

Sydney Distance Education High School

Student Attendance

Distance education is governed by the same policies as apply to all NSW government schools, including policies on student attendance. Regular attendance at school is essential if students are to maximise their potential and meet the requirements of the law. Schools and parents share responsibility for promoting regular attendance.

The NSW Department of Education School Attendance Policy requires that Principals of NSW government schools ensure:

- that when frequent absences are explained as being due to illness that:
 - consultation occurs with parents regarding the health care needs of the student
 - medical certificates are sought for the absences
 - where there are ongoing concerns, approval is sought from parents to contact the student's doctor so that the school has all the relevant information regarding the student's health care needs.

Sydney Distance Education High School measures attendance by the amount of work completed. Each week, in each subject, students are expected to complete and return a week's print materials ("Title Page") or the equivalent through elearning, web lessons, phone lessons or school visits. Individualised Learning Plans and Personalised Learning Plans for identified students are also taken into consideration.

Distance education schools keep records of student–teacher contacts and use this information to assess satisfactory attendance. Teachers and faculties monitor the progress of individual students. Teachers review all students on a weekly basis to check they are returning work regularly and have work to go on with, as summarised in *Sydney Distance Education High School Teachers Roles and Responsibilities*. Teachers refer any issues to the Faculty Head Teacher or Year Adviser as outlined in the *Referring On Guide – A quick Guide for Teachers*.

Students are considered to have satisfactory attendance if they have completed more than 75% of their study program, as identified in the *Student Review and Student Engagement Policy and Procedures*. This accords with Centrelink's requirement that schools report if a student has "submitted a satisfactory number of assignments in sufficient subjects to maintain progress at 75% of a normal full-time workload". However, ABSTUDY requires students to "attend a minimum of 85% of days in a school term", which means that ABSTUDY students must complete 85% of their study program.

The *Student Attendance in Government Schools Procedures (2015)* includes that parents or carers of children of compulsory school age are responsible for ensuring that their child attends school every day. Children must commence school by age 6 and then complete Year 10. After Year 10 and until they turn 17, students must be:

- in school, or registered for home schooling, or
- in approved education or training (eg TAFE, traineeship, apprenticeship) or
- in full time, paid employment (average 25 hours a week) or
- in a combination of work, education and/or training.

For students younger than 17 whose attendance is identified as being less than 50%, the Head Teacher Welfare will ensure that a broad range of strategies are put in place to support the student. These may include:

- a Years 7–10 part program ie a student does some of the required courses in a year
- a Years 11–12 Pathways program ie a student completes Stage 6 over more than 2 years
- ongoing communication from class teachers eg phone, emails
- referral to Year Advisers, Faculty Head Teachers, Head Teacher Welfare or Head Teacher Secondary Studies for follow up.

Refer also to *The Enrolment of Students in Government Schools: A Summary and Consolidation of Policy (1997)* and *Protecting and Supporting Children and Young People Policy and Procedures*