



# Mandatory reporting training instructions

Training must be conducted at the commencement of each school semester. Staff who do not undertake training at the start of each semester must complete the training at their earliest convenience (for new staff this must be within one week of commencement).

It is recommended that:

- minimum of 60 minutes is allocated to delivering the presentation
- a copy of the department's Mandatory Reporting of Harm and Exploitation of Children Guidelines and the presentation is provided to participants
- discussion is encouraged during the training presentation
- participants are provided with a means to anonymously ask questions and voice concerns.

Department of EDUCATION

# Mandatory reporting of harm and exploitation of children

21 January 2020





# Prevention of child harm and exploitation

Child harm or exploitation can be prevented.

Alternative services outside of Territory Families can help.

Territory Families and Children Enquiry and Support (FACES) can provide information about referrals to external services and agencies.



# Territory FACES

Provides opportunity for early intervention by connecting families with tailored support services and resources to assist or resolve difficulties or concerns, and prevent problems from escalating.

FACES can be contacted by calling 1800 999 900 between 8am-8pm Monday to Friday.

FACES is for anyone living in the Northern Territory, including:

- parents and carers
- children and young people
- family members
- community members
- professionals working with families and/or children.



**Every person in the  
Northern Territory  
is required to report.**



# Mandatory reporting

**Territory Families** – responsibility for investigating allegations of child harm or exploitation that is the result of an act or omission of the child’s parents or carers.

**Police** – responsibility for investigating allegations of child harm or exploitation by people who are not part of the child’s household and the harm or exploitation is not a result of something their parents did, or failed to do AND allegations relating to criminal or sexual offences.



# Role and responsibilities

- making a report if they believe on reasonable grounds that a child:
  - has suffered, or is likely to suffer, harm or exploitation
  - aged less than 14 years has been, or is likely to be, a victim of a sexual offence
  - aged less than 14 years is, or is likely to be, sexually active even if that child's parent is aware of the situation
  - over the age of 16 years and in a special care relationship has been, or is likely to be, a victim of an offence according to the Criminal Code Act
  - is exposed to domestic and family violence
  - has been, or is likely to be, a victim of criminal or sexual offences, including sexual misconduct against a student by a co-worker or colleague
- informing their principal or director/manager when a mandatory report has been made
- understanding and supporting the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, in particular:
  - complying with obligations of information sharing and record keeping
  - recognising the signs of harm and facilitating child-friendly ways for children to communicate and raise concerns
  - participating in continual education and training to develop knowledge, skills and awareness to keep students safe
- undertaking mandatory reporting training at the start of each semester (and signing the attendance acknowledgement) if they work directly with students.

# Legislation





# Care and Protection of Children Act 2007 (NT)

Act promotes the wellbeing and protection of children from harm and exploitation to maximise their opportunities to develop to their full potential.

# Domestic and Family Violence Act 2007 (NT)

Act provides for the protection of persons in a domestic relationship against violence.



# Sexual Offences (Evidence and Procedure) Act 1983 (NT)

Act relates to evidence and procedure in the examination of witnesses and the trial of persons in respect of sexual offences.

## Criminal Code Act 1983 (NT)

Act establishes a code of criminal law.



# National Principles for Child Safe Organisations

# National Principles for Child Safe Organisations

1. Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.
2. Children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.
3. Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.
4. Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.
5. People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.

# National Principles for Child Safe Organisations

6. Processes to respond to complaints and concerns are child focused.
7. Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.
8. Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.
9. Implementation of the national child safe principles is regularly reviewed and improved.
10. Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.

# Reporting



# When to report

As soon as possible once a belief has been formed, on reasonable grounds, that a child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, harm or exploitation.



# Who makes the report

The person (adult) who has formed the belief that child may have been, or is at risk of being, harmed or exploited must make the report.

This is a legal requirement and ensures that the most accurate and reliable information is reported.

**All reports are confidential.** A reporter's identity will not be disclosed, confirmed or denied nor will the reporter's identity be included in documents prepared for court, except where the court orders the information to be provided.

Section 27 of the Care and Protection of Children Act protects a person making a report from civil or criminal liability if they have done so in good faith.





# How to make a report

**If it is an emergency, call 000 and ask for police.**

If it is not an emergency:

1. Report to Territory Families by calling 1800 700 250 or completing an online report at [childprotectionreport.nt.gov.au](http://childprotectionreport.nt.gov.au).
2. If the matter involves the following, also make a report to police by calling 131 444 or at the local police station:
  - domestic, family or sexual violence
  - criminal or sexual offences, including sexual misconduct against a student by a co-worker or colleague.
3. If the matter involves a child enrolled in an early childhood education program and the incident occurred on the program site, also make a report to the Quality Education and Care Northern Territory by calling (08) 8999 3561 or emailing [qualityedcnt.det@nt.gov.au](mailto:qualityedcnt.det@nt.gov.au).



# Information to be provided when making a report

The person making the report will be asked to provide the following information to the best of their ability:

## Identifying information:

- reporter's details
- child's details
- parent's details
- extended family or support network details.

## Type of harm:

- neglect
- emotional
- physical
- sexual
- cumulative.

## Information about:

- what has happened to the child
- when it occurred
- where the incident happened
- who was there
- who is potentially responsible for the harm.

The person making the report should keep a record of:

- date and time the report was made
- reference number provided by Territory Families and police.

# Understanding harm and exploitation

# What is harm?

Harm to a child is any significant effect caused by any act, omission or commission:

- the physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing of the child
- the physical, psychological or emotional development of the child
- the emotional abuse or neglect, or sexual abuse or other exploitation of a child
- the exposure of a child to physical violence.

# What is exploitation?

Exploitation of a child includes any sexual abuse of a child, any forms of exploitation, or involving the child as a participant or spectator in any act of a sexual nature, prostitution or pornographic performance.

# Understanding harm and exploitation

PHYSICAL

CUMULATIVE  
HARM

SEXUAL

EMOTIONAL

NEGLECT

GROOMING

Note this falls under sexual harm

# Understanding harm and exploitation

## **Physical harm**

Refers to all non-accidental physical injuries or impairment or where there is significant risk of injuries occurring. This also includes exposure and involvement in domestic violence.

Physical harm by a parent/caregiver to a child can be caused by actions such as the child being, for example: punched, kicked, slapped, shaken, bitten, burnt, and hit/injury by an object.

# Understanding harm and exploitation

## Sexual harm

Sexual harm to a child is when someone bigger or older, usually an adult, involves a child in any sexual activity or sexual threat. It involves an abuse of the unequal power relationship between the child and the adult or other person, and is a betrayal of the child's trust.

Coercion (physical and emotional), and exploitation of the dependency and immaturity of children is intrinsic to child sexual abuse.

Sexually abusive behaviours may include exposure to sexually explicit material, sexualised photographs of the child and genital exposure, fondling, voyeurism, persistent intrusion of a child's privacy, involvement with pornography, digital penile or object penetration, child prostitution and female genital mutilation.

# Understanding harm and exploitation

## Grooming

An individual persuading a child they have a special relationship with them, and inappropriately:

- spending special time with a child
- giving gifts to a child
- showing special favours to one child but not others
- allowing the child to step out of boundaries or rules
- testing and breaking of professional boundaries.



# Understanding harm and exploitation

## **Emotional harm**

Occurs when a child's social, emotional or cognitive development is impaired or is at significant risk as a direct result of carer's persistent failure to meet the child's emotional need for love and security, or their psychological needs for stimulation/nurturing.

May include:

- constant criticism
- name-calling
- rejection
- withholding praise
- exposure to domestic and family violence.

# Understanding harm and exploitation

## **Neglect**

The repeated failure to meet a child's basic physical and emotional necessities of life including:

- supervision
- shelter
- nutrition
- education-attendance (school responsibility not Territory Families)
- personal hygiene
- medical care.

# Understanding harm and exploitation

## **Cumulative harm (multiple dimensional abuse)**

- effects of multiple adverse circumstances and events in a child's life
- the experiences of these prolonged and repeated events on the child can be profound and cumulative, diminishing a child's sense of safety, stability and wellbeing
- cumulative harm is especially relevant to chronic neglect and emotional abuse where there the damaging effects are unlikely to be evident after a single incident.



# Responding to a child's disclosure of harm

Revealing information about an action that may lead to serious consequences, incidents can include:

- suspected harm or exploitation of students
- sexual behaviour in students
- student injuries
- behaviour requiring intervention (behaviour management)
- drug-related incidents.



# Responding to a child's disclosure of harm

1. Actively listen to what the child is saying, allow them to speak with minimal interruption, and reassure them.
2. Once they have finished, ask open ended questions in order to obtain as much information as possible to make a report. This should be done in a manner that does not place any unnecessary duress on the child.
3. In language that is appropriate to the child's age and stage of development, let the child know that their confidentiality cannot be maintained and that a report to the relevant authority must be made. For example:  
*Younger children:* "Thank you for trusting and sharing this with me. I believe you. This is very serious and my job is to talk to someone who is going to help you. We want you to be safe. You are not alone".  
*Older children:* "Thank you for trusting and sharing this with me. I believe you. This is very serious. I am required to report this to someone who specialises in this area. We want you to be safe. You are not alone".
4. In every case, reassure the student that disclosing the matter was the right thing to do and that reporting the matter will help stop (or prevent) the harm or exploitation.

**Do not undertake an investigation, including questioning other children or adults. The allegation will be investigated by Territory Families and/or police.**

# Sexual behaviours in children



It is natural for children to display sexual behaviours.

Response to sexual behaviours in children can vary from  
talking to the child  
about school behaviour expectations  
to making a report to the  
Department of Territory Families or the Police.



# Traffic Lights<sup>®</sup> Guide

The department has adopted the Traffic Lights Guide to promote consistent and appropriate approach to responding to sexual behaviours in children.

The guide is a tool developed by **True: Relationships and Reproductive Health** to assist adults:

- to identify and respond to sexual behaviours in children
- support the development of healthy sexuality
- protect children and young people from harm and abuse.



## RED

Sexual behaviours which indicate or cause harm because they are:

- excessive, compulsive, coercive, forceful, degrading or threatening
- secretive, manipulative or involve bribery or trickery
- not appropriate for the age and stage of development
- between children with a significant difference in age, developmental ability or power

These behaviours signal the need to provide immediate protection and follow up support.

0 to 4 years

- compulsive masturbation which may be self injurious, of a persistent nature or duration
- persistent explicit sexual themes in talk, art or play
- disclosure of sexual abuse
- simulation of sexual touch or sexual activity
- persistently touching the genitals/private parts of others
- forcing other children to engage in sexual activity
- sexual behaviour between young children involving penetration with objects, masturbation of others, oral sex
- presence of a sexually transmitted infection

5 to 9 years

- compulsive masturbation e.g. self injuring, self harming, seeking an audience
- disclosure of sexual abuse
- persistent bullying involving sexual aggression e.g. pulling/lifting/removing other children's clothing, sexually threatening notes, drawing, text messages
- sexual behaviour with significantly younger or less able children
- accessing the rooms of sleeping children to touch or engage in sexual activity
- simulation of, or participation in, sexual activities e.g. oral sex, sexual intercourse
- presence of a sexually transmitted infection
- persistent sexual activity with animals
- using mobile phones and internet which includes giving out identifying details or sexual images

10 to 13 years

- compulsive masturbation e.g. self harming, seeking an audience
- engaging vulnerable others in a process to gain sexual activity by using grooming techniques e.g. gifts, lies, flattery
- force or coercion of others into sexual activity
- oral sex and/or intercourse with a person of different age, developmental ability and/or peer grouping
- presence of sexually transmitted infection or pregnancy
- deliberately sending and/or publishing sexual images of self or another person
- arranging a face to face meeting with an online acquaintance
- sexual contact with animals
- sexual activity in exchange for money or goods
- possessing, accessing or sending child exploitation materials e.g. photos of children naked or in sexual activities

14 to 17 years

- compulsive masturbation e.g. self harming, in public, seeking an audience
- preoccupation with sexually aggressive and/or illegal pornography
- sexual contact with others of significant age and/or developmental difference
- engaging others in a process to gain sexual activity by using grooming techniques e.g. gifts, manipulation, lies
- deliberately sending and/or publishing sexual images of another person without their consent
- arranging a meeting with an online acquaintance without the knowledge of a peer or known adult
- sexual contact with animals
- sexual activity in exchange for money, goods, accommodation, drugs or alcohol
- forcing or manipulating others into sexual activity
- possessing, accessing or sending child exploitation materials

## ORANGE

Sexual behaviours which cause concern because of:

- persistence, intensity, frequency or duration of behaviours
- the type of activity or knowledge for the age and stage of development
- inequality in age, size, power or developmental ability
- risk to the health and safety of the child or others
- unusual changes in a child's behaviour

These behaviours signal the need to monitor and provide extra support.

0 to 4 years

- masturbation in preference to other activities
- preoccupation with sexual behaviours
- persistently watching others in sexual activity, toileting or when nude
- explicit sexual talk, art or play
- following others into private spaces e.g. toilets, bathrooms to look at them or touch them
- pulling other children's pants down or skirts up against their will
- touching the genitals/private parts of other children in preference to other activities
- attempting to touch or touching adults on the breasts, bottom, or genitals in ways that are persistent and/or invasive
- touching the genitals/private parts of animals after redirection

5 to 9 years

- masturbation in preference to other activities, in public, with others and/or causing self injury
- explicit talk, art or play of sexual nature
- persistent questions about sexuality despite being answered
- persistent nudity and/or exposing private parts in public places
- persistently watching or following others to look at or touch them
- pulling other children's pants down or skirts up against their will
- persistently mimicking sexual flirting behaviour too advanced for age, with other children or adults
- touching genitals/private parts of animals after redirection
- use of mobile phone and internet with known and unknown people which may include giving out identifying details

10 to 13 years

- masturbation in preference to other activities, in public and/or causing self injury
- persistent explicit talk, art or play which is sexual or sexually intimidating
- accessing age restricted materials e.g. movies, games, internet with sexually explicit content
- persistent expression of fear of sexually transmitted infection or pregnancy
- marked changes to behaviour e.g. older or adult flirting behaviours, seeking relationships with older children or adults in preference to peers
- engaging in sexual activities with an unknown peer e.g. deep kissing, mutual masturbation
- oral sex and/or intercourse with a known partner of similar age and developmental ability
- using mobile phones and internet with unknown people which may include giving out identifying details

14 to 17 years

- sexual preoccupation which interferes with daily function
- intentional spying on others while they are engaged in sexual activity or nudity
- explicit communications, art or actions which are obscene or sexually intimidating
- repeated exposure of private parts in a public place with peers e.g. flashing
- unsafe sexual behaviour, including unprotected sex, sexual activity while intoxicated, multiple partners and/or frequent change of partner
- presence of sexually transmitted infection or unplanned pregnancy
- oral sex and/or intercourse with known partner of more than two years age difference or with significant difference in development
- arranging a meeting with an online acquaintance accompanied by a peer or known adult
- using mobile phones and internet to send or receive sexual images of another person with their consent

## GREEN

Sexual behaviours which are part of normal and healthy development and are:

- spontaneous, curious, light hearted, easily diverted, enjoyable, mutual and consensual
- appropriate to the child's age and development
- activities of play among equals in terms of age, size and ability levels
- about understanding and gathering information, balanced with curiosity about other parts of life

These behaviours provide opportunities to talk, explain and support.

0 to 4 years

- comfort in being nude
- body touching and holding own genitals
- unselfconscious masturbation
- interest in body parts and functions
- wanting to touch familiar children's genitals during play, toilet or bath times
- participation in make believe games involving looking at and/or touching the bodies of familiar children e.g. "show me yours and I'll show you mine", playing 'family'
- asking about or wanting to touch the breasts, bottoms or genitals of familiar adults e.g. when in the bath

5 to 9 years

- increased sense of privacy about bodies
- body touching and holding own genitals
- masturbation, usually with awareness of privacy
- curiosity about other children's genitals involving looking at and/or touching the bodies of familiar children e.g. "show me yours and I'll show you mine", playing 'family'
- curiosity about sexuality e.g. questions about babies, gender, relationships, sexual activity
- telling stories or asking questions, using swear words, 'toilet' words or names for private parts
- use of mobile phones and internet in relationships with known peers

10 to 13 years

- growing need for privacy
- masturbation in private
- curiosity and seeking information about sexuality
- use of sexual language
- interest and/or participation in girlfriend or boyfriend relationships
- hugging, kissing, touching with known peers
- exhibitionism amongst same age peers within the context of play e.g. occasional flashing or mooning
- use of mobile phones and internet in relationships with known peers

14 to 17 years

- need for privacy
- masturbation in private
- accessing information about sexuality
- viewing materials for sexual arousal e.g. music videos, magazines, movies
- sexually explicit mutual conversations and/or use of humour and obscenities with peers
- interest and/or participation in a one on one relationship with someone of the same or other sex
- sexual activity with a partner of similar age and developmental ability (ability to consent must be considered)
- use of mobile phones and internet in relationships with peers

# Support and resources




# Self care

- Be aware of your own beliefs and values when formulating allegations of harm and your expectations regarding the role and response from Territory Families.
- Build reporting and support processes within your team/unit.
- Seek support when a matter has impacted you on a personal and/or professional level.

# Professional Reporters Tool

Menu Resources


 **NORTHERN TERRITORY GOVERNMENT** | TERRITORY FAMILIES Professional Reporters Tool Online Training

## About the Central Intake Team


Through the PRT, you can complete a mandatory report and access educational resources to support you in making reports.

Where a report involves imminent high risk to the child, significant injury or involves multiple family groups, we recommend speaking directly with the Central Intake service.

Professional Reporters Tool



Child Protection Hotline  
1800 700 250



# Professional Reporters Tool

NORTHERN TERRITORY GOVERNMENT TERRITORY FAMILIES Professional Reporters Tool Online Training

## When to use this tool

The family needs some support.	I need to make a report.	I'd like to speak to someone (I need advice or it's urgent).	This person is in immediate danger.
Territory FACES 1800 999 900	Central Intake Online Tool	Central Intake 1800 700 250	Police 000

Questions or comments?