

# DISTANCE EDUCATION ENROLMENT PROCEDURES

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Implementation document for Enrolment of Students in NSW Government Schools policy

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# 1 Distance education in NSW

The NSW Department of Education provides distance education for students living in NSW who are isolated or whose special circumstances prevent them from attending school on a regular basis. Distance education also provides for those students unable to access an appropriate curriculum in their local school.

These enrolment procedures provide information for principals and parents/carers when accessing the department's distance education provision. They should be applied to other relevant departmental policies and procedures including:

- Enrolment of Students in NSW Government Schools
- Exemption from School Procedures
- Child Protection Policy.

Distance education students follow the relevant NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) approved syllabus and must apply themselves with diligence and sustained effort to set tasks to maintain satisfactory attendance.

## 1.1 Attendance

State attendance data does not contain information about students in distance education because of the nature of distance education. Attendance is monitored in a number of ways, including records of student engagement in learning activities, student reviews, and regular contact between students and subject teachers. Distance education schools will maintain a register of interactions that take place between the student and the teacher and use these interactions to assess satisfactory attendance. All students enrolled in distance education must meet standards of engagement and participation set by the distance education school to satisfy the compulsory attendance requirements of the *Education Act 1990*.

Examples of interactions that may indicate satisfactory attendance include, but are not limited to:

- the regular return of allocated work
- engagement in synchronous remote teaching sessions such as phone lessons, satellite lessons, web lessons and video conference sessions
- engagement in synchronous face-to-face teaching sessions such as lessons and study days at learning hubs
- asynchronous remote teaching practices such as email, authenticated online learning and learning management systems
- field services such as camps and workshops, home visits and excursions.

## 1.2 The difference between distance education and home schooling

Home schooling allows parents/carers to choose to educate their children at home while distance education provides schooling for students who are unable to access a local government school. In distance education, the school and teacher are responsible for developing, implementing and evaluating student learning programs. In home schooling, parents/carers are responsible for developing teaching and learning programs for their children. More information about home schooling can be found at the [NESA website](#).

## **1.3 Full-time students**

Full-time enrolment in NSW distance education is provided for eligible students, from preschool to Year 12, either on a continuing basis or as a temporary provision to meet the particular needs of students or their family.

Principals of distance education schools determine the category under which a student will be admitted to distance education and the duration of the enrolment, acting on advice or recommendations from other departmental officers, relevant professionals, documentary evidence and their own inquiries. A student will be admitted to distance education only when it is established that this is the best course of action for that student after consideration of all known circumstances.

### **1.3.1 Enrolment of adults**

NSW Government schools provide education for compulsory school-aged children. The education of adults is provided primarily by TAFE NSW, the Adult and Community Education sector, and other education providers.

Adults do not have a legal entitlement to be enrolled in schools. However, principals may accept adult enrolments for purposes of receiving instruction usually leading to the award of the Higher School Certificate (HSC).

A distance education enrolment of an adult may be considered in the full-time enrolment categories outlined in sections 2.2, 2.6 and 2.7 in this document, in accordance with section 10 of the [General Enrolment Procedures](#), or if directed under section 2.10 in this document.

## **1.4 Single course and curriculum access**

Single course and curriculum access provisions enable students to meet the department's mandatory requirements and the NESA minimum requirements in Stages 5 and 6 leading towards the award of the HSC. In all cases, the principal of the distance education school must be satisfied that the student's needs cannot be met within their home school or setting, or by accessing other local resources. See section 3 of this document for further detail.

## **1.5 Support and advice**

Principals and designated staff of distance education schools can provide support and advice about distance education to other schools, school services teams and parents/carers. Contact details are provided in section 7 of this document.

The Rural and Distance Education team can provide policy support and advice to schools across NSW, state offices, school services teams and parents/carers. For assistance, please contact the Rural and Distance Education team on email [rde@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:rde@det.nsw.edu.au) or telephone 02 6334 8072.

## 2 Full-time enrolment in distance education

Full-time enrolment in distance education is available to students who are isolated or whose special circumstances prevent them from attending a school or another appropriate local provision.

Parents/carers may seek full-time enrolment in distance education for a student who is eligible to enrol in a NSW Government school and meets the criteria in one of the enrolment categories listed in this section. The specific conditions and processes to be followed for each enrolment category are detailed in this section.

A student should be enrolled in only one school at any given time. However, the distance education school may establish a shared enrolment to facilitate a transition with another government school for documented wellbeing reasons in some enrolment categories.

The following information sets out the conditions, in addition to the common requirements for enrolment, for each full-time enrolment category.

Before enrolling, it is recommended that the potential student and supervisor visit the school. This allows an assessment of the student's needs, an opportunity to meet the teachers, and for the supervisor to discuss his/her role and responsibilities.

When applying to enrol, the school will advise all students of the voluntary school contribution and other contributions that may cover the cost of items such as course kits, materials and equipment. Parents/carers who, because of financial hardship, are unable to pay for elective subjects may be eligible for assistance.

### Enrolment reviews

All enrolments are subject to periodic review. If a student is no longer eligible for distance education, the student's enrolment will cease and the parent/carer will be required to enrol the child at the local school or other approved education provider to meet the requirements of the *Education Act 1990*.

As a condition of enrolment, all students enrolled in distance education must meet standards of engagement and participation set by the distance education school to satisfy the compulsory attendance requirements of the *Education Act 1990*.

Some full-time enrolments target temporary circumstances and have set time limits that cannot be extended.

### Common requirements for enrolment

In addition to adhering to the department's [General Enrolment Procedures](#), applications for full-time enrolment in a distance education school must include:

- a completed application form to enrol in either a [NSW Government school or preschool](#)
- evidence of a residential address in NSW, a post office box is not acceptable
- parent/carer confirmation that the home learning environment is suitable for effective distance education provision
- a declaration by the parent/carer that they recognise their roles and responsibilities in the student's education
- an undertaking by the parent/carer to provide and maintain an agreed mode of communication between themselves and the distance education school for the duration of the enrolment

- acceptance of the parent/carer to perform the role of supervisor during the period of enrolment, and carry out the supervisor responsibilities listed below.

Working with Children legislation requires all people working or volunteering with children under 18 years to have a Working with Children Check. Parents/carers who engage tutors for support should ask the tutor to provide a Working with Children Check clearance number, then verify that number online. Parents/carers can verify the status of a Working with Children Check number by using the [online tool](#) available from the Office of the Children's Guardian.

## **Supervisor responsibilities**

- liaising with the school about the program of learning that will be provided for the student and the scheduling of the student's and supervisor's time for engaging in schoolwork and the completion of set tasks
- supervising the student during school or learning activities
- supporting and encouraging the student through assistance with locating materials and resources needed for lessons, development of a timetable for work, provision of a suitable workplace and basic equipment
- ensuring that the student follows the course developed by the school and addresses, with diligence and sustained effort, the set tasks and experiences provided by the school
- interacting with the student as required by the learning materials
- interpreting and explaining to the student the spirit and intention of instructions or comments included in lesson materials or in messages from the distance education teacher
- providing feedback to the distance education teacher on the student's responses to the lesson activities and on the student's performance and interest, including advice about illnesses or absences that have affected the student's ability to complete activities
- monitoring the student's participation in satellite, computer-based or teleconference lessons and field services as appropriate
- supervising examinations and assessment tasks, as required by the school.

## 2.1 Preschool students who meet geographic isolation and other criteria

These Enrolment Procedures should be read in conjunction with the department preschool classes enrolment procedures.

The department operates a limited number of distance education preschool classes that complement preschool provision in the broader children's services sector in NSW. Distance education preschools cater for geographically isolated children who cannot access other early childhood education services.

Preschool children need to meet the same distance criteria as that applied to primary school aged children.

In assessing a preschool child's eligibility for enrolment in distance education, principals will take into account the distance from the applicant's home to any local children's services, including community-based preschools, mobile children's services and/or long day care.

The designation of distance education sites that will provide preschool services is determined every three years on a needs basis. Currently, provision is available through Dubbo School of Distance Education and Broken Hill School of the Air.

Children generally attend departmental preschool classes for 15 hours per week for one year only. Children are eligible for enrolment at the distance education preschool from the beginning of the school year if they turn four years of age on or before 31 July in that year. In exceptional circumstances, an additional year of enrolment may be considered, provided that the child is not within the compulsory years of schooling.

Applications for enrolment extension under this provision must be referred to the Leader, Rural and Distance Education at [rde@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:rde@det.nsw.edu.au) or PO Box 717, Bathurst, 2795.

In addition to the **common requirements for enrolment**, the department also requires relevant supporting documentation to establish the distance from the student's home to the nearest early childhood service and to any local children's services, such as community-based preschools, mobile children's services or long day care.

**Submit completed documents to** the principal of the appropriate distance education school (see 'Accessing distance education linked to your local school' at the end of section 2 in this document).



## 2.2 Students who meet geographic isolation criteria

Students who meet the geographic isolation criteria will be eligible to enrol at their local distance education school and must provide evidence to the principal of the enrolling school that they meet **one** of the following conditions.

- The distance between home and nearest government school is 48 kilometres or more.
- The student does not have reasonable access to an appropriate government school for at least 20 school days in a year because of adverse travel conditions such as impassable roads.
- A primary school student for whom the distance between home and transport pickup point is 3 kilometres or more and the nearest government primary school is 16 kilometres from the transport pickup point.
- A primary school student with a journey time that regularly exceeds 60 minutes each way to access the nearest government primary school.
- A secondary school student for whom the distance between home and transport pickup point is 5 kilometres or more and the nearest government high school provision is 16 kilometres from the transport pickup point. This condition does not apply to students continuing in distance education from the primary provision.
- A secondary school student with a journey time that regularly exceeds 90 minutes each way to access the nearest government high school provision.

In addition to the **common requirements for enrolment** the following are required:

- supporting documentation such as road conditions, distance from the local school and distance from the student's home to the nearest transport pickup point or school
- other relevant information and supporting documentation about the student's circumstances that contribute to geographic isolation.

**Submit completed documents to** the principal of the appropriate distance education school (see 'Accessing distance education linked to your local school' at the end of section 2 in this document).

## 2.3 Students travelling within Australia

Time limited enrolment category.

Students who are unable to attend a regular school because they are travelling with their family in Australia for at least 50 school days (one term), may be eligible to enrol in distance education. This provision aims to provide continuity of learning for students returning to a school in NSW. The family must intend to continue the student's permanent schooling at a NSW school after travelling. Any other circumstances should not be considered in this category.

A comprehensive itinerary must be provided with the application. Addresses for a minimum of six weeks in advance are required to ensure continuity of the learning program.

During the period of travel, the distance education school will provide learning programs that meet the relevant syllabus requirements. The supervisor must agree to a regular commitment to complete lessons and maintain communication with the child's teacher. This would usually correspond with a daily commitment to lessons during term time.

Enrolment in distance education will be for up to 200 school days (one school year) for the family. This may be extended upon application by the parent/carer outlining unexpected circumstances that lead to the case for an extension. Extensions must not exceed an additional 200 days and will only be approved if the principal of the distance education school considers that the return of work and engagement with the teaching programs during the initial period of enrolment is satisfactory. As this is a continuity provision, enrolment in this category will only be available two years after returning to a school in NSW.

After travel, the distance education school will be required to provide the new school with a state travellers exit document outlining the student's participation and progress while enrolled in distance education.

Travellers who take up residence in one place for six weeks or more will be expected to enrol at the local school. A decision to waive this requirement will be at the discretion of the principal of the distance education school.

When the commencement of travel is delayed by more than 30 school days, the student is no longer eligible to be enrolled in distance education and is required to seek enrolment at the local school.

In addition to the **common requirements for enrolment**, the following are required:

- a statutory declaration stating the family's intention to travel, the anticipated duration of this travel, the student's NSW home address before the travel and their expected home address after the travel
- a comprehensive itinerary showing addresses for at least six weeks in advance.

Students will be enrolled at the designated distance education school based on their home address before travel commences. Enrolments in this category will not be accepted outside of the intake zone.

**Submit completed documents to** the principal of the appropriate distance education school.

Secondary students in the Sydney metropolitan area in this category should contact Finigan School of Distance Education (see 'Accessing distance education linked to your local school' at the end of section 2 in this document).

## 2.4 Students temporarily resident or travelling overseas

Time limited enrolment category.

Students who are travelling overseas or are temporarily overseas residents for at least 50 school days (one term) may be eligible to enrol in distance education. This provision offers continuity of learning for students returning to a school in NSW. The family must intend to continue the student's permanent schooling at a NSW school after travel. Any other circumstances should not be considered in this category.

A comprehensive itinerary must be submitted with the application. Addresses for a minimum of six weeks in advance are required to ensure the continuity of the student's learning program.

During the period of travel, the distance education school will provide learning programs that meet the relevant syllabus requirements. The supervisor must agree to a regular commitment to complete lessons and maintain communication with the child's teacher. This would usually correspond with a daily commitment to lessons during term time.

Enrolment in distance education will be for up to 200 school days (one school year) for the family. This may be extended upon application by the parent/carer outlining unexpected circumstances that lead to the case for an extension. Extensions must not exceed an additional 200 days and will only be approved if the principal of the distance education school considers that the return of work and engagement with the teaching programs during the initial period of enrolment is satisfactory. As this is a continuity provision, enrolment in this category will only be available two years after returning to a school in NSW.

Parents/carers are required to purchase all necessary textbooks and equipment and a charge for airmail postage of lesson materials. The postage charge for overseas students must be paid in advance to ensure the continuity of the student's learning program. All lesson materials must be mailed directly to the student and cannot be sent via a local address. Any alternative arrangement must be authorised by the principal of the distance education school.

After travel, the distance education school will be required to provide the new school with a state travellers exit document outlining the student's participation and progress while enrolled in distance education.

When the commencement of travel and departure from NSW is delayed by more than 30 school days, the student is no longer eligible to be enrolled in distance education and should seek enrolment at the local school.

In addition to the **common requirements for enrolment**, the following are required:

- a statutory declaration stating the family's intention to travel, the anticipated duration of this travel, the student's NSW home address before the travel and their expected home address after the travel
- a comprehensive itinerary showing addresses for at least six weeks in advance.

Students will be enrolled at the designated distance education school based on their home address before travel commences. Enrolments in this category will not be accepted outside of the intake zone.

**Submit completed documents to** the principal of the appropriate distance education school.

Secondary students in the Sydney metropolitan area in this category should contact Finigan School of Distance Education (see 'Accessing distance education linked to your local school' at the end of section 2 in this document).

## 2.5 Students with a medical condition that prevents their attendance at a regular school or other local provision: short-term provision

This provision is for students requiring education while they are undergoing a medical assessment or treatment that prevents regular attendance at their home school as a short-term arrangement. Under these circumstances this may be considered as a shared enrolment with another government school in consultation with the distance education school.

The enrolment period is for a minimum of 50 school days (one term) and must not exceed 400 school days (two school years). The principal of the distance education school will review enrolments in this provision regularly and may require updated evidence for the enrolment to continue.

The principal of the distance education school may seek advice from the local school services team where the student lives, to investigate alternative local provision that may be available or to determine whether further assessment is needed before enrolment can proceed.

The principal of the distance education school may seek background information about a student's medical condition from the student's previous school under section 7 of the [General Enrolment Procedures](#).

If the student's medical condition persists beyond the maximum period, their continued enrolment should be sought under the category outlined in section 2.8 of this document to access the support and resources available in local school services teams.

In addition to the **common requirements for enrolment** the following are required:

- a letter from the student's specialist with expertise in the medical condition, outlining the student's condition and how treatment impacts on their ability to attend their school or other local education provision
- independent advice may be sought by the department to confirm that distance education is and continues to be the most appropriate provision for the student.

**Submit completed documents to** the principal of the appropriate distance education school (see 'Accessing distance education linked to your local school' at the end of section 2 in this document).

## 2.6 Pregnant students/young parents for whom no appropriate local provision is available

Pregnant students or students seeking to re-engage in education as a school-aged parent may be eligible for enrolment at a distance education school. Enrolment can be maintained for up to 200 days (one year) or extended to the completion of the next stage of learning after the development of a comprehensive case management plan.

The principal of the distance education school may seek advice from the local school services team where the student lives, to investigate alternative local education provisions before enrolment and to help the student to transition from distance education at the end of the enrolment period.

In addition to the **common requirements for enrolment** the department requires a medical certificate confirming the pregnancy or the child's birth certificate.

**Submit completed documents to** the principal of the appropriate distance education school (see 'Accessing distance education linked to your local school' at the end of section 2 in this document).

## 2.7 Vocationally talented students employed in the entertainment industry and students participating at elite levels in the performing arts or sport

It is expected that students in this category will have exhausted all other departmental provisions before seeking enrolment in distance education.

Students whose employment in the entertainment industry or elite participation in the performing arts and sport prevents their regular attendance at a school or other suitable local provision for more than 50 school days (one term) in a year, may be eligible for enrolment at a distance education school.

As this provision is targeted at elite participation, the provision is generally only available to students in Years 9 to 12.

While enrolled in distance education, the student's daily timetable will integrate suitable times for the student's distance education learning through each day's program. This program must be provided with the enrolment application documentation. Adherence to this timetable may be monitored during enrolment by field service visits approved by the principal. Satisfactory engagement and progress in the distance education program must be maintained to remain eligible for this provision.

Exemptions from schooling for employment in the entertainment industry or participation in elite sporting events are outlined in the Exemption from School – Procedures website.

The NSW Department of Education offers selective high schools and schools with programs that specifically cater to talented students who wish to participate in sport and the performing arts at elite levels. Where a student has been accepted or enrolled in one of these programs within the last 12 months, they are not eligible to access distance education in this category and could only be considered under the extraordinary circumstances category (see section 2.10 in this document).

Enrolments in this category will be reviewed each year to confirm continuing eligibility for this provision.

Applications will be considered from students who can provide documented and certified evidence:

- of employment in the entertainment industry
- of participation in the performing arts at an elite level
- of participation in sport at an elite level
- that they are required to be available to meet the demands of this employment or participation in ways that make it impossible for them to attend a school or other suitable local provision on a daily basis more than 50 school days in the year.

In addition to the **common requirements for enrolment** the department requires that, for all students, the parent/carer must provide a statutory declaration including:

- details of the employment obligations or the participation that will prevent the student from attending a regular school, with a student résumé clearly outlining participation at an elite level
- the length of time for which it is expected that the student will need to access distance learning
- an outline of arrangements that will be made for supervision of the student's school work and regular liaison between the student and staff at the distance education school.

Further evidence to establish eligibility will be required in each category. This evidence must be attached with the application and certified by a Justice of the Peace.

### **2.7.1 Entertainment industry**

An employment contract for the student is required and additional evidence to establish the significance of the project.

### **2.7.2 Performing arts**

Parents/carers must provide evidence of the criteria used to assess the student's elite participation in performing arts, such as:

- achievement records such as accredited examination results, certificates, photographs of awards
- professional work logs
- testimonials from industry-based professionals, or any other evidence that clearly demonstrates that the student is participating at an elite level and that the student's commitment is such that a regular school could not cater for such commitment through significant program adjustments including leave in excess of 50 school days per year.

In addition the principal may require that the student meets specific standards. In the case of dance, Sydney Distance Education High School can provide information on relevant dance accreditation considered in this category.

### **2.7.3 Sport**

Parents/carers must provide evidence of the criteria used to assess the student's elite participation in sport, such as:

- letters of offer, employment contract or selection into an elite sporting team, squad or program and evidence of the student's acceptance of the place
- achievement records such as accredited and certified results, certificates, photographs of awards
- professional work logs
- testimonials from industry-based professionals.

The evidence must be supported in writing for each year of enrolment by a representative of the highest national governing body in connection with the student's sporting commitment.

### **Additional information when participation involves attendance at a sporting or performing arts institution**

When the student will be participating at an elite level at an institution, the organisation must provide evidence including:

- the organisation's name and purposes
- how it meets requirements for child protection and other risk management procedures
- selection procedures
- the student's program with an indication of when distance learning will be scheduled each day
- student accreditation procedures
- the criteria used to assess the student's elite level of participation
- the ranking of the student within the organisation (where relevant)
- any other material that demonstrates the nature of the organisation.

## Principal endorsement

The principal of the student's current school must review the associated evidence and provide a statement on the enrolment application. The statement must articulate:

- any program adjustments that have been made to cater for the talented nature of the student
- that the student is operating at an elite level and the commitment is such that a regular school could not cater for this commitment through program adjustments including exemption from attendance.

**Submit completed documents to** the principal of the appropriate distance education school (see 'Accessing distance education linked to your local school' at the end of section 2 in this document).

## 2.8 Students with additional learning and support needs

It is expected that students in this category will have exhausted all other departmental provisions before seeking enrolment in distance education.

Students with additional learning and support needs may be eligible for enrolment in distance education if it is determined that they cannot attend school regularly or there is no local provision to meet their learning needs.

Access to this provision is through the Online Access Request process through the local government school. Local schools services teams will provide support and advice on access to a range of support provisions and enrolment options for students with disability and learning support needs.

In consultation with the parent/carer, an access request will be initiated by the learning and support team at the local government school attended by the student. Before this request can be assessed, Appendix A, found at the end of this document, must be completed by the principal and attached to the access request.

Students not currently enrolled in a NSW Government school will be assessed to provide the most relevant education provision from the range of services available to government schools.

Students seeking to enrol in a NSW Government school or wanting to access specialist support including distance education should do so through their local government school. Where accessing specialist support is not possible at the local government school, school services personnel can assist with completing the access request process.

This will require the exchange of detailed information from the student's previous school to assess the appropriateness of support through distance education, or enrolment in a local school before distance education. School principals may refer to the document [Information Sharing between Principals and Schools](#) for the processes to be followed in gathering this information.

A distance education enrolment may be recommended when **ALL** of the following apply, and evidence is included as an attachment in the access request:

- consultation with the parent/carer supports an enrolment in distance education
- the student has a disability confirmation
- the local school cannot meet the student's educational needs with access to the available school, community and state resources
- the distance education school is the most appropriate enrolment
- Appendix A (in this document) has been attached to the access request.

This evidence must be documented in terms of intervention strategies implemented at the current school and assessment of the impact of these interventions.

The distance education school must conduct a review of each student in this category at least every 12 months. Consultation between the local school services team and the distance education school will be maintained during the enrolment and review process. The purpose of this review is to assess and monitor individual student needs and review the appropriateness of continued support through the distance education school.

In cases where the review identifies that distance education is no longer appropriate, the local school services team will support schools to manage an enrolment at a suitable local setting.

If a student moves out of the intake area of their distance education school during the period of enrolment the original access request will be cloned by the current distance education school and evaluated by the new school services team to determine if distance education remains the most appropriate educational provision in the new location.

Ongoing collaboration between the school services team and the distance education school will:

- support teaching and learning
- assess and monitor the student's individual needs
- review where necessary the appropriateness of continued enrolment through a distance education school
- ensure the effective use of home school area and state resources and address transition planning issues.

The principal of the distance education school may request further information under section 7 of the [General Enrolment Procedures](#) to verify the safety of the student in the distance learning environment.



## 2.9 Transition for students with significant support needs

Students, for whom an assessment indicates that they cannot attend their local government school on a regular basis, may be eligible for temporary enrolment in distance education. This provision can only be accessed as part of a managed transition strategy between the local government school and the distance education school where the purpose is to return to the local school or to facilitate participation in further education or employment.

Access to this provision is through the Online Access Request process. The School Services team in the home location is responsible for processing access to the range of student services support provisions. Learning and Wellbeing personnel are available to provide advice and support to schools to help them meet their students' learning and support needs.

In cases where mental health problems experienced by the student are a key reason for the application under Category 2.9 in this document, the local school should work with the student's clinician, either an external mental health professional or a member of the school counselling service, to contribute to a plan for support at school and/ or the transition management plan. This should be submitted with the Online Access Request form.

During the period of enrolment, the student will be enrolled at the distance education school but shared on ERN with the home school. The home school will receive copies of student reports while they are enrolled in distance education.

The home school will arrange a transition review with the distance education school at least three months before the return to school.

A plan from the home school to manage the transition, drawing on resources available from them and the distance education school, must be attached to the access request as a condition of enrolment. School services teams will be able to provide advice to their local school on elements that should be included in the transition plan.

While the student attends distance education, strong links will be maintained with the learning and support team from their home school. It is desirable that the transition period for this enrolment not exceed 200 school days (one year).

In consultation with the parent/carer, an access request will be initiated by the learning and support team at the school where the student is enrolled. Before this request can be assessed, Appendix A (in this document) must be completed by the principal and attached to the access request. When this cannot be endorsed, a supervised environment, drawing on resources from the home school and community, must be established locally for an enrolment to proceed.

A distance education enrolment may be recommended when **ALL** of the following apply and evidence is included as an attachment to the access request:

- consultation with the parent/carer supports an enrolment in distance education
- a transition management plan has been developed
- the local school cannot meet the student's educational needs with access to the available school, community and state resources
- the distance education school is the most appropriate enrolment
- Appendix A, at the end of this document, has been attached to the access request.

This evidence must be documented in terms of intervention strategies implemented at the current school and assessment of the impact of these interventions.

The distance education school will provide feedback to the home school and the school services team where the student lives about recommendations for continued access to distance education support.

The purpose of this ongoing collaboration is to:

- support teaching and learning and report student progress
- assess and monitor student's individual needs
- review where necessary the appropriateness of continued enrolment through a distance education school
- ensure effective use of school home area and state resources and address transition planning issues.

The principal of the distance education school may request further information under section 7 of the [General Enrolment Procedures](#) to verify the safety of the student in the distance learning environment.

On completion and approval of the specified procedure, the parent/carer will be notified of the placement panel outcome and if successful will be invited to enrol at the distance education school.

## **2.10 Students in extraordinary circumstances**

This category is designed to meet unforeseen and unique circumstances not identified elsewhere in this document and must be endorsed by the local director, educational leadership or the Director, Rural and Pathways.

NSW Government schools ensure inclusive teaching practices that recognise and value the backgrounds of all students and promote an open and tolerant attitude towards different cultures, languages, religions and world views. For this reason, this category cannot be used where these are the only justification for the request.

Enrolments in this category will be supported by the Rural and Distance Education Specialist Program Coordinator who will liaise with the local director, local school services team and other relevant agencies to determine if an enrolment in this category should proceed.

Please contact the Specialist Program Coordinator on 6334 8070 to discuss enrolment processes and requirements before proceeding with an enrolment in this category.

An enrolment will only proceed where:

- the student's educational and/or wellbeing needs cannot be met by a regular school with access to school, local and state resources
- the distance education school is the most appropriate option
- suitable supervision of the student's learning during school hours can be established
- a risk assessment/management plan has been developed that takes into account the specific circumstances of the isolated learning and attests to the safety and suitability of the home or other location in which learning will take place.

A statutory declaration may be required to attest to the facts of the extraordinary circumstances and/or the willingness to comply with the conditions of supervision and enrolment in this category.

Enrolments in this category will indicate the length of time the student can remain in distance education, a review date and the specific conditions required for enrolment.

Enrolment at the distance education school proceeds after the distance education school receives the director's signed letter outlining the conditions of enrolment.

During the enrolment, the Rural and Distance Education Specialist Program Coordinator will provide ongoing advice, guidance and support to executive directors, directors, local school services teams and the distance education school.

## **2.11 National school for travelling show children**

The department has established a Kindergarten to Year 6 distance education enrolment category to meet the educational needs of children from families that are part of the National School for Travelling Show Children under an interstate deed between NSW, Victoria and Queensland.

Dubbo School of Distance Education will provide enrolment into this full-time provision specifically for families that are affiliated with the National School for Travelling Show Children.

In addition to the **common requirements for enrolment**, a letter of support from the National School for Travelling Show Children indicating the student has access to their show school infrastructure, support and coordination is required for enrolment to proceed in this category.

## **2.12 Students where an enrolment direction has been made by the NSW Department of Education Secretary or delegate**

When a direction has been made to enrol a student at a distance education school, the student will be enrolled.

### **Accessing distance education linked to your local school: where to apply**

A child of compulsory school age is entitled to be enrolled at the NSW Government school that is designated for the intake area within which the child's home is situated and that the child is eligible to attend. This school is the child's designated local school.

Each of these schools has a linked distance education school. A student who meets the conditions for full-time distance education enrolment is entitled to access the distance education school linked to their designated local school.

These regional links provide are designed to provide support services required to meet the educational and wellbeing needs of the student and undertake face-to-face field services. Provision of face-to-face field service activities from the linked distance education school will not involve undue travel for staff, students and families.

Each distance education school has an enrolment buffer – the number of places set aside for students entitled to attend the school who are accepted throughout the year. The size of the enrolment buffer will be set by the principal and approved by the director, educational leadership as outlined in the [General Enrolment Procedures](#).

Parents/carers should contact the Rural and Distance Education unit on 02 6334 8070 for advice regarding distance education eligibility and the name of the designated local school and linked distance education school. Acceptance to a distance education school other than the linked school is subject to:

- the child being eligible to attend the school
- the school being able to accommodate new enrolments within the available permanent accommodation
- the development of a documented plan by the distance education school to provide field services to the student
- students within the travelling category will only be eligible to enrol at the linked distance education school.

Exceptions to these enrolment rules are made for the following students.

- Preschool children will enrol with Dubbo School of Distance Education or Broken Hill School of the Air.
- Residents of the ACT will enrol with Finigan School of Distance Education.
- All secondary students living in metropolitan Sydney who are travelling overseas or within Australia will enrol with Finigan School of Distance Education. Families in Sydney with students in both primary and secondary years may elect to enrol all their children at Finigan School of Distance Education, a Kindergarten to Year 12 school.
- Primary and secondary students with intellectual disability may be eligible to enrol with the Distance Education Support unit.

### **3 Years 9 to 12 curriculum access single subject provision categories and conditions**

Single subject provision is available as a service to registered schools that cannot provide the necessary breadth and flexibility of curriculum and where a local solution such as a connected classroom with another local school is not available.

Home schools may request single subject provision from the distance education school to expand their curriculum to allow their student to meet the minimum curriculum requirements for Stage 5 or the pattern of study requirements for Stage 6 as required by the NESA for registration. **Students exceeding the minimum curriculum or pattern of study** for their stage are not eligible for this provision.

Schools using distance education must comply with NESA requirements for outsourcing subjects to an external provider. Information for [non-government schools](#) is available in the appropriate NESA registration documentation.

NSW government schools are required to meet the registration requirements described in the [Registration Process for the NSW Government Schooling System Manual](#). This manual describes the requirements and associated evidence that will demonstrate system compliance. All distance education schools are subject to these requirements and meet NESA conditions as an external provider for single subject provision.

In providing single subject access, the relationship is strictly between the home school and the distance education school. All aspects of the request must be assessed and managed by the home school, not the parent/carer.

The principal of the distance education school approves the provision of single subjects.

Single subject applications are limited by a quota based on the size and capacity of the school to deliver a broad curriculum from its own resources.

#### **Common requirements for single subject provision**

Single subject provision will be considered only when the home school principal certifies that:

- the student meets all eligibility conditions for the selected subject
- the student is capable of working independently

- the students' school will provide the distance education school with relevant information on current learning adjustments, requirements for learning support provisions, and evidence for the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data (NCCD)
- a member of the teaching staff at the home school has been nominated to supervise the study arrangements of the single subject student, including assignments, formal examinations and assessment tasks
- the student will be allocated the prescribed time to study single subjects, including daily study/work periods and times when distance education teachers can contact students
- procedures will be in place to ensure that the student will regularly return work and complete all tasks including assignments, formal examinations and assessments
- the student is informed that they are required to return work each week or to meet alternative minimum standards set by the distance education school
- the student will be provided with resources where required, such as printing, textbooks, reference materials, access to a telephone, computer, internet access, video conferencing, web conferencing and audio equipment, that meet the department's current specifications
- the student has access to, and use of supervised specialist rooms as required
- procedures will be in place to ensure that parental/carer permission is obtained for the student to attend activities arranged by the distance education school and that the home school will carry out risk assessments related to these activities
- a suitable and safe work placement for any vocational education and training course is possible
- the home school agrees to conduct and supervise trial HSC and midcourse examinations within the distance education school's specified schedule to meet secure period requirements
- access to a suitable venue and supervision for NESA examinations is available.

## Annual quota applying to new applications

Schools have maximum flexibility within the limits of the annual quota. For example, students can be included in more than one subject, or schools can fill their annual quota in a single subject.

Schools seeking single course provision for students can forward a maximum number of new applications per year according to the schedule outlined in Table 1. This does not apply to schools for specific purposes or schools in juvenile justice settings.

**Table 1: Maximum applications per year for schools seeking single course provisions**

Total secondary school enrolment	New applications per year
300 or fewer	15
301 to 500	9
More than 500	6

Specialist settings attached to other schools, such as tutorial centres and support classes, should make their requests for curriculum support to their host school. If the host school cannot provide the necessary levels of support, the principal can apply for single subject provision on behalf of the specialist setting within the existing quota.

## **3.1 Applications where the quota applies**

### **3.1.1 Schools requiring access to an elective subject in Years 9 and 10**

When a school requests access to an elective subject for a student in Year 9 or 10, it replaces a school-delivered elective subject. Subjects studied by a student should not exceed the equivalent of seven 200-hour courses.

### **3.1.2 Schools accessing subjects to meet NESA minimum requirements for the HSC**

The maximum number of units studied by a student, including the distance education subjects, must not exceed 13 units in Year 11 and 11 units in the Year 12 course.

Students completing study of a subject at the end of Year 10 are not considered to be continuing their study of the same subject for Year 11. These students count as part of each school's annual quota for new applications.

### **3.1.3 Schools accessing subjects to meet the needs of students with special circumstances**

When the principal can establish that a student's special circumstances require access to distance education, the principal can apply to the distance education school for single subject provision with accompanying documentary evidence to substantiate their application.

### **3.1.4 Schools requiring flexible curriculum to facilitate acceleration**

When a school requests access to a subject for acceleration purposes, they must provide evidence of a rigorous identification and school-based management program before applying for distance education. Applications must comply with the [Assessment Certification Examination \(ACE\)](#) requirements on the NESA website, particularly documents 8001, 8043 and 8104. This evidence can include, but is not limited to:

- NAPLAN results
- school counsellor's report
- secondary reports from Year 7 onwards
- evidence that the school learning support team has addressed the needs of the student through coordinating, developing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating educational programs
- letter of recommendation from the home school principal indicating support for the request and outlining steps the school has taken to facilitate the acceleration before considering distance education.

Students seeking acceleration into a Stage 6 subject need to have completed 'All My Own Work', before commencement.

The home school is responsible for completing the NESA form for notification of acceleration for more than 12 months, if applicable.

As single subjects are provided to meet minimum curriculum requirements, students will not be eligible to repeat the course using distance education to improve their result.

## **3.2 Applications not subject to quota**

School principals who seek distance education single subject provision for students in the following circumstances must provide a statement justifying the application.

### **3.2.1 Students whose study has been interrupted by transfer to another school**

Students committed to studying a course in Stage 5 or Stage 6 whose study has been interrupted by transfer to another school, may have an application made on their behalf by the principal of the new school. Applications for single subject provision for these students should be made as soon as possible after the student arrives at the new school. This may include students who are temporarily attending a NSW secondary school while on a recognised exchange program.

### **3.2.2 Specific single subject languages for small cohorts**

Consideration for out-of-quota placements will only be accepted for small numbers of students and will not include a subject offered at that year level by the home school. The principal of the home school must provide evidence to the distance education school that they cannot provide access to language subjects in any other way than distance education. Consideration for provision outside-of-quota will not be considered after the date when all enrolments are finalised (see application closing dates).

### **3.2.3 Vocational education and training in remote schools**

Students in remote schools with a current ARIA+ ranking greater than or equal to 2.4 who wish to study a vocational education and training (VET) subject that contributes towards the HSC can have the principal of their school make an application for single subject provision on their behalf.

### **3.2.4 Schools requiring access for students with confirmed disabilities**

Students unable to undertake a subject at their school because their disability restricts their access to specialist teaching areas or facilities can have the principal of their school make an application for single subject provision on their behalf. It is permitted for a student to access more than one subject outside of quota in this category.

### **3.2.5 Full fee paying overseas students currently enrolled in government or non-government schools**

NSW Government or non-government schools that have enrolled full fee paying overseas students can apply to the local distance education school for single subject provision to meet the needs of these students.

The application should explain why the home school cannot provide for the student.

### **3.2.6 Students with unforeseen and unique circumstances**

This category is designed to meet circumstances not identified elsewhere in this document and may include more than one subject.

Schools should provide their request for consideration to their director, educational leadership. Non-government schools should provide their request for consideration to the Director, Rural and Pathways.

The relevant director will consider if:

- all local options to provide specific curriculum for the student have been exhausted
- that distance education curriculum access is required as part of a documented personal learning plan detailing the student's learning support needs for each subject requested
- the educational monitoring and welfare needs of the student will be met by the home school
- curriculum access through a distance education school is the most appropriate option.

## **Application closing dates**

Applications for commencement in Week 1 of Term 1, 2020 should be received at the distance education school by Wednesday, 13 November 2019 and must be finalised by Wednesday, 12 February 2020. Applications after this date can only be considered if endorsed by the director, educational leadership for the requesting school or in the case of non-government schools, the Director Rural and Pathways.

Applications for students beginning an HSC course should be made as early as possible. Preferably in Term 3 of Year 11.

## **Where to apply**

The distance education schools, including the NSW School of Languages, have designated intake areas. Schools seeking single subject enrolment are advised to contact the closest secondary distance education school, listed in section 6 of this document, to seek advice about their designated intake areas.

The full range of distance education services may not be available at schools outside the designated intake area. In particular, opportunities related to face-to-face programs may be restricted due to the impact of greater distance.

## **Subject cost**

NSW Government schools will have a staffing reduction applied for students accessing distance education. All other schools, such as non-government, schools in the ACT and TAFE will be charged a fee that represents a contribution to the staffing reduction incurred by a government school. On application for single subject provision, a student's home school will be responsible for all costs as outlined in the schedules published by the relevant distance education school. Fees will not be accepted directly from parents/carers.

Fees for access to single course distance education will be set annually. The Department of Education does not determine whether non-government schools will meet the course costs or pass them on to the parents/carers.

## **Course fees**

Additional course costs may be required during the year for some courses, particularly for courses that have practical work as a course component.

These fees are outlined in the schedules published by the relevant distance education schools. When the home school, parents/carers and students have completed the distance education single course application, the home school will transfer funds to the distance education school. Fees paid by parents/carers are considered voluntary contributions.

For NSW Government schools, a student's home school will prepare an interschool journal to transfer funds to the distance education school.



## **4 Curriculum access provision for special education settings**

Special education settings such as schools for specific purposes (SSPs), including hospital schools and schools located in juvenile justice centres, may request curriculum access provision by a distance education school if the setting is unable to provide curriculum access for students in a key learning area at an appropriate stage level through any other means.

Curriculum access through distance education gives special education settings the opportunity to meet the minimum requirements leading to the Record of School Achievement (RoSA) or the NSW HSC.

Distance education must be included as part of a documented personalised learning and support plan or transition plan for students in these settings.

### **Schools for specific purposes**

The principal of the special placement setting must certify:

- as far as practical the setting will meet the common requirements for single course enrolment as listed in section 3 of this document
- they cannot provide curriculum access for the nominated student to a subject at an appropriate stage level through any arrangement other than distance education.

Applications for curriculum access to support schools for specific purposes must include:

- the name of the individual student who will be supported through the curriculum access arrangement
- the student's personal learning plan or transition plan
- details of any other state or school resources allocated to the support of the student.

This information will assist in ensuring the effective use of resources and support transition planning.

All applications must be endorsed by the director, educational leadership who will record and monitor the use of this provision.

### **Schools within juvenile justice centres**

Schools within approved juvenile justice centres may be considered for curriculum access provision through Sydney Distance Education High School if the setting is unable to provide curriculum access at an appropriate stage level through any other means. This provision must be focused on supporting single subject curriculum access from Stage 5. Schools in juvenile justice centres should use their best endeavours to deliver a breadth of curriculum to meet the needs of students.

Curriculum access arrangements for students in these specialist settings must comply with safety and security requirements and other conditions determined by Juvenile Justice. This may include curriculum adjustments and will require restrictions on students' access to the internet and electronic communications.

The principal of Sydney Distance Education High School and the principal of the school within the juvenile justice centre are responsible for communicating specific requirements and resolving any issues about a student's enrolment.

The principal of the school within the juvenile justice centre must certify:

- the name and age of the student
- that the student has a genuine interest and capacity in continuing education via distance education
- that the setting cannot provide the student with curriculum access to a subject at an appropriate stage level within their school setting other than distance education, especially where the student is of post-compulsory school age
- the anticipated duration of the enrolment (if known)
- as far as practical the setting will meet the common requirements for single course enrolment as listed in section 3 of this document
- that distance education is required as part of a documented personal learning and support plan detailing the student's learning support needs for each subject
- that the student is registered with NESA.

## **5 Sir Eric Woodward Memorial School Distance Education Support Unit**

The Sir Eric Woodward Memorial School Distance Education Support Unit (DESU) provides a specialised distance mode delivery of education for isolated students with a confirmed moderate to severe intellectual disability. The specialised support provided by this unit cannot be provided by other distance education schools.

Access to DESU is assessed by a state placement panel through the Online Access Request. Additional documentation supporting the student's eligibility for distance education will be required as part of the access request. School services personnel from the home school principal network will be able to support schools to assess the appropriate support provision and will forward applications for DESU to the state panel.

Priority for access to this provision is given to students who meet isolation criteria where regular access to specialist services is not available for the student.

To be eligible students must meet one of the criteria outlined below.

### **Geographic isolation**

- The distance between home and nearest appropriate specialist provision is 40 kilometres or more.
- The student does not have reasonable access to an appropriate specialist provision for at least 20 school days in a year because of adverse travel conditions such as impassable roads.
- Journey time regularly exceeds 90 minutes each way to access the nearest government specialist service.

### **Exceptional circumstances**

The department recognises that in exceptional circumstances it may be possible to consider an enrolment in the DESU when the student's educational needs cannot be met by a local service. To be eligible in this category, clear evidence must be provided that specifies:

- the assessment of additional need that cannot be provided by a local setting
- intervention strategies that have been exhausted in the local setting and the impact assessment of these interventions.

Before this request can be assessed, Appendix A (in this document) must be attached to the access request.

The parent/carer will be notified of the placement panel outcome and if successful will be invited to enrol at the distance education school. The Distance Education Support Unit at Sir Eric Woodward School will complete the final checks of eligibility for this provision before finalising the enrolment.

## **6 Complaints, compliments and suggestions**

If you have a complaint, compliment or suggestion about any aspect of our services we're keen to hear from you.

Parents/carers may appeal any decision relating to access to distance education by following the department's [complaints, compliments and suggestions process](#) available on our website.

## **7 Distance education schools**

### **Primary distance education schools**

#### **Bourke Walgett School of Distance Education**

T: Bourke Campus 02 6872 2424

T: Walgett Campus 02 6828 1374

<https://bourkewalg-d.schools.nsw.gov.au/>

#### **School of the Air (including preschool)**

T: Broken Hill Campus : 08 8087 3565

T: Hay Campus : 02 6993 1882

<https://schoolair-p.schools.nsw.gov.au/>

#### **North East Public School of Distance Education**

T: Port Macquarie Campus 02 6584 1118

<http://www.nepsode.org.au/>

#### **Sydney Distance Education Primary School**

T: 02 9207 6300

<https://sdeps.net/Portal/>

### **K-12 distance education schools**

#### **Dubbo School of Distance Education (including preschool)**

T: 02 5804 7000

<https://dubbo-d.schools.nsw.gov.au/>

#### **Finigan School of Distance Education**

T: 02 6210 5200

<https://finigan-d.schools.nsw.gov.au/>

#### **Sir Eric Woodward Memorial School – Distance Education Support Unit**

T: 02 9988 0677

<https://sirericwoo-s.schools.nsw.gov.au/>

#### **Southern Cross School of Distance Education**

T: 02 6681 0300

<https://sthcrossc-d.schools.nsw.gov.au/>

## **Secondary distance education schools**

### **NSW School of Languages**

T: 02 9381 4800

<https://nswschoollang.schools.nsw.gov.au/>

### **Camden Haven High School**

T: 02 6556 8200

<https://camdenhave-h.schools.nsw.gov.au/>

### **Sydney Distance Education High School**

T: 02 9383 0200

<https://sydneyh-d.schools.nsw.gov.au/>

## 8 Appendix A: Access requests

This appendix must be signed by the principal and uploaded as an attachment to the access request for distance education to assess the specific circumstances of the isolated learner.

In completing this declaration, the principal is encouraged to use the decision trees available as part of the Mandatory Reporter Guide to inform their decision-making.

If the student is seeking access to distance education from outside the NSW Department of Education in 2.8 (in this document) or the Distance Education Support Unit, this appendix may require support from the local school services team to facilitate the appropriate enrolment processes. This may require the use of approved information sharing protocols to obtain the required information to support the welfare of the child.

### Information sharing

On 1 December 2014, the Minister announced a protocol on information sharing between principals and schools across the three education sectors. It clarifies the circumstances when student information held by a school should, or must, be shared. This includes when a student may be transitioning between schools, including between school sectors.

The protocol will support students to make a successful transition when they are moving between schools and sectors. The protocol can be accessed from the following link: [Information Sharing between Principals and Schools](#).

### Principal's declaration

I have no knowledge of current child protection concerns under the *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998* for:

Student name:

Principal name:

Signature:

Date:

### Upload this declaration to the access request for distance education.

When this assessment indicates that the home environment lacks the capacity to support the student, a managed environment, drawing on resources from the home school and community, must be established locally to proceed or be assessed by the local Director, Educational Leadership as an extraordinary circumstances enrolment as outlined in section 2.10 in this document.