

Code of conduct in schools - policy

Department of Education and Training

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Read this document with the Code of conduct in schools – guidelines

1. Policy

The Northern Territory (NT) Department of Education and Training (department) is committed to delivering quality education to all children in schools by creating learning and working environments that are safe, respectful, inclusive and supportive for all members of the school community.

This policy establishes clear standards of conduct in schools, ensuring that interactions are professional, respectful, and do not adversely impact staff wellbeing or damage the reputation of a school or its staff.

All parents, volunteers and other school community members who enter or engage with the school agree to comply with the school Code of conduct by virtue of that act. Any breaches of the code of conduct may result in action from the school or department, as detailed in section 5 of this policy.

2. Purpose

Under the *Education Act 2015* (the Act) and the *Work Health and Safety (National Uniform Legislation) Act 2011*, the department has a duty of care to make sure schools provide safe, respectful, inclusive and supportive learning and working environments for students, staff, families, and school community members in alignment with the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations 2018 (Cth).

3. Scope

This policy applies to all NT Government schools as outlined:

- school staff and school body employees
- employees of the NT Government must also comply with:
 - the Code of Conduct for the NT Public Sector, set out in Employment instruction number 12
 - the general principles set out in the *Public Sector Employment and Management Act 1993*
 - any additional instructions outlined in the Code of conduct in schools –guidelines.
- parents, volunteers and school community members
- volunteers who are elected members of a School representative body (SRB) or School management council (SMC) must also comply with:
 - School representative body policies
 - School council guidelines
 - School council guidelines – code of conduct for members.

Where an SRB or SMC does not have a code of conduct, SRB and SMC members must abide by the Code of conduct in schools.

This policy does not apply to students at the school in which they are enrolled. Expectations and standards of student behaviour are outlined in the Student Wellbeing and Positive Behaviour policy.

4. Unacceptable conduct

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.

5. Breaches

Breaches of the Code of conduct in schools will be managed in line with relevant legislation, department policy and the Code of conduct in schools - guidelines. Serious breaches may result in being issued a trespass notice by the school, NT Police involvement, or other legal action.

Breaches will be:

- managed promptly and proportionately
- documented accurately
- escalated where necessary.

Serious breaches must be reported to the principal and relevant authorities immediately.

Consequences for school community members who breach the Code of conduct may include:

- verbal reminder of obligations under the Code of conduct or warning of consequences
- written warning and documentation of the breach and intended action
- requirement to undertake Appropriate Workplace Behaviours refresher training
- requirement to participate in mediation or restorative justice practices
- restricted access to school premises or activities
- suspension or termination of volunteering or service engagement
- formal exclusion from school premises under relevant legislation
- referral to external authorities for serious matters, for example: violence, threats, child safety concerns.

6. Roles and responsibilities

6.1. Principal

The principal is responsible for:

- implementing and promoting the Code of conduct in schools policy
- displaying Code of conduct in schools posters across the school
- providing clear advice on roles and responsibilities in relation to this policy
- taking appropriate action following a breach of the Code of conduct 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
- supporting principals to manage breaches of this policy, particularly regarding staff conduct.

6.3. Director School Operations

Directors, School Operations are responsible for:

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

6.4. School representative bodies and school management councils

School bodies are responsible for:

- advising all school body staff employed under subsection 107(1)(k) or subsection 119(1)(g) of the Act that they must abide by to the Code of conduct in schools
- ensuring all school body committee members adopt their school body Code of conduct and model behaviours that reflect the Code of conduct in schools.

6.5. Parents, volunteers and school community members

Parents volunteers and school community members are responsible for:

- understanding the purpose of the Code of conduct in schools and how to access and use it
- demonstrating behaviours that align with the Code of conduct in schools
- report any breaches of the Code of conduct in schools to the principal.

7. Definitions

Term	Definition
Breach	Any action or behaviour that violates the standards outlined in this policy or associated guidelines
Misusing social media, phones, email or other digital platforms	Using technology to harass, spread misinformation, share inappropriate content or breach confidentiality
Parent	Means: 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	Means: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a school representative body • a school management council • a multi-school management council
School community members	All school staff, families, and persons who have direct involvement or interest in the school including all employees, visitors, volunteers and service providers, employed or engaged 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 <i>Education Act 2015</i> and includes a multi-school management council established for more than one school
School representative body	An incorporated body under the <i>Education Act 2015</i> and includes independent public school boards, school councils and joint school representative bodies
School representative body and school management council employees	All persons employed by a school representative body or school management council
School representative body and school management council members	Individuals, other than enrolled students, who are elected members of the school representative body or school management council
Schools	Includes early childhood settings, primary schools, middle schools and senior 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

8. Related legislation, policy and resources

Additional related policy, legislation and resources are listed in the Code of conduct for schools – guidelines.

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

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

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

8.3. Resources

Code of conduct for schools - poster - <https://elearn.ntschoools.net/policies/3978>

Code of conduct in schools – guidelines – <https://elearn.ntschoools.net/policies/3978>

Family Engagement Charter – <https://education.nt.gov.au/statistics-research-and-strategies/family-engagement-charter>

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

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

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2	April 2023	Quality Standards and Regulation – Operational Policy	Administrative amendments to align roles and responsibilities to the structural alignment in effect from 1 July 2022, including NTG template and minor formatting
3	January 2026	School Operations	Updated to align with NT Government policy