

Reforming urban secondary education in the NT – Nightcliff Middle School

Secondary education in the Northern Territory (NT) is being reformed to ensure all students can access high-quality secondary pathways that prepare them for further education, training and jobs within the Territory. These reforms will support the NT Government's vision to provide:

- An **excellent and equitable** secondary system that supports all students to achieve.
- A **guaranteed standard of local secondary school provision**, and a pathway to Northern Territory Certificate of Education and Training completion for all students, regardless of geographic location.
- A **model of delivery that is differentiated and informed** by student and community need and industry pathways.
- An engaging learning design that **guarantees core literacy, numeracy and work readiness skills and drives improvements in student attendance and wellbeing**.
- A **shift away from middle schools** as a key NT government election commitment

What is the future for Nightcliff Middle School?

Nightcliff Middle School will transition to a **full comprehensive high school (years 7 to 12)** and deliver the NT Certificate of Education and Training (NTCET) including academic and vocational education and training (VET) pathways.

The NT Government has announced the final design for secondary schools in urban areas of Darwin, Palmerston, and Alice Springs. This follows extensive engagement with staff, students, and parents who have shown strong support for the proposed designs, while also offering valuable insights and considerations for implementation.

Transitioning to a full comprehensive high school will provide the following benefits:

- ensure students in the Nightcliff priority enrolment area have a local high school they can attend from year 7 to 12. This will reduce the number of transitions points and enables greater continuity of learning and relationships for students and teachers
- provide students with career and industry programs and pathways to post-school education and training
- provide career pathways and development opportunities for staff.

How and when are we planning for this change?

Over the next 6 months, the Department of Education and Training will work closely with the Nightcliff community to ensure a smooth transition. Planning will focus on:

- **Clear communication:** making sure students and parents understand what's changing from 2026
- **School branding:** choosing a new school name and updating logos and uniforms.
- **School workforce planning:** looking at how the changes will affect teachers and making sure there's a plan for support
- **Career and Industry pathways:** identifying the subjects and VET courses that will support students to prepare for a further education and employment after they finish school
- **Facilities and technology:** upgrading infrastructure and IT systems for 2026 and beyond
- **Student transport:** establishing any changes to bus routes as schools grow
- **Student support:** making sure students, especially those that are vulnerable or have additional needs, get the support they need during the transition.

From Term 1, 2026, changes will gradually begin, with the full transition to the new design of secondary education in Nightcliff to be completed by 2028. This gradual approach will ensure a smooth rollout, minimise disruption and enable students to continue their education journey at the school.

	2026	2027	2028
Year level expansion	Add Year 10. The school will operate as a year 7-10 school	Add Year 11. The school will operate as a year 7-11 school	Add Year 12. The school will operate as a full comprehensive 7-12 school
Pathways and subjects	Add Year 10 Australian Curriculum, VET, and compulsory NTCET subjects	Commence offering of subjects and courses for identified Career and Industry programs and pathways	Access to the full suite of subjects and courses for identified Career and Industry programs and pathways

What is the priority enrolment area for Nightcliff?

The existing priority enrolment area for Nightcliff Middle School will be in place for the full comprehensive year 7 – 12 school. For 2026 only, current Nightcliff Middle School students moving into Year 10 can also be considered for enrolment at the new combined Darwin Middle/High school. Further information on the priority enrolment policy and the updated priority enrolment map is available on the Department of Education and Training website.

How will we communicate our progress?

The Department of Education and Training is committed to keeping schools, students, teachers, and communities well informed. Updates via the department's website, social media and directly from schools will provide the latest information on progress including career and industry programs and pathways each secondary school will offer and the approach to managing staff changes. Information for each school impacted by the transition away from middle schools, along with frequently asked questions is available on the Department of Education and Training's website at education.nt.gov.au/secondary-education