



Northern
Territory
Government

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Teacher Responsibilities

a Guide for Teachers and School Leaders in NT Government Schools 2012



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OVERVIEW

The *Teacher Responsibilities – a Guide for Teachers and School Leaders in NT Government Schools* has been developed to assist teachers by clarifying their responsibilities and the way in which they work with teaching colleagues. The guide aims to help teachers meet the needs of students, work with parents or caregivers and other staff, and liaise with the public. It also provides clear statements of expectations of responsible and committed teachers in an NT Government school.

The agency is committed to support the achievement of student outcomes and recognises that quality of teacher practice is central to school performance and the achievement of those outcomes.

Teachers in Northern Territory Government schools have a responsibility to create a learning environment which ensures that their students acquire the knowledge and skills they need to become effective learners and responsible citizens who contribute to Australian society.

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 behavior required by the agency, the Northern Territory Teacher Registration Board, parents and the public. This includes an ongoing commitment to professional learning to maintain currency of practice.

Schools are best placed to decide how to deploy teachers to deliver quality education. Hence the allocation of teacher work is managed at the school level within reasonable and transparent Territory-wide parameters that recognise the changing nature of work organisation in schools.

Principals are responsible for the educational outcomes of their schools. Principals will work together with their leadership teams and teachers in a collaborative and consultative manner to achieve required outcomes.

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

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

ALLOCATION OF TEACHER WORK

Four factors are to be considered in determining this distribution of work.

- A. **Face-to-face teaching**, including timetabled classes, relief classes, VET delivery or supervision, pastoral care sessions and assemblies.
- B. **Other professional responsibilities** of teachers, including marking, preparation, assessment, meetings, student supervision including yard duty, reporting and organisational duties.
- C. **Contextual factors**, including class size, curriculum mix, range of ability and age of students, resources available and facilities.

- D. **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.

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 within the parameters of the Teachers and Educators 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 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.

A. FACE-TO-FACE TEACHING

Face-to-face teaching is undertaken during Instruction Time.

Instruction Time equates to a minimum of 5 hours and 20 minutes per day in NT Government schools.

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 and senior schools according to the agency's VET for School Students policy¹.
4. Relief lessons that are allocated to replace absent teachers.
5. School assemblies.

The maximum face-to-face teaching hours for teachers are as follows.

| <i>Stage of Schooling</i> | <i>Instruction Time (maximum)</i> |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <i>Classroom Teacher</i> | |
| Preschool | 23 hours and 40 minutes ² |
| Primary Years | 23 hours and 40 minutes |
| Middle Years | 21 hours and 20 minutes |
| Senior Years | 21 hours and 20 minutes |

¹ The VET for School Students policy states that VET programs may be available to some targeted students in Years 8 and 9 who: have special needs; or, are 'at risk' of disengaging from school education; or, are in remote areas; or, have a disability. VET programs for these students are negotiated between the school, the student's guardian and the training provider.

² Preschool Teachers delivering traditionally structured programs access non-contact time by not conducting classes for one session per week. Transitional arrangements apply in schools trialling other arrangements leading up to the implementation of Universal Access from 2013.

| | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------|---|
| Senior Teacher | 0.75 of teacher load | Primary: 17 hours and 30 minutes Middle: 16 hours Senior: 16 hours |
| Assistant Principal | 0.5 of teacher load | Primary: 11 hours and 40 minutes Middle: 10 hours and 40 minutes Senior: 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 above specified maximum 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.

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, providing the overall work commitment is neither excessive nor unreasonable.

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 is available and the option that is most appropriate for 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.

B. 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. However the normal work hours are 36 hours and 45 minutes and it is expected that a teacher's work will usually be able to be done in that amount of time.

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. (It should be noted that different arrangements to those stated below may be appropriate in non-standard contexts, such as 1-2 teacher schools, or special centres.)

1. Yard duties (usually not more than three 20 minute supervisions per week 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 work day. It is acknowledged that some flexibility may be required from time to time. However 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 as negotiated to discuss student outcomes and school projects or programs.

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.
7. Student welfare in the capacity of the level of expertise reasonably expected to be demonstrated by a teacher without formal counseling 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:

- The equitable distribution of other duties within the school
- The relative importance of the various duties to be undertaken
- The time required to perform the duty
- The range and frequency of tasks to be performed
- The classification, qualifications, training and experience of the teacher, and
- The preparation and correction requirements.

Non-contact time should be allocated in useable blocks of time, for example not less than 30 minutes, for the purpose of preparation, planning, assessment and correction.

Allocated non-contact time for teachers is as follows.

| <i>Classification</i> | <i>Non-Contact Time (minimum)</i> |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <i>Classroom Teachers</i> | |
| Preschool | One session per week ³ |
| Primary Years | 3 hours |
| Middle Years | 5 hours and 20 minutes |
| Senior Years | 5 hours and 20 minutes |

³ Preschool teachers teaching full-day programs access non-contact time on par with teachers in the Primary Years. Note that non-contact time for Preschool teachers will vary with implementation of Universal Access in 2013.

Teaching Principals are provided the equivalent of one day per week without classes to meet administrative responsibilities.

C. 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
- Resources available.

In allocating work equitably across all teachers in a school, the Principal will consider areas of learning which may require specific attention, for example classes where students may require a higher level of supervision to ensure their safety. Having effective occupational health and safety practices in the workplace will assist in identifying, eliminating or at the very least mitigating risk factors that can lead to injury or illness. Whilst reasonable care will be taken to prevent injury to a student, it cannot be guaranteed under any circumstances that this will not occur.

Where a teacher is required to travel between school campuses or to outstations, adequate time will be allowed for the travel and associated logistical requirements. Such travel may on occasion be outside the normal work day. However, where travel is regularly outside the normal work day, the Principal and teacher will negotiate a fair time in lieu arrangement.

D. 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 and after school sport.

When considering allocation of work to teachers Principals should distinguish between work that can be required of a teacher and work that a teacher may choose to undertake.

However 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 pre-service 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
5. Outside school and/or out of hours student activities such as excursions and camps.

STUDENT SUPERVISION – SPAN OF HOURS

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. 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.

BREAKS

A teacher's day is required to include a meal break, preferably of at least 30 minutes and without the need to supervise students. 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.

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 work day. 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.

WORKLOAD MANAGEMENT

In accordance with the *Northern Territory Public Sector Teacher and Educator 2010-2013 Enterprise Agreement*, Principals will:

- a) Ensure employees have sufficient and appropriate resources to undertake their jobs
- b) Ensure the tasks allocated to employees can reasonably be performed in the hours for which they are employed, including reasonable additional hours

- c) Monitor employee workloads, work patterns, priorities, staffing levels/classifications, use of work/life balance arrangements, and any other relevant indicators within the workplace
- d) Implement strategies to ensure workloads remain reasonable
- e) Monitor vacant positions and fill vacancies in a timely manner, and
- f) Consult with employees and their nominated representatives over workload issues.

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.

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.

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 agency 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.

Where matters relating to allocation of teacher work cannot be resolved at the local level, an aggrieved employee may request a review of their treatment in employment in accordance with the agency's Grievance Management policy.

FURTHER ASSISTANCE

If you require assistance or wish to clarify any matters related to the management of teacher work, please contact your HR Consultant available on (08) 8999 5659.