



Selena Uibo  
Minister for Education



Media Statement

## Keeping Territory Kids Learning and Supporting Teachers in the Time of COVID-19

**26 March 2020**

During these unprecedented times, the Territory Labor Government is working to ensure Northern Territory students continue to receive a high quality education, while also supporting our dedicated teachers.

The Territory Government established a working group that includes the Department of Education, the Australian Education Union NT, the NT Principals' Association, NT COGSO and the Office of the Commissioner of Public Employment to work through options for school staff as we approach the term break.

As the result of these discussions, and the Chief Minister's work on the National Cabinet, the Territory Labor Government has decided the final four days of this school term – Monday, 6 April to Thursday, 9 April – will be professional development days for staff to prepare for the continued delivery of education in Term 2.

Students will not be required to attend during this time, however, schools will remain open for the children of workers who cannot make alternative arrangements and for any vulnerable children who may need to attend. No child will be turned away from school.

School will continue as usual next week but parents and families can choose to keep their children home if they wish. The advice of Australia's top health experts is that schools continue to be safe, but that parents can make the choice that is best for their family.

These decisions will take pressure off our dedicated teachers, give principals more flexibility to manage their workforce and support teachers, and allow our educators more time to prepare for Term 2.

The Department of Education has been working to develop units of work for students to continue their learning in Term 2, whether that be at school or at home.

This includes learning resources and guidelines for families to enable them to take an active role in their child's learning.

From the start of Term 2, these will be available online. Hard copies of these resources will be distributed to all government schools for every student across the Northern Territory to access.

### **Quotes attributable to Minister for Education, Selena Uibo.**

“The safety of Territorians is paramount right now and the Territory Labor Government’s primary focus for our children in these unprecedented times is ensuring they continue to receive their education in a safe environment.

“We are implementing tough measures, including strict border control, to make sure the coronavirus doesn’t do to the Territory what it’s doing to other parts of the country and the world.

“But we know many parents are anxious and we know many teachers and school staff are anxious, so for the rest of this week and next week, parents can choose to keep kids at home.

“We know some families will still need to send their child to school. No child will be turned away from school.

“Teachers will use their professional development days at the end of this term to work on flexible arrangements for learning in Term 2, to ensure the education of our Territory children can continue, and that all families will have equal access to material – be it online or in hard copy.

“I would like to thank teachers for their extraordinary work, for their resilience and for their flexibility in these unprecedented times.

“Their health and wellbeing is important to us. We are in this together and we will get through this together.”

**Media contact:** Kim Stephens 0417 683 144