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This policy should be read in conjunction with the following:

* Independent Public Schools Policy
* Independent Public School Board Guidelines
* Modify Parent Membership – Independent Public School Board Guidelines and Procedures
* School Representative Body Policy
* School Representative Body Constitution Guidelines

# Introduction

These Guidelines outline the process for NTG schools to become an independent public school (IPS) and the process to revoke IPS status.

The NT IPS model is one of a range of school improvement strategies available to schools. The main purpose of IPS is to make real change for improved student outcomes, not only for individual IPS, but also to be a conduit for school improvement in public education across the NTG school system. Key to achieving school improvement is the empowerment of the principal, school board, leadership team, staff and parents to make decisions and take action towards improving the outcomes for students and facilitating stronger engagement between schools and their community.

IPS are required to maintain their improvement continuum, from good to great, great to excellent, on successfully gaining IPS status as outlined in the McKinsey Report, “How the world’s most improved school systems keep getting better” 2010.

The Chief Executive determines an appropriate timeframe for IPS selection and has the delegation to approve and revoke IPS status.

# Definitions

**Consultation** is a process where the views and opinions of identified stakeholders are collected and recorded for consideration in a decision making process. Consultation is conducted in a way that is transparent, culturally sensitive, inclusive, and affords procedural fairness to stakeholders.

**Independent public school** is a school designated by gazette notice as a school that has greater autonomy to provide education to children and young persons in the community it serves.

**Independent public school board** is the governing body for an independent public school.

**Parent** signifies a child’s father, mother or any other person who has parental responsibility for the child, including a person who is regarded as a parent of the child under Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander customary law or tradition.

**School board parent member** must be a parent of a student enrolled at the school for which the school board has been established.

**School representative body** is an incorporated separate entity established under the Act referred to as an independent public school board or for non-IPS referred to as a school council

# Roles and Responsibilities

**Chief Executive** is responsible for:

* determining the IPS selection process, including timeframe, selection panel appointment
* approving, revoking and gazettal of IPS status
* approving process for reviewing IPS

**Senior Director School Improvement and Leadership (SIL)** is responsible for:

* supporting candidate IPS schools through the IPS application process
* providing a reference to the IPS selection panel on request from the IPS selection panel
* providing support to the principal of an IPS where a preference to revoke IPS status has been proposed by the school representative body
* providing support to the principal of an IPS prior to a revocation process being progressed

**Principal** is responsible for:

* authentically engaging and consulting with the school community before and during the IPS selection process
* coordinating and submitting a high-quality IPS application
* liaising and seeking advice from the Senior Director SIL where the school is considering IPS revocation

**School Representative Body** is responsible for:

* collaborating with the principal and engaging with parents during an IPS application process in line with these guidelines
* transitioning from a school council to an IPS board on successfully gaining IPS status
* submitting an application in line with these guidelines for the Chief Executive’s consideration where revoking IPS status has been determined by the school representative body
* ensuring the board’s constitution is amended and ratified to reflect IPS revocation

# Procedures

## IPS selection process

The Chief Executive determines an appropriate timeframe for IPS selection and communication regarding IPS expression of interest at their discretion.

### Expression of interest

NTG schools in urban, remote and very remote locations may apply to become an IPS through an expression of interest process.

Nominating to become an IPS is a choice made by the principal and the school community.

Schools that express an interest to become an IPS undergo a robust and rigorous selection process. Schools are selected based on their ability to demonstrate a sustained school improvement continuum aligned with the McKinsey report, “How the world’s most improved school systems keep getting better”. Schools will be assessed by a selection panel against the following set of criteria – all criteria have an equal weighting:

* **vision and innovation** — The school principal, council, community and staff must have a clear vision for the school with innovative programs and projects that will benefit the school community. The difference that will be seen in student outcomes as a result of the introduction of programs must be evident.
* **local support** — Broad staff and school community support to become an IPS must be evident, specifically from school councils, teachers, parents and students and evidence of a sustainable culture of shared decision making must be demonstrated.
* **capacity** — Readiness to operate with more autonomy must be demonstrated with evidence of sound financial, human resource and school management with a culture of continuous improvement.

### Preparation workshop

Schools that submit an expression of interest must attend an IPS preparation workshop, where offered, tailored to support principals and school council chairs to consider how becoming an IPS will benefit their school’s individual circumstances, context and assist to identify readiness to operate as an IPS. On completion of the workshop schools must confirm intention to proceed, or not, with the IPS application process.

### Written application

A written application of no more than 750 words, along with supporting evidence, will be requested from each school that has confirmed intention to proceed with the IPS application process. The application and supporting evidence must be concise, and in a printable format. The written application and supporting evidence will be provided to the IPS selection panel members.

### Selection interview

One hour will be allocated to each school to present and respond to questions from the IPS selection panel. Schools will present on their capability to operate as an IPS addressing the key selection criteria. The panel will consider a wide range of evidence, including references from Senior Director SIL, to determine a candidate school’s suitability to transition to IPS status.

### Selection Panel

The IPS selection panel, approved by the Chief Executive, will comprise senior executives from the Department of Education, current IPS principal/s, school representative body representation and an external member.

The selection panel will assess the suitability of candidate IPS against the selection criteria, written application and supporting evidence and the Senior Director SIL’s referee report. The selection panel will compile a report of each candidate school with recommendations of suitability for the Chief Executive’s consideration.

### Transitioning to IPS status

Successful candidate IPS will operate as an IPS from Term 1 of a new school year. During the transition period (from notification of successfully becoming an IPS and the start of a new school year), IPS principals may use increased flexibility in recruitment and selection of staff and have greater authority under the department’s Teacher Recruitment Policy, Human Resource Delegations and Financial Delegations.

School councils will transition to an IPS board within the first 12 to 18 months.

## IPS Revocation Process

IPS revocation may be warranted in circumstances such as the following:

* School representative body determines IPS status should be revoked. This must be a decision made by the school representative body and principal with evidence of broad support from the school community
* IPS is considered a significant operational risk
* The operational model of the school has undergone a significant change.

### School representative body determines IPS status should be revoked

In consultation with the school community a school representative body may submit an IPS revocation application for the Chief Executive’s consideration. Revoking IPS status is a significant decision that requires careful consideration by the school community, specifically from the school representative body members, teachers, staff, parents and students.

#### Preparation required before the revocation application is submitted

* The Principal must seek advice and support from the Senior Director SIL if revocation is being considered by the school to identify reasons for revocation and whether additional support from the department is required to assist the school maintaining IPS status.
* The school representative body must consider how the school and students’ best interests will be taken into account through revoking IPS status.
* The school representative body must gain the support of parents, teachers, staff and students on the proposed revocation of IPS status and have the motion in support of revocation passed at a school representative body meeting.

#### Making an application

* The application must be made using the IPS Revocation Application form (LINK)
* All sections of the form must be completed and supporting evidence provided.
* The application and supporting evidence must be presented in printable format, scanned and submitted.

#### Processing the application

* The application will be registered and assessed for completeness. The school may be contacted if more information is required.
* The Senior Director SIL will be consulted to ensure all options and adequate departmental support has been provided prior to the application being forwarded to the Chief Executive for consideration.

#### Decision

* The Chief Executive may approve or refuse the application to revoke IPS status.
* In making the decision the Chief Executive will consider whether:
  + the provision of extra support from the department would alter the decision to request revocation with the interests of students at the centre
  + the best interests of the school and students have been fully considered and addressed
  + the school community has been adequately consulted and have indicated broad support for the IPS revocation application
  + the Senior Director SIL fully supports the IPS revocation.

#### Notice of the decision

* The Chief Executive will notify the board of the decision in writing as soon as practicable.

### IPS at significant operational risk

Where an IPS appears to be at risk, e.g. significant financial risk, irregular decreases in student enrolment and attendance, etc., the Chief Executive may determine a review by exception (full or partial) or other appropriate intervention is required.

Pending the outcome of such a review and if deemed appropriate, remediation strategies will be put in place through a performance and development plan for the school. Failure to meet the agreed key performance indicators within an agreed time-frame may result in the Chief Executive revoking the IPS status of the school.

### IPS has a significant change to the operational model

Where an IPS has experienced a significant change to its operational model, e.g. an IPS school is amalgamated with a non-IPS, the Chief Executive may appoint a panel to consider whether the school continues to be able to demonstrate performance against the set of criteria used in IPS selection. This provides an opportunity for school communities undertaking change to re-engage with the IPS selection process, an essential element of the IPS journey. At the Chief Executive’s discretion, this may result in confirmation or revocation of IPS status.