

Code of Conduct for School Ferry Travel

Guide for Parents and Carers

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3	November 2019	Passenger Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students prohibited from using devices to record images or audio. Obligation to report misconduct of other students to skipper, parent/carer or teacher.
4	November 2023	Passenger Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 6.1.2 Category 1 updated to include repeated offences may lead to a travel ban of up to 10 days. Section 6.1.3 Category 2 updated banning period from 10 to up to 15 days. Section 6.1.4 Category 3 list includes e-cigarette products. Section 6.1.4 Category 3 updated banning period from 10 to 20 days. Section 11 contact details updated. Added section 12 related documents.

Acronyms	Full form
DE	Department of Education
DIPL	Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics

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1. Introduction

The Northern Territory Government is committed to providing a safe and effective transport service for students.

To help ensure that school students behave sensibly and safely on the ferry, the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics (DIPL) together with the Department of Education (DE), ferry operator, schools, have developed the Code of Conduct for School Ferry Travel (the Code).

2. What is the Code of Conduct

The Code is a set of guidelines for students and parents/carers to follow while travelling to and from school on the ferry that operates between Mandorah and Cullen Bay. It forms the basis for the specific rules to manage behaviour on the ferry and at the jetties.

It also includes procedures for the ferry operator, skipper and schools to follow.

3. To Whom Does it Apply?

This Code applies to all students attending primary, middle and secondary schools in the Northern Territory who use the ferry to travel to or from school, or for other school related activities.

Parents / carers must be confident that their children are able to safely travel on ferries independently and abide by the Code.

4. How does the Code benefit you?

The Code sets standards of behaviour and provides an agreed systematic process so that disruptions or inappropriate behaviour by students are dealt with quickly and fairly. It also aims to minimise the number and severity of these disruptions.

5. What are the Standards?

Parents/carers should discuss these standards with their children so they clearly understand what they should and should not do.

For most students, complying with the Code will not require any change in their current behaviour. By continuing to act in accordance with this Code, students will help ensure that all passengers have a comfortable and safe journey.

Skippers also abide to a Code of Conduct. To provide feedback on the skipper's behaviour, please contact the ferry operator. See contact details under 11. Further Information.

The following table lists some of the types of behaviour expected for school ferry travel.

Behaviour	Examples of how to meet the Code of Conduct
Respect other people and property	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treat other people and their possessions with respect. • Make a seat available to those who may require it, i.e. student who is injured / on crutches. • Follow the skipper or deckhand's directions without argument. • Do not interfere with ferry property or equipment by marking, removing or damaging them.
Wait for the ferry in an orderly manner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wait well back from the ferry until it stops and allow other passengers to leave the ferry first. • Stand quietly without calling out or shouting in an obscene, unruly or aggressive manner. • Running along the jetty is not permitted. • Wait until instructed to board the ferry. • Do not push or shove other passengers. • Enter the ferry in a single file.
While on the ferry, conduct yourself in an orderly manner	<p>Students must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Always follow instructions from the skipper or deckhand about safety on the ferry. • Produce your Student ID card on request by a skipper, deckhand or ferry operator, Transit Officer or Police Officer. • Sit properly on a seat inside the ferry cabin or in the allocated seat if directed by the skipper. • Store school bags under the seat. • Speak quietly and do not create unnecessary noise. • Follow all directions specified by the NT Chief Health Officer (CHO) if/when required. <p>Students must not:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bully, harass or intimidate other ferry occupants. If incident/s occurs, inform the skipper or deckhand as soon as possible. • Carry dangerous items (such as knives etc). • Vandalise the ferry or other students' property. • Interfere with the driving controls, emergency exits or switches. • Place feet on or stand on the seats. • Fight, spit or use offensive language. • Throw any article around or from the ferry. • Leave rubbish on the ferry or at the jetty. • Consume food or drink (other than water from a sealable container) without permission of the skipper. • Play audible music (loud music that may distract the skipper) without permission of the skipper or deckhand. • Smoke (includes e-cigarette products). • Put any part of their body outside the ferry. • Use a mobile phone or another device of any description, to

	<p>film, photograph or otherwise obtain image or audio of other passengers, drivers or their surroundings either inside or external to the vehicle.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possess, discuss or distribute any material that may be considered inappropriate or offensive (for example material of a violent or sexually explicit nature).
When leaving the ferry, do so in an orderly manner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wait until the ferry stops before moving to get off. • Leave the ferry in a quiet and orderly fashion. • Do not run or push other people on the jetty.
In case of an emergency, breakdown or rough seas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow the skipper or deckhand's instructions.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

Parents / carers must be confident that their children are able to safely travel on ferries independently and abide by the Code.

Middle and Secondary School students should carry and present their valid student identification in order to receive free travel if they are not travelling in school uniform.

6.1. Student Responsibilities and Consequences

6.1.1. What happens if students do not comply with the Code?

To promote consistency and fairness in responding to students who do not follow the Code, inappropriate behaviour has been divided into three categories of seriousness.

There are various actions that may be taken if a student does not follow the Code. These range from a warning, banning of travel, or possible civil or police action.

The following factors will be taken into consideration when categorising the breaches of the Code:

- the threat to the safety of passengers on the ferry and the nature of the incident;
- the seriousness of the breach;
- the age of the student; and
- Whether the breach was the first or one of a series of incidents about which the student had been previously cautioned.

For further information please refer to Section 8 Procedures for Managing Inappropriate Behaviour.

6.1.2. Category 1 – Nuisance and Offensive Behaviour

This includes behaviour that may be irritating or unpleasant but is not physically dangerous. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- failing to show student identification card upon request;
- supplying a false name or no name when requested;

- failing to report observations of breaches of this Code to a person of authority (e.g. a parent/carer, teacher or the skipper/deckhand);
- eating and drinking on the ferry (other than water from a sealable container) without the permission of the skipper or deckhand; or
- using offensive body language or language (i.e. swearing or racist language).

Repeated incidents within a 10 week period will result in a written warning being forwarded to the school by the ferry operator. Repeated offences may lead to a ban on the student travelling for up to 10 school days.

6.1.3. Category 2 – Dangerous Behaviour

This includes behaviours where there may be some physical danger to individuals or assets, including but not limited to:

- distracting the skipper or deckhand by persistent noise (i.e. yelling and shouting);
- climbing over the top of the seats;
- spitting;
- bullying, harassing and intimidating other passengers;
- using electronic devices to record visual or audio recordings or for inappropriate or offensive material;
- damaging other students property;
- allowing any part of their body to protrude from the ferry while it is in motion;
- standing or sitting on the steps or in areas that are not set aside for standing or sitting;
- refusing to sit down;
- moving about the ferry while it is in motion;
- swinging on handrails;
- throwing objects inside or outside the ferry;
- deliberately stopping others from getting off the ferry;
- group inappropriate behaviour (i.e. yelling and shouting, throwing objects etc);
- refusing to obey reasonable instructions from the skipper or deckhand;
- not abiding to CHO directions when applicable (e.g. not wearing a mask during a mandatory mask mandate if you are a student 12 years or older, unless you have a lawful exemption); or
- verbally threatening the skipper or deckhand.

Such behaviour may result, with no warnings given, in a ban on the student travelling for up to 15 school days.

6.1.4. Category 3 – Very Destructive and Dangerous Behaviour

This includes behaviours that are very dangerous or destructive, including, but not limited to:

- fighting;
- smoking (includes e-cigarette and vape products);

- using matches or lighter;
- carrying dangerous items (i.e. knives etc.);
- pushing other passengers;
- deliberately interfering with the driving controls, emergency exits or switches;
- destruction of ferry operator property (i.e. breaking windows, slashing seats); or
- physically attacking the skipper or deckhand.

Such behaviour will result in an immediate 20 school day ferry travel ban (with no warnings) while decisions are made by the ferry operator about the duration of a longer term ban which may lead to the permanent refusal of travel privileges or possible civil or Police action.

The cost of repair of damage to a ferry operator's property may be sought from the student's parent/carer.

6.1.5. Repeat Offenders

Where a student has been a repeat offender (i.e. three periods of banned ferry travel within a 12 month period) the DIPL representative will meet with the ferry operator, school principal and parent/carer to review the appropriateness of a travel ban of up to 12 months.

The ferry operator and school principal may need to consider if the student's return to the ferry is conditional on the parent/carer, student and ferry operator signing a written behaviour management agreement setting out conditions for travel. If the student breaches the agreement, then refusal of travel is immediate.

6.2. Schools

Schools and school principals play a key role in advising students of their responsibilities and the consequences of breaching the Code.

School principals are responsible for contacting the parents/carers of children who have received warning or banning letters, and informing them that such letters have been received. If the parent/carer is unable to be contacted prior to the commencement date of the ban, the school must advise the ferry operator.

Schools can also assist by:

- ensuring the school community is aware of the Code and how to access it;
- communicating with students about the importance of adhering to the Code; and
- providing assistance in managing breaches of the Code in consultation with the relevant ferry operator and parent/carer.

6.3. Parent/Carer

Parents/carers have responsibility for the behaviour of their children. Accordingly, they should:

- ensure their child understands the Code and is competent to travel independently on the ferry;
- if requested, attend a meeting with the appropriate stakeholder/s to discuss their child's inappropriate behaviour and its consequences if the child's behaviour has breached the Code;

- contact the ferry operator to discuss matters regarding their child's school ferry travel. It is not appropriate for parents/carers to discuss these matters with the skipper or deckhand;
- recognise that if their child is refused travel, they will need to make alternative travel arrangements and meet any costs for such transport;
- understand they may be required to afford restitution in cash or kind to cover costs incurred by damage to ferry property, equipment, the jetty and signs; and
- realise that a record of a student's inappropriate behaviour will be kept on file.

6.4. Skipper/ Deckhand/Ferry Operator

Skipper's and deckhand's are responsible for the general operation of the ferry including:

- complying with all legal requirements of the relevant legislations and Code;
- treating all students with respect;
- providing reasonable directions to ensure the safety and comfort of students; and
- contacting the ferry operator for clarification of correct procedures if there is any uncertainty in relation to student inappropriate behaviour.

When a student breaches the Code the skipper/deckhand shall:

1. advise the student that their behaviour was inappropriate;
2. try to obtain the student's name and school;
3. advise the student that they will be reported to the ferry operator and their behaviour will be investigated; and
4. record the incident and pass this information onto the ferry operator, which will then make a determination of the appropriate action.

6.5. Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics

The Passenger Transport Branch of the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics has overall administrative responsibility for public transport in the Northern Territory. The Division has responsibility for developing the Code of Conduct for School Ferry Travel in consultation and conjunction with schools, DE, ferry operators, NT Police and non-government organisations.

7. Fair Processes

Students will only be refused travel after the ferry operator has informed the school principal in line with Section 8 Procedures for Managing Inappropriate Behaviour outlined below.

If parents/carers have any questions about decisions taken by the skipper or deckhand in responding to breaches of the Code, they should take the matter to the ferry operator. If parents/carers remain dissatisfied with the ferry operator's decision, they may contact the Passenger Transport Branch and request a review of the decision.

8. Procedures for Managing Inappropriate Behaviour

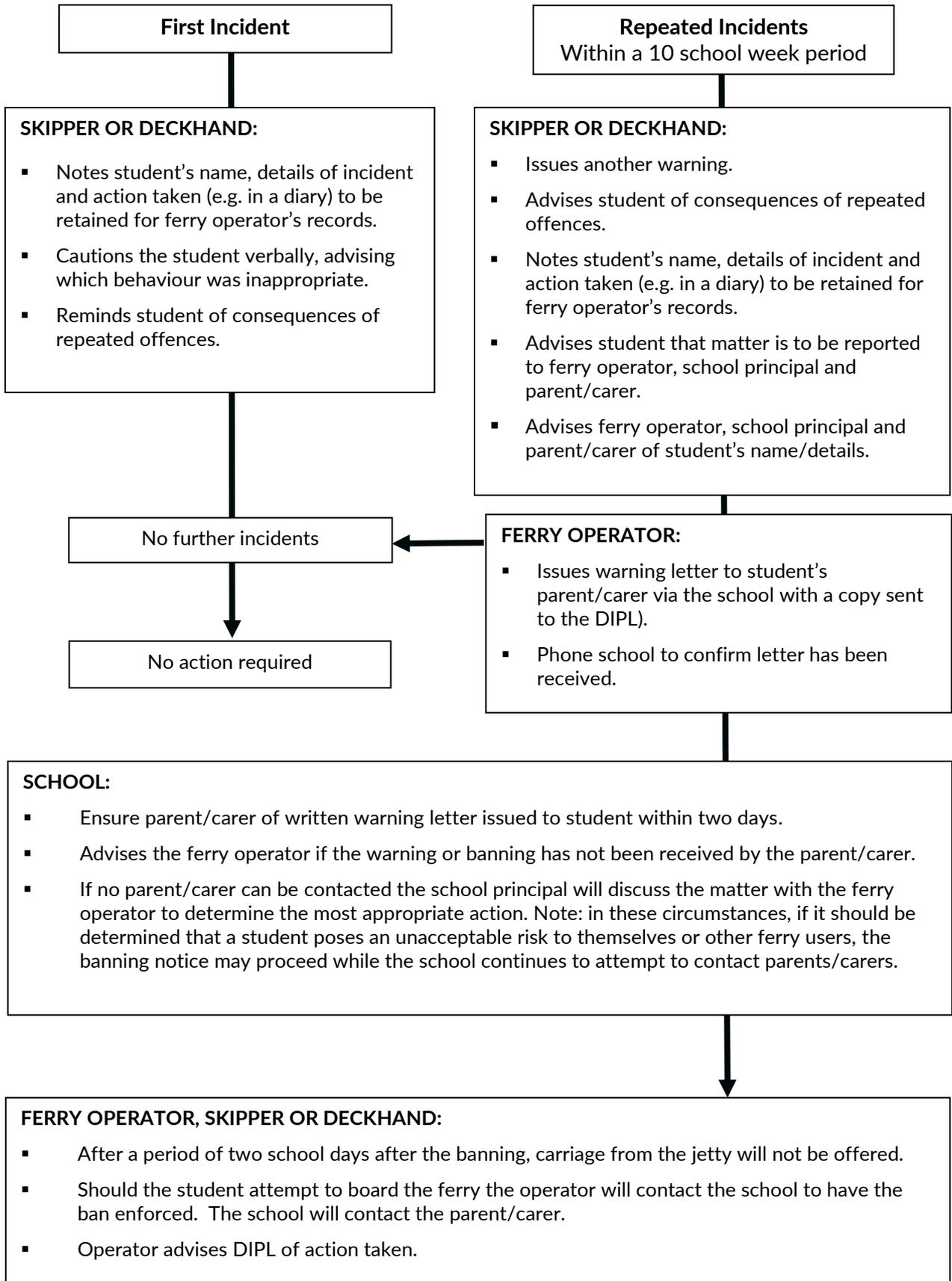
Skippers and deckhands are responsible for the safe carriage of students travelling to and from school on the ferry. In cases of student inappropriate behaviour, the skipper or deckhand will follow these procedures.

Depending on the nature of the inappropriate behaviour, this may involve simply cautioning the student on the spot, formally recording the inappropriate behaviour as part of the skipper's/deckhand's own record, or immediately reporting the incident to the ferry operator for follow up, which may lead to a ban on school ferry travel.

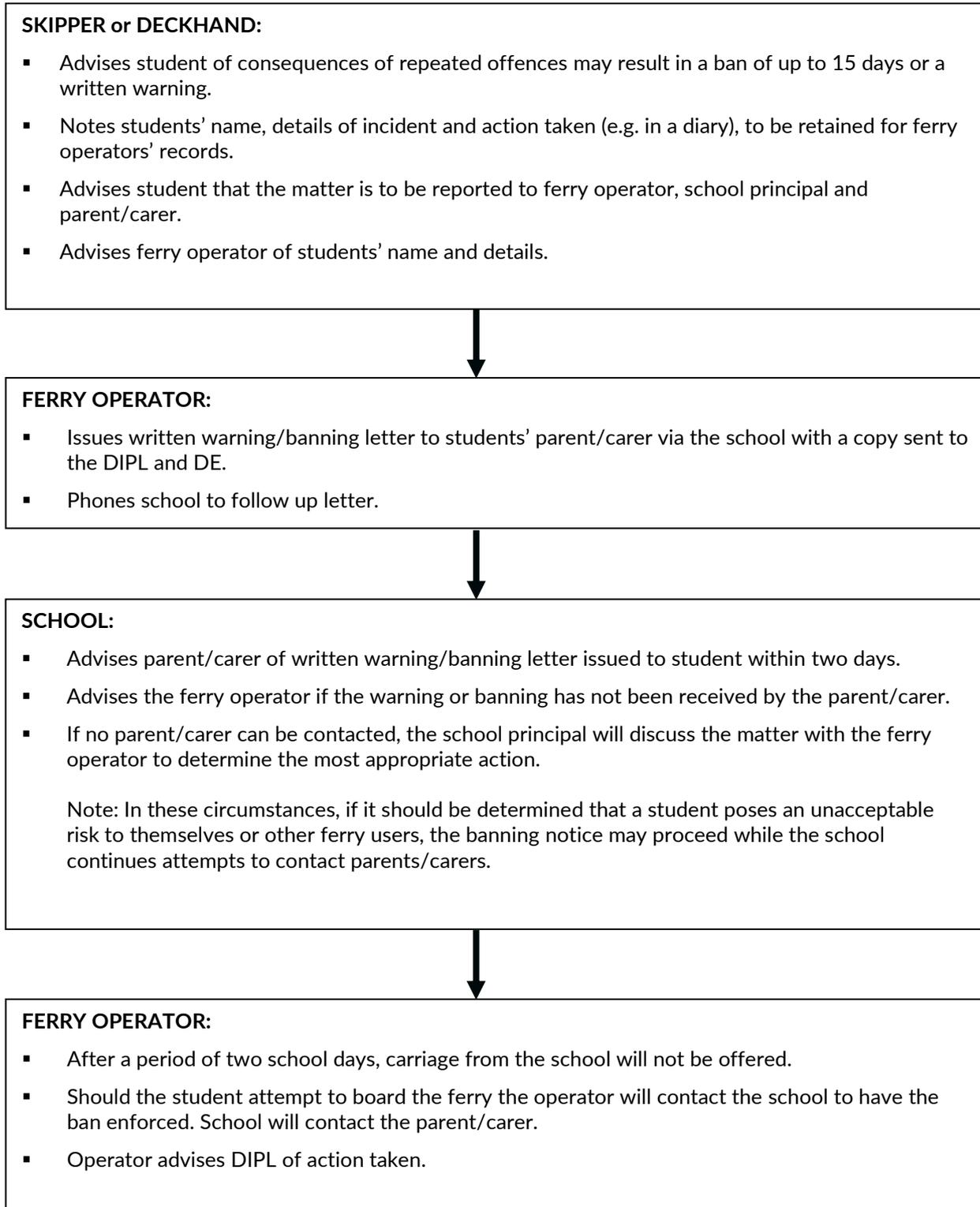
For most students, complying with the Code of Conduct for School Ferry Travel will not require any change in their current behaviour. By continuing to act in accordance with this Code, students will help ensure that all passengers have a comfortable and safe journey.

Flowcharts displaying procedures for each of the three categories of behaviour are set out on the following pages.

8.1. Category 1 – Nuisance and Offensive Behaviour



8.2. Category 2 – Dangerous Behaviour



8.3. Category 3 – Very Destructive and Dangerous Behaviour

SKIPPER or DECKHAND:

Very Destructive

- Reports matter to ferry operator.
- Notes student's name, details of incident and action taken (e.g. in a diary), to be retained for ferry operator's records.
- Advises student that the matter is to be reported to ferry operator, school principal and parent/carer.

Dangerous Behaviour

- Takes all reasonable measures to ensure safety of passengers (in an extreme emergency, contact Police and follow Police instructions).
- Reports matter to ferry operator.
- Notes students' name, details of incident and action taken (e.g. in a diary), to be retained for ferry operators' records.
- Advises student that the matter is to be reported to ferry operator, school principal and parent/carer.



FERRY OPERATOR:

Very Destructive

- Issues written banning letter to students' parent/carer via the school with a copy sent to DIPL.
- Phones school to follow up letter.

Dangerous Behaviour

- Immediately advises Transit Officers, Police and school principal or contact the DIPL's School Transport Planner on 8924 7845.
- Issues banning letter to student's parent/carer via the school with a copy sent to the DIPL.
- In consultation with school and parent/carer, determines longer-term period that student will be refused travel.



SCHOOL:

- Immediately advises parent/carer of banning letter issued to student.
- Advises the ferry operator if banning has not been received by the parent/carer.
- If no parent/carer can be contacted, the school principal will discuss the matter with the ferry operator to determine the most appropriate action. Note: In these circumstances, if it should be determined that a student poses an unacceptable risk to themselves or other ferry users, the banning notice may proceed while the school continues attempts to contact parents/carers.

9. Critical Incident Management

In rare circumstances a critical incident will occur during the delivery of normal school ferry services.

A critical incident is an incident that significantly impacts on the normal transport of students to and from school using school transport services contracted by the DIPL

A critical incident response is coordinated by the DIPL in close consultation with the DE, ferry operators and other key stakeholders according to the roles and responsibilities outlined in Section 6. Student safety is the primary concern in responding to a critical incident.

10. Review

The Code is reviewed by the DIPL on a three-yearly basis.

11. Contact details

11.1. Ferry Operator

SeaLink NT 1300 130 679 salesNT@sealink.com.au

11.2. Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics

Public Transport 08 8924 7577 public.transport@nt.gov.au

11.3. Department of Education

School Operations 08 8999 5612 schoolops@education.nt.gov.au

12. Related documents

- [Transport for Students with Special Needs Policy](#)
- [Code of Conduct for School Bus Travel](#)