

POLICY

Police in Schools

Responsibility of: Schools Policy and Operations
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1 POLICY

The Northern Territory Department of Education and Training (DET) supports schools working proactively with police to ensure safe and secure school communities.

Full cooperation must be given to the police to enable them to undertake their duties. In circumstances where police are required to speak with a student in relation to an offence, the requirements of the *Youth Justice Act* must be adhered to, particularly section 4(i) which provides that there should be no unnecessary interruption of a youth's education.

The principal and school staff must adopt a neutral role and ensure they are aware of the roles and responsibilities of police and schools as outlined in this policy.

Should police enquiries establish that a student is implicated as a suspect in an offence, enquiries should then cease and police will be responsible for conducting any investigation in line with normal police procedures. Formal interviewing of students should not occur on DET premises, except in exceptional circumstances.

2 BUSINESS NEED

Police, and in particular school based police officers (SBPOs) are extremely valuable resources in NT schools. The primary aim of police in schools is to provide positive, proactive police resources to the school community.

It is important that schools are supportive of the role of police in the community, and that close working relationships are developed and maintained between schools and police. Through regular, effective communication this aim can be achieved and the interests of both school personnel and the police met.

This policy provides schools with appropriate information and guidance in order to promote good working partnerships with police, in particular with SBPOs where they are allocated.

3 RESPONSIBILITIES

School contact person

The school contact person for police is the principal or the appropriate assistant principal nominated by the principal.

School based police officers

Each middle and senior school has a nominated SBPO as a police representative who works with the school and schools in their local area to facilitate links between the general public and the police, undertake a significant crime prevention role, provide significant advice and assistance and respond to low, medium and high level situations.

SBPOs operate in accordance with the NT Police, Fire and Emergency Services School Based Police Officers Standard Operating Procedures. Unless police operational requirements dictate otherwise the SBPO, in consultation with the principal may act in a consultative role at school, for example:

- Providing advice and assistance i.e. to students and their parents, and to school council/staff meetings on an informal, confidential basis whenever required.
- Supporting the delivery of educational curriculum as appropriate.
- Delivering Drug and Personal Safety Awareness programs in conjunction with classroom teachers
- Monitoring road safety and personal safety issues in the school.
- Monitoring possible criminal activity or behaviour in the community surrounding the school, including speaking to and obtaining information from witnesses, and assistance in locating offenders.
- Performing normal police duties as required.

Schools with no allocated SBPO should utilise police services through a SBPO in their area or contact their local police station.

SBPOs are not permitted to wear, carry, or secure any police issue firearm in any Northern Territory school and are prohibited from teaching students how to use a firearm or any other operational safety equipment issued to police.

Schools with an allocated SBPO should provide a separate secure office at the school for the SBPO's use. Where this is not possible the SBPO must be provided with a work area that provides sufficient security and confidentiality.

Police contact person

The Sergeant of the School Based Policing Unit (SBPU) in Darwin is the central contact person for schools in Katherine, Darwin, Nhulunbuy, Katherine and Alyangula. The Officer in Charge of the Crime Prevention Section in Alice Springs is the central contact for schools in Alice Springs and Tennant Creek. Schools may contact the Sergeant SBPU regarding any concerns relating to the performance of a SBPO.

Where the Sergeant SBPU is not available, schools should contact the Officer in Charge of Crime Prevention. In areas where there is no dedicated SBPO, the officer in charge of the local police station may be the most appropriate contact or schools may contact the Officer in Charge of the Crime Prevention Section in either Darwin or Alice Springs for advice.

Schools managers

Schools managers are responsible for ensuring that principals have adhered to the requirements of this policy.

4 DEFINITION

Responsible adult: has the same meaning as in Division 2 section 5 of the *Youth Justice Act*; in respect of a youth, means a person who exercises parental responsibility for the youth, whether the responsibility is exercised in accordance with contemporary social practice, Aboriginal customary law and Aboriginal tradition or in any other way;

Support person: has the same meaning as in section 35 of the *Youth Justice Act*; (a) a responsible adult in respect of the youth; (b) a person nominated by the youth; (c) a legal practitioner acting for the youth; (d) a person called upon under subsection (5). Section 35(5) states that if a police officer has made reasonable attempts to have a person mentioned in subsection (1)(a), (b) or (c) present but it was not practicable for any such person to be present within 2 hours, the officer may call upon a person from the register maintained under section 14 of the *Youth Justice Act* to be the support person.

5 RELATED POLICIES

Child Protection and Mandatory Reporting (under development)
Drug Taking By Students
Emergency Preparedness and Continuity Management (under development)
Improper Conduct of a Sexual Nature against a student by any person associated with a school/college

6 REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

[Building Relationships & School Wellbeing](#)
[Community Welfare Act](#) (and when commenced, the [Care and Protection of Children Act](#))
[Criminal Code Act](#)
[DEET Drug Education](#): Drug Awareness and Personal Safety Program
NT Police, School Based Police Officers Standard Operating Procedures (Northern Territory Police Fire and Emergency Services)
[Safe Schools NT Code of Behaviour](#)
[Safe Schools NT Information for Parents and Students](#)
[Youth Justice Act](#)

7 GUIDELINES/PROCEDURES

Please refer to the DET *Police in Schools Guidelines*.