

Northern Territory Government schools Term 3, 2020

Information for parents and carers

Current as at 17 July 2020. Major changes to the previous version appear in a breakout box

The Northern Territory Department of Education would like to sincerely thank students, parents, carers and the broader school community for their ongoing support for our educators in schools and early childhood education and care services during what is an unprecedented time.

The Northern Territory Government in line with the latest health advice from the [Australian Health Protection Principal Committee \(AHPPC\)](#) is that schools are safe and all students are expected to attend school.

Roadmap to the new normal

The NT Government has released and implemented a [Roadmap to the New Normal](#), which set out a three stage recovery process with additional activities, services and functions permitted at each stage. Stage three of the roadmap commenced on 5 June 2020. The Roadmap is underpinned by three principles; personal responsibility, physical distancing and hygiene. In our schools' context, this means:

- Continuing to reiterate that all members of our school community must take personal responsibility to follow the principles in the Roadmap, and encourage their friends and families to do so as well.
- Continuing to take appropriate measures to maximise physical distancing in the school environment where possible.
- Continuing to enhance safety in the school environment by practising, and support students to practise good hygiene.

These principles strongly reflect the existing practices in schools.

We will continue to review school operations as the pandemic situation develops, and communicate updates to school communities accordingly.

Term 3 in the Northern Territory

Education is compulsory in the Northern Territory, and all children of compulsory school age are required to physically attend school.

However, students who are unwell must remain at home and parents/carers should notify the school.

Parents are asked to notify the school when students have been directed by the Northern Territory Government to self-quarantine at home or enter mandatory quarantine at a government facility. The school will provide the student with learning from home materials to ensure that they can continue to learn during this period. Students who have been required to quarantine, will need to provide the school

with a letter of clearance from the Northern Territory Government, prior to their return to face to face learning. This is about schools minimising the risk of the spread of the virus and giving reassurance to other students, staff and the community, that it is safe for students who have been quarantined to return. Please note that all school staff who have been required to undertake quarantine, will also provide the same clearance letter before they return to school.

If your child falls ill during the day, parents/carers will be contacted by the school and required to arrange for them to be collected as soon as possible.

Schools are actively following up with families of absent students, and we ask that parents notify the school of any absences, and respond to any queries from the school.

Parents and carers on school grounds

Where possible, minimising the number of adults entering school sites is desired to ensure the safety and wellbeing of students and staff.

Principals have the authority to allow visitors onto school grounds on a case by case basis, ensuring appropriate physical distancing and hygiene requirements are met. Visitors are required to comply with all directions from the school regarding physical distancing and hygiene, and are encouraged to supply their own water bottle and hygiene products (hand sanitiser, tissues, etc) wherever possible.

No person including staff, students or visitors should come onto school grounds if:

- they are unwell;
- they are awaiting the outcome of a test for COVID-19;
- they have been directed by relevant authorities to quarantine or self-isolate; or
- in the last 14 days, they have travelled to a place identified by the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC) as a COVID-19 hot spot.

From Term 3, some schools may recommence large events and other activities that include visitors coming onto school grounds. Where this does occur, these activities will be carefully managed to ensure that the above principles regarding physical distancing and hygiene are maintained. Parents and carers are asked to keep updated with the latest information about visiting and events from their child's school, and to comply with any requests and protocols put in place to ensure the ongoing safety and wellbeing of students and staff.

Please speak directly with your school if you have queries or concerns about visiting the school, or any planned activities.

Parents and carers of primary aged students and students with additional needs are encouraged to speak directly with their school to confirm what arrangements are put in place to minimise the number of people moving in and out of the school grounds, particularly at drop off and pick up times.

Parents and carers are encouraged to continue to regularly communicate with their child's school. It is recommended that this be done via phone or online in the first instance and if a face-to-face discussion is required, this is discussed and planned.

Information for Year 12 students

The same requirements for completing the Northern Territory Certificate of Education and Training (NTCET) are in place and students will be able to obtain an ATAR.

Schools will adjust the way they deliver the learning and conduct assessments completed in fair way for everyone.

Exams will still go ahead and will follow the [published schedule](#).

To support senior secondary students, schools will:

- adjust specific assessment to meet curriculum requirements;
- case manage students, enabling pathway completion;
- modify learning to meet curriculum requirements;
- flexibly collect evidence for learning; and
- ensure that the NT is consistent with the changes at the national level.

If you have further questions, contact your school's NTCET Coordinator or visit the [South Australian Certificate of Education](#).

Information on Vocational Education and Training (VET) courses

VET courses will continue in Term 3, 2020, including courses run by Charles Darwin University in Darwin and Palmerston. Schools will review the RTOs COVID-19 business plan.

All Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) working in partnership with schools are expected to be operating in accordance with the NT Roadmap, and have in place COVID-19 safety plans. Schools will be reviewing RTOs' COVID-19 safety plans before engaging with them.

Structured Work Placement for students undertaking a VET course will continue if agreed to by the employer and parent, subject to school and parents being satisfied with the business's COVID-19 safety plan.

Any changes to VET courses will be communicated directly from the Registered Training Organisation (RTO) to the school.

Information for boarding school students

In May 2020, the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC) released a [statement](#) outlining the requirements boarding schools will need to meet to be allowed to reopen.

All Northern Territory boarding schools met these criteria and re-opened during Term 2, and are expected to continue operating in Term 3, 2020. The department continues to work with boarding schools in the NT and interstate to facilitate students transitioning successfully back into their boarding facilities.

From the commencement of Term 3:

- Students enrolled in boarding schools are expected to return to their boarding schools either in the NT or elsewhere.
- Students whose parents have made the decision not to return to previous boarding will be required and supported to enrol in:
 - a) their local school

- b) another boarding school; or
- c) the Northern Territory School of Distance Education.

Assessments

Assessment and reporting expectations remain the same; that is every student in transition receives a comment and in Years 1 to 9 students must receive an A to E grade for each subject studied, and Years 10 to 12 will receive one written report each semester using A to E grades.

For students learning from home for health reasons, each school will develop an assessment and reporting schedule that identifies evidence of learning from Term 1 and 2 to make an assessment of the student's progress and achievement.

These students can still receive an A to E grade for each subject studied. Each school to determine how teachers will collect evidence of learning if students are learning from home.

Measures in place by schools to enhance hygiene practices

Schools will:

- continue to practise and promote good hygiene including implementing routine hand washing by all children and staff members, before and after class and before and after meal breaks;
- consider moving classes outside, separating into smaller groups and/ or spreading into larger indoor spaces where possible;
- encourage the avoidance of handshaking, hugging and kissing, or games that include holding hands or other physical contact; and

All schools in the Northern Territory have received additional funding to enable them to increase their current cleaning regime.

Schools have been provided a cleaning fact sheet which has been developed by the Department of Health to inform what enhanced cleaning practices should be undertaken during this time.

Learning from home

Where a child is learning from home due to vulnerabilities to COVID-19 or direction by a health professional to self-isolate or quarantine, schools will provide learning (online or printed) to support the continuation of learning from home and, where possible, may also loan devices to students to support their continued learning.

Parents and carers can also access a range of resources on the [Learning Together website](#) to support their child if they are learning from home.

Where a student is learning at home, the parent or carer is responsible for the student's learning, safety and wellbeing at home or elsewhere.

Parents and carers must notify their child's school if they will be learning from home and not physically attending school.

As per usual practices, schools will work with students and families who are unwell or have explained absences to support their learning from home.

Your school will work with any students with unexplained or unacceptable reasons for being absent from school.

Students with unexplained or unacceptable reasons may be supplied with a hard copy or online learning package with further support being provided dependent on the operational capacity of the school.

Supporting your child to learn safely online

Parents and carers are encouraged to access the [eSafety.gov.au](https://www.esafety.gov.au) for specific advice regarding COVID-19 including:

- [an online safety kit for parents and carers](#)
- [an online safety booklet for parents and carers](#)
- [advice for school leaders keeping schools and learning safe online](#)

Outside school hours care

Outside school hours care (OSHC) services will continue to operate, including on-site OSHC and other services off site that cater for school age children, such as long day care or family day care. The Australian Government has announced that parent fee contributions for these services will resume from 13 July 2020. Please check with your local service.

School transport

School buses will continue to operate.

Additional cleaning practices, physical distancing and hygiene practices are in place.

Talking to your child about COVID-19

Listen to your child; answer their questions as honestly as possible and correct any misunderstandings. This will help them feel informed and understand what is happening.

Stay up to date with the facts from reliable sources so you can keep conversations calm, considered and constructive. Provide information in words that are appropriate to the age of your child.

Children can be distressed by hearing repeated stories so monitor how much your children are being exposed to television and social media and encourage them to talk about what they are seeing and hearing.

Tips for [talking to kids](#) about coronavirus (COVID-19).

Advice on keeping children healthy

Remind them to cover their nose and mouth when they cough or sneeze (catching their cough or sneeze in their elbow), keep their hands clean by washing them regularly with soap and water, and try and avoid them touching their eyes, nose and mouth before washing their hands.

If your child is required to stay at home, it is important that they maintain a healthy lifestyle, including a balanced diet, good sleep and social contact at home and by email and phone with family and friends.

Advice on wellbeing support for children

Contact the school if you are concerned about your child's wellbeing to discuss the most appropriate support.

You can also seek support from:

Kids Helpline – 1800 551 800 – kidshelpline.com.au

HeadSpace – 1800 650 890 – eheadspace.org.au

Parent Helpline – 1300 30 1300

Beyond Blue – 1300 224 636

Lifeline – 13 11 14

Further advice about COVID-19

You are also encouraged to stay informed of the latest health developments relating to COVID-19 by regularly visiting the [Coronavirus NT website](#).

If you need to speak to someone about your concerns, contact the National Coronavirus Hotline: 1800 020 080

All Australians are encouraged to download the COVIDSafe app on their phone.