Related legislation, policy, and resources

8.1. Legislation

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

Education Regulations 2015 - <https://legislation.nt.gov.au/en/Legislation/EDUCATION-REGULATIONS-2015>

Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth) - <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2021C00189>

Northern Territory Public Sector Code of conduct employment instruction number 12 - <https://ocpe.nt.gov.au/employment-conditions-appeals-grievances/code-of-conduct>

Public Sector Employment and Management Act 1993 - <https://legislation.nt.gov.au/Legislation/PUBLIC-SECTOR-EMPLOYMENT-AND-MANAGEMENT-ACT-1993>

Work Health and Safety (National Uniform Legislation) Act 2011 - <https://legislation.nt.gov.au/Legislation/WORK-HEALTH-AND-SAFETY-NATIONAL-UNIFORM-LEGISLATION-ACT-2011>

8.2. Policy

Alcohol consumption on department premises - policy - <https://education.nt.gov.au/media/docs/policies/school-operations/alcohol-consumption-on-department-premises/policies/alcohol-consumption-on-department-premises-policy.pdf>

Complaint resolution - policy - https://elearn.ntschoools.net/system/files/resource_document/2024-07/Complaint%20resolution%20-%20policy.pdf

Safety management - policy - <https://elearn.ntschoools.net/policies/4451>

Smoke free schools - policy - https://education.nt.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0010/1594990/smoke-free-schools-policy.pdf

Student wellbeing and positive behaviour - policy - <https://education.nt.gov.au/policies/health-safety/behaviour-and-wellbeing>

8.3. Resources

Contractors site rules and declaration - form - <https://elearn.ntschoools.net/media/file/7651>

National Principles for Child Safe Organisations - <https://www.childsafety.gov.au/resources/national-principles-child-safe-organisations>

Respect and responsibility in schools expected behaviours - https://education.nt.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/1606288/respect-responsibility-schools-expected-behaviours.pdf

Respect and responsibility in schools our shared expectations - https://education.nt.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/1606289/respect-responsibility-schools-our-shared-expectations.pdf

Trespass on school grounds - procedures - <https://education.nt.gov.au/media/docs/policies/school-operations/trespass-on-school-premises/trespass-on-school-grounds-procedures.pdf>

Weapons in schools - guidelines - <https://education.nt.gov.au/media/docs/policies/school-operations/weapons-in-schools/weapons-in-schools-guidelines.docx>

Acronyms	Full form
NT	Northern Territory
SMC	School management council
SRB	School representative body

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