

School Based Police Program key messages

Current situation

- Police previously redeployed to COVID-19 duties began returning to schools in October 2020, the number of officers has now increased to eight. They are operating in high schools, middle schools and senior colleges in Darwin, Palmerston and Katherine.

Expanding program

- Last year Government made a decision to expand the program by five officers to 15.
- At the time the decision was subject to an embargo which limited the ability to undertake wider consultation.
- The additional five officers will allow Education to expand the program to another three schools.
- The three new schools will be Darwin High School, Nhulunbuy High School, and Centralian Senior College.
- Due to the high number of year 7-10 enrolments, Palmerston College and Taminmin College will both have two officers.
- The second officer in each school will support their schools and provide support and relief across the program.
- School selection has been aimed at engaging the greatest number of students in the targeted years with the resources available.

Refocus of the program

- Along with the expansion, there will be a refocus of the program, in line with the recommendations of the 2019 School Based Police Program Review.
- One of the key recommendations of the Review was the need to clearly define the program aims.
- The aim of the program going forward will be to improve young people's (students years 7 to 10) understanding of community and safety issues to:
 - a) enhance positive relationships between police and young people;
 - b) improve safety, community connections, wellbeing and resilience; and
 - c) build understanding of their personal responsibility to contribute positively to community safety.
- The program will continue to focus on middle years (Years 7-10), but with a stronger emphasis on building positive relationships and proactively supporting the safety and wellbeing of students and the school community.
- The role of the officers in schools will not be to respond to, or manage incidents, relating to student behaviour.

- Like all NT schools, schools with officers in place will need to implement a whole-school approach to student well-being and positive behaviour, and develop and implement emergency plans and procedures in accordance with DE policies
- NT Police are currently in consultation with the Northern Territory Police Association in regard to expanding the police auxiliary model to also include the role of School Based Officers. Further advice on any resourcing of the new model will be provided when that process is complete.

Consultative Group

- Another improvement in the program will be the establishment of a Consultative Group.
- This group will be comprised of school principals from participating schools and representatives from NT Police and Education. Key stakeholders will be invited to attend as required.
- The Consultative Group will meet every term and be responsible for:
 - a. coordinating and supporting the activities of School Based Police Officers;
 - b. identifying and resolving operational issues;
 - c. consultation with program participants and key stakeholders, and
 - d. promoting co-operation and improving communication, information sharing and understanding between program members and stakeholders.
- The first meeting of the Consultative Group was held 27 May 2021. Members of the group received a brief which included a presentation from NT Police on the refocused program.

Potential Questions

What has happened to the implementation of the recommendations of the 2019 review?

These actions have been taken to address each of the recommendations:

- 1) *Develop a service delivery framework for the School-Based Police Program that clearly defines the program aim, target student cohort, roles and responsibilities, line management accountability, key performance indicators and program evaluation requirements (DoE and NT Police to develop jointly).*
 - a) DE and NT Police have developed a service delivery framework for the program which has been captured in a Memorandum of Understanding between the two agencies, as well as a Service Agreement in respect to the School Based Police Program.
 - b) The School Based Police Program Service Agreement clearly identifies the program objectives, target student cohort, role of the School Based Police Officers and participating agencies, as well as the management framework for the program.
 - c) The program objectives, target student cohort, roles and responsibilities, line management, accountability and key performance indicators are defined in more detail in the School Based Police Program Operational Guidelines, currently in draft form.
 - d) A Police in Schools Management Committee has been established to guide all current and future police programs and activities in schools.
 - e) A School Based Police Program Consultative Group will be established to act as a consultative body in relation to the operation of the School Based Police Program.

- f) A framework for program evaluation is currently being drafted to measure the impact of the program using qualitative and quantitative data.
- 2) *Update the operational guidelines for the School-Based Police Program to provide a clear and accessible document that articulates the service delivery framework for schools and school-based police officers (DoE as lead agency with NT Police input).*
- a) DE in collaboration with the NT Police have drafted School Based Police Program Operational Guidelines which will be circulated to program participants and stakeholders for review and feedback.
- b) The Police in Schools Guidelines currently on the DE webpage are being reviewed and refocused on School and Police engagement. Elements specifically relating to the School Based Police Program which are now addressed in the program's Operational Guidelines will be removed from the Police in Schools Guideline.

The Police in Schools Guideline will continue to provide guidance to all NT Government schools on managing incidents at schools and responding to emergency and exceptional circumstances.

- 3) *Review, update and rebadge Drug and Personal Awareness Safety Program (developed by DoE and NT Police in 2008-09) as the Police in Schools Resource Kit.*
- a) The actions in the recommendation have been completed. The Police in Schools Resource Kit has been developed with lessons and presentation mapped against the Australian Curriculum. A trial of the Kit in early 2020 was very positive. The Kit will be the primary source of material to assist in the presentation of lessons relating to personal safety and the law. The kit addresses:
- i) personal safety,
 - ii) road safety,
 - iii) alcohol and other drug safety,
 - iv) cyber safety; and
 - v) community safety.
- 4) *Provide program-specific professional development to school-based police to enhance consistent and key messaging in the school context (DoE and NT Police to action).*
- a) NT Police, in collaboration with DE are developing a three-week program-specific professional development training program for officers being deployed into the program.
- b) The requirements for on-going professional development which are addressed in the Operational Guidelines are still subject to consultation with stakeholders.
- c) Other program supports are being put in place to promote consistent messaging across the program, including the establishment of a School Based Police Program Consultative Group and police operational strategies, e.g. co-location of officers and on-line program musters.

When will COGSO be invited to Consultation Group meetings?

- COGSO will be invited to meetings of the Consultative Group as required to provide advice and stakeholder feedback.
- The Group will meet quarterly with a major focus on ironing out operational issues.

Where are officers now, and when will the new officers be placed into schools?

- The following schools currently have one dedicated officer:
 1. Darwin Middle School
 2. Casuarina Senior College
 3. Dripstone Middle School
 4. Taminmin College
 5. Nightcliff Middle School
 6. Palmerston College – Rosebery Campus (Middle School)
 7. Katherine High School
 8. Sanderson Middle School
- It is expected the remaining 7 officers will be in the following schools by Term 3, 2021:
 9. Darwin High School
 10. Centralian Middle School
 11. Centralian Senior School
 12. Nhulunbuy High School
 13. Tennant Creek High School

How should schools respond to emergency incidents?

- Schools should follow their emergency plans.
- NT Police advise that where a police response is required schools are to contact 131 444 or 000.
- If school staff require support responding to challenging behaviour they can contact Quality School Systems and Support or request support from Student Wellbeing and Inclusion.
- The dispatch unit will no longer direct schools to report the matter to the SBPO.

Can students tell police something in confidence?

- That will depend on what is said; police and teachers both have legislative responsibilities to act in relation to criminal offences, particularly in relation to mandatory reporting of domestic violence and child abuse. Police want a good relationship with students but need to act in accordance with legislation.

Is Tennant Creek on track to get an SBPO next term?

- Police will be recruiting to the position but acknowledge it has been difficult in the past.

What services will be available for other schools?

- All requests from Schools will continue to be assessed on a case-by-case basis.
- The focus of the program is on years 7–10 students. Most students will have access to the program as they move through school.
- Government's Multi Agency Community and Child Safety Teams continue to monitor hot-spots and provide wrap-around support for those communities, this includes police classroom presentations.
- SBPOs will continue to provide cyber safety lessons in partnership with the Australian Federal Police 'ThinkUKnow' program.

What will happen now?

- Consultation between NT Police, their Members and the NT Police Association, in relation to the operationalisation of the program is ongoing. Until those matters are agreed we can't advise on timing for the implementation of the program.
- Subject to the outcome of those consultations we expect that officers will be in most schools, existing and new, in Term 3 2021.
- A copy of the School Based Police Program Operational Guidelines will be provided for feedback and comment.