

Interstate School Visits (Immersions) : Processes and Procedures

(Including any Visitors to CENT Schools)

This process is in line with our Catholic Education Northern Territory (CENT) commitment to safeguarding children, young people and adults at risk. It is essential that records are maintained regarding anyone who visits our schools from outside CENT for any future needs that may arise.

CENT comprises 18 schools, 5 of which we call our Aboriginal Catholic Community Schools (ACCS). This process aligns with all our schools but we acknowledge that most visitors are more interested in some type of immersion process that involves visits to the remote communities.

Our ACCS welcome the opportunity to share our unique educational communities with other schools, however what is most important to us in these partnerships is that the outcomes of our students are improved. Visiting schools must have clearly articulated educational purposes which outline the benefits of the visit for our students as well as the visiting students. These are to be confirmed with the Principals as part of the approval process for immersions and be approved by the Bishop of Darwin and Director of Catholic Education which is processed through the school's Principal Consultant at the Catholic Education Office (CEO). This process, at times, may also be relevant to our regional and urban schools across the Northern Territory.

It is important that our school community is a place of learning and growth where our students feel safe, supported and respected. We would expect that visitors are extremely well prepared by their schools for the challenges of immersion and will not be surprised or ill prepared for the differences they will encounter. This will include (but not limited to) the following:

- Cultural Awareness programs undertaken by the staff, students and parents who may be attending. This program will be directed by Catholic Education Northern Territory (CENT) as each context is different and this does need to be taken into consideration
- That any adult attending our schools must provide a copy of a current Working With Children Clearance
- That CENT policies and procedures are followed for these visits by the attending school

We believe that what unites young people is much more significant than any perceived differences and a successful immersion from our point of view is one where visitors learn more and develop an awareness about their peers living in remote communities. A successful immersion is where students spend time with others, listening and learning with others in their daily routines. We view mutual respect as being central to achieving reconciliation and we expect visiting schools to uphold this as a central tenet of the experience.

Catholic Ethos

The values and beliefs of the Catholic faith are a firm component of our schools and how we operate. As such, we ask that all visiting schools share in and respect this faith community by attending local Church and school services, participating in homeroom and/or Assembly prayer, and showing respect and sensitivity to all they meet on immersion.

Working with Children / Child Protection Policy

As a system, we are committed to creating and maintaining safe and supportive environments for our students. Ensuring that all people onsite have this documentation is a mandatory requirement in the Northern Territory. This documentation will need to be provided to our schools prior to the intended visit as we are required to keep records.

Application Process

Schools must apply in writing to the Principal ideally one school semester prior to the intended visit by filling in Appendix A as an expression of interest. This would need to be formally accepted by the Principal and their Principal Consultant before any further preparation is considered.

Schools must outline intended outcomes, educational activities, group size and age, dates, accommodation and transport arrangements (further information below) and any community activities they intend to undertake while visiting our schools.

Once approval for visit has been granted, Appendix B must then be completed and sent to: ceo.safeguarding@nt.catholic.edu.au 6 weeks before the intended visit. The immersion will not be considered complete until formal response has been received from the Integrity Office at CENT giving the approval for the immersion to go ahead.

Where Clergy or Religious are also part of your group, it is a requirement that the Bishop's Office is informed of their visit to the Catholic Diocese of Darwin. The details and forms are available through this [link](#).

Costs

To cover the expenses associated with hosting visiting schools, CENT asks that \$500 (negotiated with School Principal) per day is paid by visiting schools. Our schools greatly appreciate any further fundraising or community support that visiting schools can offer.

Visiting schools often like to give gifts when leaving, however these are best organised in consultation with the Principal. A suitable donation in lieu of gifts would be appreciated and is more useful to our communities. Donations are utilised to provide our students with the best educational outcomes possible.

Staff to Student Ratios

This should be covered out clearly in your own risk assessments processes, but, our recommendation is that a ratio of 1:10 should be at the absolute minimum. Risk Assessments should be submitted to our schools and be reviewed by CENT WHS Manager before any immersion will be considered. Gender and cultural considerations should be part of this plan.

Accommodation

Each school has a different process regarding on-site accommodation. This will need to be negotiated with the school as most schools in our Aboriginal Communities cannot accommodate students on site for overnight stays due to safety concerns. This must be part of your risk assessment submitted to the CENT WHS Manager.

Food

Visiting schools are expected to arrange all their own food, either by bringing their own or purchasing items through the local stores. We encourage you to support the local economy by purchasing all/some items through the community store. Food can be pre-ordered and packaged ready for you by contacting the local shops. Please check availability before travelling as local conditions may see the local store not being fully stocked.

Transport

School groups will need to organise their own transport to and from the community they will visit. CENT Travel Officer can be contacted to suggest appropriate travel arrangements in getting to our communities, particularly for Bathurst Island. It is not CENTs role to coordinate any travel - this belongs with the visiting school.

Program

It is directed that schools critically reflect on the kind of initiatives and activities in which they wish to engage. It is to align with school charism or social justice issues and have a meaningful, positive impact on all involved with curriculum based activities/workshops provided as part of their immersion experience. The schedule and division of lesson time will be negotiated with the school prior to the trip. Visiting schools are also invited to spend time completing community service around the school, within the local Catholic parish and/or local community. It is not the role of the school to provide any resources for your visit, including sporting equipment.

Cultural Requirements

In a remote Indigenous community, there are important cultural guidelines which visitors must abide by to ensure respect and safety. This must be understood before the visit and outlined in your Risk Assessment.

For example, both males and females, shorts, skirts or dresses may not sit higher than the top of the knee. Strap tank tops, midriff shirts, or any low rise cut neck or arm holes may not be appropriate. For sun safety it is recommended that students always wear a t-shirt, preferably with a collar, and a hat.

Should you wish to visit one of our schools, we ask that you complete the relevant application form attached. Final decisions will be made by the School Principal in consultation with their Principal Consultant at the Catholic Education Office.

- 1. APPLICATION FORM: VISITING GROUP /IMMERSION GROUP**
- 2. APPLICATION FORM: VISITORS (not travelling with students)**

1. APPLICATION FORM: VISITING GROUP /IMMERSION GROUP

This form should be completed by all visiting groups 6 months before intended visit from other states or territories in Australia, PRIOR to visiting Catholic Education NT. The completed form should be forwarded to the school principal who will then pass onto the Catholic Education Office where final approval will be granted (or not).

Name of organisation / parish / person who extended the invitation:			
Name of organisation/ group invited:			
Names of parish / school/ community you are visiting:			
Previous contact/connection to the parish/school/community:			
Duration of visit	From:	To:	
Reason for visit (e.g. School Immersion, presenting workshop, studies, Mission work, retreat, Youth Ministry):			
Community activities intending to undertake:			
Intended mode of transport:			
Intended place to stay:			
Cultural Awareness Training undertaken prior to visit			

Leaders/Supervisors of group:

Name		Date of Birth:	
Working With Children Clearance Details:			
Name		Date of Birth:	
Working With Children Clearance Details:			
Name		Date of Birth:	
Working With Children Clearance Details:			
Name		Date of Birth:	
Working With Children Clearance Details:			



PLEASE ATTACH A COPY OF ANY WORKING WITH CHILDREN CLEARANCES OR ANY APPROPRIATE CLEARANCES.

Name/s of person/s in visiting group:		

Group Leader to Sign:			
Mobile:		Email:	

N.B. Once this section is completed and approval given, a Risk Assessment must be provided to CENT and approved before any final approvals are given to visit our school(s).

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Principal in consultation with Principal Consultant		Approved: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Signature:		Date:	

Sighted & verified WWCC; as required	Date:	
Updated CENT Integrity Office Visitor Register	Date:	

2. APPLICATION FORM: VISITORS (not travelling with students)

This form should be completed by all visitors wishing to visit from other states or territories in Australia, PRIOR to visiting Catholic Education NT. The completed form should be sent to [CENT INTEGRITY OFFICE](#).

Person Details	
Full Legal Name	
Date of Birth	
Current Organization (i.e. the organization to which you belong or which you represent)	
Mobile Number	
Email Address	
Postal Address	
Details of Visit	
Date(s) of visit	
Total Duration of Visit (days)	
Schools where services are being provided during visit	
Reason for visit (e.g. presenting workshop, studies, Mission work, retreat, Youth Ministry)	

PLEASE ATTACH A COPY OF ANY WORKING WITH CHILDREN CLEARANCES OR ANY APPROPRIATE CLEARANCES, (e.g. Teacher Registration).

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Sighted & verified WWCC; as required	Date:	
Updated CENT Integrity Office Visitor Register	Date:	
Advice to SCIP and Principal	Date:	

