Welcome to Distance Education

The information contained in this booklet will ensure that both your child and you, as a parent and supervisor, will have a successful learning journey. It should be read by any parents considering Distance Education as an option for their children. It particularly outlines the role of the supervising parent or parents and the considerable commitment of time and energy required by anyone taking on that role.

Your understanding of how distance education operates will greatly assist in providing the provision of the high-quality education for your child
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What is distance education?
In primary, distance Education is a form of teaching and learning in which the teacher and student are separated from each other. For primary students, their supervisor (usually a parent) is the vital link between the teacher and the student in that they deliver the lessons to the student in their own physical environment. Regular communication between students, their supervisors and teachers is vital to achieving success in this mode.

Who are we?
The Queanbeyan Distance Education Centre (QDEC) a NSW Department of Education and Communities provider. It is part of Queanbeyan Public School as well as part of the network of distance schools and centres in NSW. Our centre is staffed with highly trained and specialised teachers who are committed to providing the best education possible for all students.

What do we provide?
We provide a personalised, distance education program your child. The resources needed to successfully administer the program away from the face-to-face contact with the teacher, are also provided. Your child’s distance education program encompasses the Key Learning Areas, as determined by the NSW Board of Studies. These are:

- Mathematics
- English
- Science and Technology
- Human Society and its Environment
- Creative and Practical Arts
- Personal Development, Health and Physical Education.

A personalised education program is designed by the distance education teacher to specifically meet your child’s needs and circumstances. Students who are enrolled for limited periods of time (6 to 12 months) who are travelling, or for whom learning the basics is a priority, attention is given to English and Mathematics. Where possible we encourage the students to take advantage of their unique locations or travel experiences as part of their learning.

To whom do we provide?
We provide for students from Kindergarten to Year 6 who, for a variety of reasons, are unable to attend their local schools. Some of our students, referred to as home students, live in isolated areas. Some are temporarily overseas or travelling around Australia. Others have special needs while some have medical conditions which prevent them from attending their local schools.
Who is involved?

Distance teaching and learning is a three-way partnership. It involves:

The student who is the focus of teaching and learning. They are responsible to complete the lessons prepared for them under their supervisor’s care.

The teacher who designs and prepares the student’s program for delivery and who then assesses student returned work and plans for future learning.

The supervisor who is responsible for the delivery of the program and for supervising their child’s learning. They also undertake to ensure the regular flow of contact and for return of student work.

Distance Education works best when it is based on a good working relationship between teacher and family. The one-to-one relationships between student and supervisor and between student and teacher are highly conducive to quality learning.

How is school work delivered?

The delivery of Instructional materials is flexible and can be provided in a range of formats. Traditionally these have been in hard-copy via the mail and it remains an option today. Materials are also provided in a range of digital formats which can be uploaded to USB drives and posted to students. Most students have access to broadband internet, even when travelling, and a number of options for online learning can be programmed. Learning materials can also be accessed through the Department’s ‘eback-pack’ cloud space.

How is the school work organised?

Generally, work is organised in fortnightly packs, referred to as sets of work. A set of work will include an overview of the work to be completed in the set. Resources for the conduct of the work as well as instructions to the supervisor and to the student are included. At the end of each fortnight, set work and the resources are returned to the centre for assessment and teacher feedback is provided for learning. The distance education teacher prepares and sends new work and so the cycle is established.

When do we meet?

Staff likes to meet new students, their parent/s, carer/s, supervisors and/or their community support representatives at the beginning of the enrolment so that good, agreed working relationships can be forged from the outset. It also allows for all to have valuable input into the development and delivery of the student’s distance education program so that it is engaging and successful.
Who can enrol in distance education?

Prospective students must:

- reside in or maintain a residential address in the Illawarra or East Coast region of NSW or in the Australian Capital Territory
- be of an age that would qualify for enrolment in Kindergarten up to Year 6 of a mainstream school
- have an English-speaking supervisor
- require enrolment for a minimum of three months
- qualify in one of the following categories -

Isolated Home Students

Where the distance between a student’s home and the nearest bus route to a government school is over three kilometres and is significant enough to make it too difficult to get to school every day, a student can enrol as an isolated home student. Such a difficulty would need to be certified by the Principal of the nearest NSW government school. A Distance Certificate must be completed and forwarded at the time of your application to enrol. While enrolled at the Distance Education Centre students cannot be enrolled at another school.

The student’s parent or carer is required to submit a Statutory Declaration stating the distance from the student’s home to the nearest bus route.

Students travelling within Australia

Families travelling for work or for a holiday within Australia may enrol under this category. The minimum period for this type of enrolment is 3 months. The maximum period is 12 months. However, extensions may be granted in exceptional circumstances and on application to the centre. The student’s parent or carer is required to provide a statutory declaration stating their intention to travel and for what period of time.

So that we can ensure that students are provided regularly with lessons, a parent or carer is to ensure they are contactable by phone during school hours or by email. Timely contact will mean that lessons and returned work can be arranged to be posted to your intended location. All postage costs are paid by the school, except where redirection is necessary because of failure to inform the school of your intended location.

If you take up residence in one place for 6 weeks or more you may be required to enrol at the local school. This will be at the discretion of the principal of the local school in consultation with the manager of the centre.

Students temporarily resident or travelling overseas

This enrolment is available to children who are temporarily resident overseas and for whom no suitable English-speaking school is accessible or who are travelling overseas. Normally, such enrolment will be for a period of 3 to 12 months. However, an extension may be granted in exceptional circumstances on application to the centre. The student’s parent or carer is required to provide a statutory declaration stating their intention to travel or reside temporarily overseas and for what period of time. Where students will be in remote or where services are not reliable, it may be more practicable for families to take up to ten weeks of work with them. A student’s work and relevant lesson resource material must be returned by airmail. The cost of this postage is to be met by the family.
Students with Significant Support Needs

Students with significant support needs which impact on their engagement and prevent them from attending school on a regular basis, including a special school or a special class within a regular school, may be eligible for enrolment. Such enrolments require specific procedures to be undertaken by the principal of the referring school. This may include students who have a diagnosis, confirmed disability or history of:

- Mental health challenges
- Autism
- Severe disruptive behaviours
- School phobia

Student Support co-ordinators or delegates in the region where the student resides, will assist the school, parents or carers in determining the support needs of the student. The region must determine whether the distance education centre is the most appropriate placement.

In liaison with the distance education centre, parents or carers may be invited to make application for enrolment. After consultation, the principal may approve the enrolment. Student Support co-ordinators will assess ongoing student needs. All enrolments under this category must be reviewed by the distance education centre and the regional support co-ordinator as the need arises or every 12 months.

Students with medical conditions

Students affected by a physical disability or extended illness, which prevents them attending their local school, may enrol under this category. A parent or carer must submit specialist (not a GP) medical documentation which:

- clearly identifies the medical condition
- explicitly states the condition which prevents the student from attending a school
- specifies the length of time the medical certificate covers

The principal will determine if further assessment is needed. The certificate from the medical specialist must be renewed at the beginning of each academic year. The principal of the centre reserves the right to contact the specialist to discuss the student’s medical condition. Medical enrolment is usually not a permanent option depending on the nature of the illness. Its purpose is to assist the child during a period of trauma and/or recovery, with the intention of seeing the child integrated back into their local school as soon as possible.

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Students with intellectual disabilities

Students who have a continued intellectual disability, and who meet one of the full time enrolment categories for distance education, may be eligible for enrolment in the local Distance Education Centre. Where the student has moderate or severe intellectual disability and they meet one of the full time enrolment categories for distance education, parents or carers can choose to seek enrolment in the Distance Education Support Unit. Special programs are designed for these students by staff of the Distance Education Support Unit.

Please direct enquiries to:
Distance Education Support Unit (DESU)
Location address: Cnr Ayers & Acron Roads, St Ives NSW 2075 OR
Postal address: Locked Bag 1516, Pymble BC NSW 2073
Email: dedsupport-d.school@det.nsw.edu.au
Phone: (02) 9988 0677

Australian Capital Territory Students

The ACT Department of Education and Training seeks the provision of distance education for its students through the Queanbeyan Distance Education Centre. Under certain circumstances, and with the endorsement of the ACT Department of Education and Training, enrolment may be granted by this school to students resident in the ACT who are travelling, temporarily overseas, or who, for some other acceptable reason, are unable to attend their local school.

Parents residing in the ACT who wish to make application for enrolment with the Queanbeyan Distance Education Centre should, in the initial instance, contact the ACT Department of Education and Training:

Location address: 220 Northbourne Avenue
Postal address: PO Box 158
BRADDON ACT 2612
Phone: (02) 6207 5111 or 132281

How do I apply to enrol?

Each category of enrolment has a specific application and enrolment process. Please phone Mrs Vickie Fowlie (School Administration Officer – Distance Education) for further information regarding your particular needs and requirements.
What does distance education cost?

- **A General Service Fee for all students of $50** is payable at the time of enrolment and at the beginning of each school year. This fee contributes towards the cost of providing ‘once only use’ resources supplied by the school which are kept by the student. These include Handwriting and Mathematics textbooks and some Mathematics and Visual Arts equipment and resources.

- **A Refundable Resource Deposit for all students of $50** is payable at the time of enrolment. This is a ‘once only’ payment which is held in trust and refunded at the closure of the enrolment. This deposit is refunded when all resources have been returned in good condition. Monies will be deducted from this amount where resources are not returned or are damaged.

For overseas students only (and in addition to the above fees)

1. **An Overseas Student Term Fee for all students residing outside of Australia of $100 per term** is payable at the time of enrolment and prior to the beginning of each term. An exemption under this category only applies to students where mail is forwarded to a locked or diplomatic bag within Australia.

2. **Postage costs for the return of all work and resources are paid by the family.**
   Airmail is to be used at all times.

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**PAYMENT OF FEES IN ADVANCE IS A CONDITION OF ENROLMENT**

Cheques or money orders are to be made payable to Queanbeyan Distance Education Centre. Fees can also be paid by direct deposit. Please phone the centre on 02 6299 2966 for details.

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What is required for distance education to be successful for my child?

A dedicated supervisor
Your child will require an English speaking and dedicated supervisor. During the primary years of schooling, the parent (or an adult supervisor appointed by the parent) will need to supervise the student at all times. This is a challenging and time-consuming role requiring considerable commitment on the part of the supervisor, particularly where more than one child is enrolled. Distance education lessons take about the same time as lessons at school (i.e. about four hours a day for five days a week).

Parents or carers must nominate a supervisor who will give support and guidance to the student. The role of the supervisor includes:

- supervising the student during schoolwork activities
- interacting with the student as required by the learning materials and directions from the teacher
- 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 a suitable work area and basic equipment
- adhering to a manageable timetable and routine for the student and family
- supporting and encouraging the students to locate materials and resources as needed for lessons
- monitoring the student’s completion of set tasks and the return of work and resources to the distance education school or centre
- providing feedback to the distance education teacher on the student’s responses to the lesson activities and on their performance and interest,
- Reporting any illnesses or absences which may have affected the student’s ability to complete activities

A good, working relationship between student, distance teacher and supervisor
The importance of an honest and frank working relationship between all three parties is absolutely vital to the success of distance teaching and learning. To this end, teaching and administrative staff are available to talk to during school hours. They are also contactable via email and are able to respond quickly via this method, particularly if you are overseas or travelling.

Good communication
Teachers need to be able to contact you, as the supervisor, and your student/s. There are often times when immediate contact needs to be made. Hence, it is a requirement that the supervisor maintains a contactable phone number (either fixed or mobile) and email account. Email accounts which exceed limitations (where they are so full they can’t receive further emails) are not considered contactable. Where we are not able to contact you directly, teachers will contact your nominated emergency contact to re-establish communication.
A fortnightly ‘return of work’ cycle

Students should complete one set of lessons per fortnight by working during normal school hours. Upon enrolment, students are supplied with two or three sets of work. Each set contains enough work for two weeks only. When the teacher receives a completed set, it is assessed and returned with a new set. The continuing cycle of work depends on fortnightly returns. It is essential that you return a set of completed work each fortnight. Please ensure that the set work for each fortnight is completed fully and returned. Always comment on how your child has managed the completed lessons.

Completing assigned oral work

An integral and important aspect of learning by distance education is completing oral tasks. Your child may be required, for example, to read aloud, answer questions, speak about a given topic or offer an opinion or suggestion. These tasks will require recording using the free ‘Audacity’ software which can be easily downloaded from our homepage. Alternatively, students are choosing to webcam their responses using Window software or their camera specific software. Once completed and saved, these files can then be uploaded to the USB drive provided in set work.

A suitable work area

Students require a comfortable, well-lit and well-ventilated work area. They will need a flat desk area to spread out and work on. They will also require a space to store resources while they are not in use. Distance education students, like their mainstream counterparts, like to see their work displayed. A noticeboard or fridge door would be ideal.

The use of a computer and internet

Use of a personal computer with a disk drive and USB ports is essential in education today and is part of the provision of NSW education in primary schools. This is also the case in distance education. Importantly, the internet provides students with a wealth of information and allows them to access online learning data-bases to which the centre subscribes. High-speed broadband connection is ideal and is now available in a number of ways for both students working at home and for those who are travelling. We encourage families to seek high-speed broadband internet provision. Teachers will upload feedback, instructions, support material and/or lessons to a USB drive, send work on a disk or provide DVD support for learning.

Other equipment and resources

We provide some equipment and resources so that lessons can be conducted appropriately for distance students. Art and Maths supplies, student workbooks, readers, DVDs, USB drives, CDs, library and lesson-specific texts, games and puzzles, are supplied by the school as required. These will vary according to student age and stage of learning, the program designed by the teacher and the location of the family. Some of the equipment will be yours to keep. Some of the equipment will be on loan and is to be returned to the school. Your assistance in returning the equipment promptly and in good condition will be appreciated by the next family waiting to receive it. Equipment required for one set (2 weeks) must be returned with that fortnight’s lessons. Equipment and resources remaining outstanding will be charged to the family. Non return of resources may seriously compromise the resourcing of future lessons.

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Adherence to Customs Regulations
Local and international customs regulations must be adhered to at all times. This means that items containing seeds, fur etc. must not be mailed to the school from outside Australia. It also prevents acquaintances or family members from carrying parcels into Australia, on behalf of the family, for local posting.

What do I do if I am or my child is sick or absent?
If, for some reason, you or your child is unable attend to their lessons either for reasons of their or your ill-health or for any other reason, it is essential that you inform the school to explain the absence. This may be done by a phone call to the centre, by email, or by indicating on the overview and returning it with set work. You must specify dates and reasons for absence. It is a NSW Department of Education and Training requirement that all absences be accounted for. If you know, in advance of a likely absence the centre needs to be notified so that adjustments to student learning can be made accordingly. Continued and unexplained absences may require investigation by the department.

How long will it be before my child can begin?
After approval of your enrolment, it will be approximately two weeks before you will receive your first set of work.

How do I contact the school?
The Queanbeyan Distance Education operates during NSW Department school hours Teachers and administrative staff are able to be contacted each school day.

Telephone: Queanbeyan Distance Education Centre (02) 6299 2966
From overseas (Country Access Code) + 612 + 6299 2966

Facsimile: Queanbeyan Distance Education Centre (02) 6299 2863
From overseas (Country Access Code) + 61 + 2 + 6299 2863

Email: queanbeyp-d.school@det.nsw.edu.au

Website: www.queanbeyp-d.schools.nsw.edu.au
(or Google Queanbeyan Distance Education Centre)

Postal Address: Queanbeyan Distance Education Centre
15 Isabella Street
QUEANBEYAN NSW 2620

Visit: The Queanbeyan Distance Education Centre is located within the grounds of Queanbeyan Public School (address as above); a five-minute walk from the main street of Queanbeyan
Are there other distance education providers?

There are other Primary Distance Education providers in Bourke, Broken Hill, Casino, Dubbo, Hay, Port Macquarie, Sydney, Tibooburra and Walgett for residents of those areas.

Secondary Distance Education providers exist in Dubbo, Port Macquarie (Camden Haven HS), Queanbeyan (Karabar HS), Ballina (Southern Cross) and Sydney (Sydney Distance Education HS) for residents of those areas.

The Dubbo School of Distance Education provides for Pre-school children who are geographically isolated. Children who are four years of age on or before 31st July in that year may enrol.

The Open High School, located in Randwick, Sydney, caters for students who are enrolled in their local high schools and are studying languages by distance education.

The Sir Eric Woodward Memorial School – Distance Education Support Unit provides for isolated students with intellectual and multiple disabilities from Pre-school to Year 12.