

## > Schooling in the Northern Territory

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If your child will be going to school in the Northern Territory, this information is for you.

### High-quality education

Territory schools provide high-quality education, in line with nationally recognised standards. Student-teacher ratios are among the lowest in Australia. The Territory's diverse population including the high number of Indigenous students provides a multicultural learning environment.

Children are taught a curriculum that covers the eight nationally agreed key learning areas: English, Health and Physical Education, Languages, Mathematics, Science, Studies of Society and Environment, Technology and the Arts. Territory children participate in the Multilevel Assessment Program (MAP), which measures their learning against national benchmarks. The results are reported to parents.

Literacy and numeracy have a high priority because it is recognised they give children a sound base for learning in all areas. Territory schools employ a range of proven literacy and numeracy strategies used around Australia.

To support their learning, children can access computers and the internet in the classroom.

Teachers in Territory schools must have appropriate tertiary qualifications.

Many schools also have specialist teachers to deliver a range of programs such as English as a Second Language and special needs.

### Stages of school

Children must be enrolled in school from the ages of 6 to 15.

Preschool is not compulsory, although it is highly recommended. Children can attend government preschools from the age of four. At some non-government preschools, children can start earlier than this.

At age five or soon after, children start Transition, the first stage of primary school. Children often enter Transition mid-term, depending on their birthdays and the numbers of other children in that age group. Children are in Transition for up to 12 months and move into Year 1 when the school and parents agree they are ready. Students attend primary school until they complete Year 7.

For Years 8 to 12, children attend secondary school. In Alice Springs, secondary school starts in Year 7. Students are legally required to attend school until the age of 15, which is usually during Year 10.





Students who continue their education until Year 12 can complete the Northern Territory Certificate of Education. The NTCE is the equivalent of senior secondary certificates across Australia.

## Choosing a school for your child

Government schools are not zoned unless a school has reached or is about to reach capacity. If a school is full or almost full, children from within the school's feeder area will have priority.

To choose a school for your child, call the schools that may be suitable and arrange a time to visit or speak with the principal or a senior staff member.

Contact details for Territory schools are available from the Department of Employment, Education and Training's Media and Marketing Services on 08 8901 4909.

## School hours

Most primary and secondary schools are open from 8.00am to 2.30pm, Monday to Friday. Preschools offer morning and afternoon sessions for students. Some schools alter their hours to suit local conditions. Extracurricular activities such as rehearsals, excursions and sports activities are often held outside normal school hours.

## Costs

Government schools do not charge tuition fees. However, most schools ask parents or guardians to pay an annual school levy. The levy is not compulsory but, since it is used to complement existing programs and provide additional resources for students, most parents are willing to pay. The amount of the levy is determined by the school's council or parent body.

Parents are also responsible for funding school excursions, camps and extracurricular activities.

## School uniforms

There is no Territory-wide uniform policy for government schools. Each school has its own school uniform policy and a sun safety policy.

## The school environment

All Territory schools are regularly maintained and refurbished. Wherever possible, design features meet the challenges of the climate e.g. plenty of shade and water fountains.

Classrooms and offices are airconditioned, and many schools provide refrigeration for students' lunches. Schools are designed to cater for wet season rains with covered walkways and protected or enclosed recreation areas.

