Teacher Responsibilities Guide

*A Guide for Teachers and School Leaders in Northern Territory Government Schools*

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| Acronyms | Full form |
| AITSL | Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership |
| FTE | Full Time Equivalent |
| TRB NT | Teacher Registration Board Northern Territory |
| TRG | Teacher Responsibilities Guide |
| VET | Vocational Education and Training |

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# Overview

The *Teacher Responsibilities Guide* (TRG)outlines expectations and a shared understanding of teacher workload allocation and management for employees in Northern Territory Government schools, covered by the *Northern Territory Public Sector Teachers and Assistant Teachers’ 2017-2021 Enterprise Agreement* (the Enterprise Agreement). The TRG clarifies teacher responsibilities and the way in which they work with teaching colleagues. The TRG aims to help teachers meet the needs of students, work with parents or caregivers and other staff, and liaise with the public.

The Department of Education (the department) is committed to supporting the achievement of student outcomes and recognises that the quality of teacher practice is central to school performance and the achievement of those outcomes.

Teachers are responsible for providing a quality educational experience to ensure every child in the Norther Territory has the best start in life, and through early learning and school education gains a bright future. Teachers undertake this responsibility within the framework of the law and the lawful instructions of their employer.

Teachers are expected to meet the high standards of professional and ethical behaviour required by the department, the Teacher Registration Board of the Northern Territory (TRB NT), parents and the public. The TRB NT formalises teaching practice requirements through the *Code of Ethics for Northern Territory Teachers* and the *Protective Practices Guideline: For Teachers in their interactions with children and young people.* Furthermore, teachers in the Northern Territory must be able to teach in accordance with the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers* as approved by the TRB NT, which includes an ongoing commitment to professional learning to maintain currency of practice.

School leadership teams are best placed to decide how to deploy teachers at an operational level to deliver quality education, with consideration given to distributing workloads in a reasonable and transparent manner, noting the ever-changing nature of the work environment.

Principals are responsible for the educational outcomes of their school. Principals will work together with their leadership teams, teachers and other school staff in a collaborative and consultative manner to achieve required outcomes, whereby staff actively contribute to the decision-making process.

Teachers should have the opportunity to perform all of their duties within a reasonable timeframe, and students should have ready access to their teachers within the ordinary hours of duty. To achieve this and to safeguard the wellbeing of teachers, work will be distributed as equitably as practicable across all teachers in a school, providing fair and reasonable workloads.

# Hours of Work

## Ordinary Hours of Duty

The ordinary hours of duty for a full-time teacher is 36 hours and 45 minutes per week, consistent with other Northern Territory Public Sector employees.

The agreed hours of duty for a part-time teacher may be no less than 0.2 Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) (14 hours and 42 minutes), or greater than 0.8 FTE (58 hours and 48 minutes), of the full-time hours of duty over a fortnightly period.

Where an absence from the workplace does not interfere with professional obligations, principals should determine the most appropriate course of action, which may include a flexible approach to working hours to assist with balancing personal and work commitments, subject to operational requirements. Accessing leave entitlements may be appropriate in some instances, which should be recorded and approved through MyHR.

## Meal Break

A teacher’s day is required to include a meal break, preferably of at least 30 minutes and without the need to supervise students, noting that a level of duty of care is still owed to those around them. This break is separate from normal release time, but arrangements can vary from school to school taking into account operational requirements.

If necessary, the 30 minutes may be spread over more than one break in consultation with the teacher, or a teacher may choose to do this. The lunch break does not necessarily need to coincide with the student lunch break.

Where professional responsibilities include supervision of student eating or yard duty, these activities will be taken into consideration by the principal in the allocation of teacher work.

## Student Supervision

Principals will ensure that the school’s work-day schedule, including the span of hours when supervision is available at the school, is communicated to all staff and the school community

Notwithstanding arrangements to roster teachers on duty before school, it is expected that teaching staff will arrive at school at least ten minutes prior to morning sessions.

Principals are required to advise all parents and teachers of the time when teachers are on duty at the school to supervise students, noting that student supervision forms part of the allocation of teacher work i.e. face-to-face teaching or other professional responsibilities. Parents and caregivers must be aware that if students are on the school grounds outside of these times, supervision is not provided.

Regular reminders should be issued to parents to mitigate the risk of injury to a student on school grounds without adequate supervision.

## Recreation Leave and Non-Term Time

Recreation leave occurs on and from the first working day succeeding the last day on which the employee’s school is open in a calendar year, and the period of leave will be to the limit of available recreation leave credits or to the day preceding the first day on which the school is open in the next calendar year. Recreation leave typically occurs over December/January.

Non-term time, otherwise known as ‘stand down’ is any period when schools are otherwise not open to accept students; and employees are not required to attend the workplace; or have not been directed to use their accrued recreation leave. Stand down typically occurs in April, June/July and October each year, noting that residual recreation leave credits must be exhausted prior to stand down being applicable.

Stand down is not equivalent to recreation leave and payment of entitlements may vary between employees depending on their personal circumstances. It is strongly encouraged that employees refer to the department’s stand down fact sheet, speak to their principal or contact Workforce Relations Support for further information.

# Allocation of Teacher Work

## Overview

Four factors are to be considered in determining the distribution of work:

1. **Face-to-face teaching**, including timetabled classes, relief classes, Vocational Education and Training (VET) delivery or supervision, pastoral care sessions and assemblies;
2. **Other professional responsibilities** of teachers, including marking, preparation, assessment, meetings, student supervision including yard duty, reporting, compliance with national regulatory bodies and organisational duties;
3. **Contextual factors**, including class size subject to regulatory requirements, curriculum mix, range of ability and age of students, resources available and facilities; and
4. **Voluntary or discretionary effort**, including school camps, concerts, excursions, and activities with students before and after school such as breakfast programs and after school sport and supporting staff undertaking study relevant to the field of education.

Consideration should distinguish between work that can be required of a teacher and work that a teacher may choose to undertake.

Principals will first allocate classes to teachers in accordance with the parameters of the Enterprise Agreement.

Where a teacher undertakes a high level of other duties or activities involving voluntary or discretionary effort, the Principal may reduce the face-to-face teaching component. Similarly, where a teacher has a lower face-to-face teaching component e.g. no home group, reasonable additional duties may be assigned by the principal, which may include pastoral care.

Activities associated with the supervision or management of other staff may be undertaken as part of other professional responsibilities e.g. performance evaluation and reporting. Principals will have consideration towards these activities in the allocation of teacher work.

## Face-to-face Teaching

Face-to-face teaching includes:

1. Timetabled lessons by the teacher with primary responsibility to deliver an approved course of instruction to students, including lessons delivered through virtual learning, tutoring or special needs support.
2. All sessions of student instruction timetabled or required by the school for curricular or pastoral functions involving student supervision, student counseling and consultation, including rehearsals, practices, performances, excursions and camps that are part of an approved course of instruction.
3. Work experience and VET delivery or supervision in middle (typically from Year 9) and senior schools according to the department’s VET Delivered to Secondary Students Policy.
4. Relief lessons that are allocated to replace absent teachers.
5. School assemblies.

The maximum face-to-face teaching hours (instruction time) per week for teachers are as follows:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Position | Stage of Schooling | Maximum Instruction Time Per Week |
| Classroom Teacher | Preschool | 23 hours and 40 minutes |
| Primary Years | 23 hours and 40 minutes |
| Middle Years | 21 hours and 20 minutes |
| Senior Years | 21 hours and 20 minutes |
| Senior Teacher*(0.75 of a classroom teacher load)* | Primary Years | 17 hours and 30 minutes |
| Middle Years | 16 hours |
| Senior Years | 16 hours |
| Assistant Principal *(0.5 of a classroom teacher load)* | Primary Years | 11 hours and 40 minutes |
| Middle Years | 10 hours and 40 minutes |
| Senior Years | 10 hours and 40 minutes |

In determining actual face-to-face teaching in the school, the principal consults teaching staff at the school. A teacher’s face-to-face commitment will not exceed the maximum instruction time specified, except with the teacher’s agreement. Teaching loads may be averaged over a fortnightly period for increased flexibility. In determining the face-to-face teaching hours of a teacher employed part-time, the arrangements outlined in this section apply on a pro rata basis.

*Pro Rata Instruction Time Example:*

*Full Time Equivalent (FTE) x Maximum Instruction Time = Pro Rata Instruction Time*

*0.4 (14 hours and 25 minutes) x 21.33 (21 hours and 20 minutes) = 8.532 (8 hours and 31 minutes)*

Principals need to consider the face-to-face teaching commitments of all teachers. Principals can allocate a full range of duties and responsibilities, as the need arises; provided that the overall work commitment is neither excessive nor unreasonable. It is acknowledged that principals may also conduct face-to-face teaching.

The allocation of relief classes is agreed at the school level as part of the consultation on the allocation of teacher work. A range of options are available and the option that is most appropriate to the context should be implemented to ensure that all teachers access the non-contact time to which they are entitled. Options include having a designated non-contact teacher, roving relief, engagement of relief teachers, internal relief, and ‘timetabling off’ of teachers.

Relief classes should be allocated in an equitable manner and in the context of the total work of the teacher. Casual relief teachers should be engaged by the school where it is likely that the allocation of a relief class will result in a teacher being required to undertake an unreasonable or excessive workload. Splitting of classes to cover teacher absences is to be avoided except as a last resort.

## Other Professional Responsibilities

In addition to face-to-face teaching, teachers have a range of other professional responsibilities. Teachers may decide to undertake some of their duties outside of the normal school day, within their ordinary hours of duty.

The principal has responsibility for leading and managing the school. The principal will determine the following in consultation with staff and considering provisions in the Enterprise Agreement such as those relating to work/life balance, noting that different arrangements to those stated below may be appropriate in non-standard contexts, such as a very remote school with limited resources:

1. Yard duties (usually not more than 60 minutes per week in total in a standard primary/middle/senior setting);
2. Compulsory General Staff Meetings, which would not usually exceed one hour in total per week within the workday. It is acknowledged that some flexibility may be required from time to time. If Compulsory General Staff Meetings are to be increased in duration or number, there needs to be a suitable process for staff consultation and negotiation. The need for extraordinary meetings may also arise from time to time, for example due to critical incidents. Care must always be taken to ensure that the number of meetings does not impact unreasonably on the time available for teachers to meet their teaching responsibilities;
3. One whole of school parent-teacher afternoon/evening per semester;
4. Other meetings with parents or line managers within ordinary hours of duty or as negotiated, to discuss student outcomes, school projects or programs and collaborative planning; and
5. Scheduled professional learning and development.

Teachers also have responsibility for managing the following so that appropriate standards are maintained and agreed timelines are met:

1. Activities associated with student assessment and development of programs of work;
2. Development and evaluation of curriculum and assessment materials;
3. Development and evaluation of programs in conjunction with colleagues aligned with the school’s educational priorities;
4. Professional learning activities in which the teacher is involved (discussion with Principal or supervisor);
5. Professional reading and research for professional learning activities;
6. Development of resource materials for class or school use taking into account the availability of resources and the location of the teacher to the resources; and
7. Student welfare in the capacity of the level of expertise reasonably expected to be demonstrated by a teacher without formal counselling qualifications.

Within the parameters of a balanced workload, principals may require teachers to participate in observation in other classrooms in relation to probation, performance improvement plans, performance management, CT5-CT6 progression, teacher registration requirements or other activities.

In the distribution of other professional duties, as far as practicable the following factors will be taken into account:

* Equitable distribution of other duties within the school;
* Relative importance of the various duties to be undertaken;
* Time required to perform the duty;
* Range and frequency of tasks to be performed;
* Classification, qualifications, training and experience of the teacher; and
* Preparation and correction requirements.

## Non-Contact Time

In addition to teaching loads, teachers are allocated non-contact time to meet other professional responsibilities. Teachers have flexibility to use their non-contact time to achieve required outcomes.

Non-contact time is provided for the purpose of preparation, planning, assessment and correction necessary to perform the role of a teacher and will be allocated in a minimum 30 minute block, which is intended to occur within the school day.

Allocated non-contact time per week for a classroom teacher is as follows:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Stage of Schooling | Minimum Non-Contact Time Per Week |
| Preschool | 3 hours |
| Primary Years | 3 hours |
| Middle Years | 5 hours and 20 minutes |
| Senior Years | 5 hours and 20 minutes |

Principals with an allocated teaching load are provided with the equivalent of one day per week without classes to meet administrative responsibilities.

## Contextual Factors

It is recognised that a teacher’s overall work commitment is influenced by a number of factors including:

* Class size;
* Curriculum mix (the year level and subjects taught);
* Range of ability and age of students; and
* Resources available.

In allocating work equitably across all teachers in a school, the principal will consider areas of learning which may require specific attention. Class sizes need to take into account space and safety considerations relevant to the activities being undertaken, which may be practical classes in industrial arts facilities, laboratories or gyms. These decisions will vary from place to place depending on individual school circumstances. Where there is a safety issue, the teacher has an obligation to raise it with the principal in the first instance.

Where a teacher is required to travel between worksites, adequate time will be allowed for the travel and associated logistical requirements. Such travel may on occasion be outside the normal workday. However, where travel is regularly outside the normal workday, the principal and teacher will negotiate a fair time in lieu arrangement.

## Voluntary/Discretionary Effort

Voluntary or discretionary effort includes school camps, concerts, excursions, fundraising/community events, and activities with students before and after school such as breakfast programs, after school sport and supporting assistant teachers undertaking accredited study in the field of education.

When considering allocation of work to teachers, principals should distinguish between work that is required of a teacher and work that a teacher may choose to undertake.

The sharing of voluntary or discretionary effort should be encouraged and such effort should be considered when determining the overall allocation of teacher work.

Teachers may volunteer to participate in the following activities:

1. Supervision and support for pre-service teachers notwithstanding that they may enter into separate financial arrangements with universities to mentor and assist these preservice teachers
2. Activities reasonably designed to foster school-community relationships
3. Reasonable additional communication with parents (this may include teachers meeting with parents off the school grounds where appropriate)
4. Additional support for students with disabilities and students at risk (this excludes teachers employed for the purpose of providing support for students with disabilities and students at risk)
5. Outside school and/or out of hours student activities such as excursions and camps
6. Providing support to assistant teachers undertaking accredited study in the field of education.

# Meetings

The timing and frequency of regular meetings need to be determined at the school level in a consultative manner.

Reasonable notice should be provided of meetings and other activities at which teacher attendance is required. Meeting dates should be included on the school calendar at the start of the year wherever possible.

It is recognised that meetings may sometimes be scheduled outside the normal workday. However, it is also recognised that teachers must attend to personal obligations, and it is in the school community’s interest that they achieve an appropriate work/life balance.

When planning personal commitments, teachers are expected to take account of their professional obligations. Principals are also expected to consider professional and personal obligations in scheduling meetings and other activities at which teacher attendance is required.

# Consultation

It is expected that principals will consult with employees on matters that affect them to an extent that is proportional to the issue and the impact that it has on both the employee and the school. Management of Change provisions under the Enterprise Agreement apply where major change or a change to the regular roster pattern or ordinary hours of work is proposed.

Where a number of options are available, effective consultation is in everyone’s interests so that employees are able to contribute and ensure that the best outcome is achieved.

Consultation should not be so extensive that it impinges on a principal’s capacity to manage the daily operations of the school.

# Workload Management

In accordance with the Enterprise Agreement, principals will:

1. Ensure employees have sufficient and appropriate resources to undertake their jobs;
2. Ensure the tasks allocated to employees can reasonably be performed in the hours for which they are employed, including reasonable additional hours;
3. Monitor employee workloads, work patterns, priorities, staffing levels/classifications, use of work/life balance arrangements, and any other relevant indicators within the workplace;
4. Implement strategies to ensure workloads remain reasonable;
5. Monitor vacant positions and fill vacancies in a timely manner; and
6. Consult with employees and their nominated representatives over workload issues.

# Resolving Teacher Workload Issues

The Enterprise Agreement endorses the principle that employees should be able to achieve an appropriate balance between their work and personal lives, and confirms that departmental management, teachers and teacher representatives play a positive role in ensuring that workloads are reasonable.

The parties to the Enterprise Agreement recognise that there may be unavoidable peak work periods where teacher workloads increase. However, this is the exception rather than the norm.

It is expected that every effort will be made to resolve issues in relation to the allocation of teacher work at the local level, and that local resolution will be achieved if the process has involved genuine consultation and communication based on mutual respect.

In the event of a dispute, teachers should endeavor to resolve the matter internally as outlined in the Dispute Settlement Procedures in the Enterprise Agreement.

Where matters relating to allocation of teacher work cannot be resolved internally, an aggrieved employee may request a review of their treatment in employment in accordance with Employment Instruction Number 8 – Internal Agency Complaints and Section 59 Grievance Reviews. An employee may nominate to have a union representative, represent them in a dispute or significant workplace matter and make representations on their behalf.

# Further Assistance

If you require further assistance or wish to clarify any matters related to the management of teacher work, please contact the Department of Corporate and Digital Development:

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| **Workforce Services** |  |
| HR Services Portal: | hrservices.nt.gov.au  |
| Email: | WorkforceServices@nt.gov.au |
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