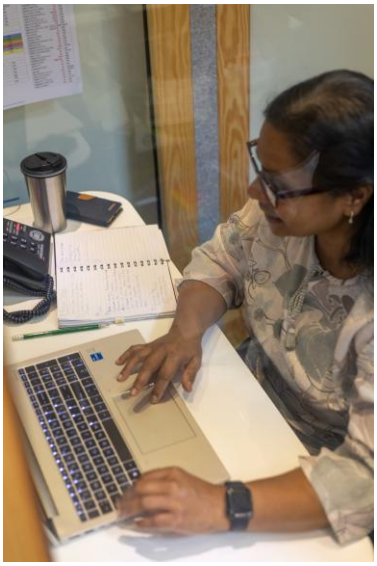
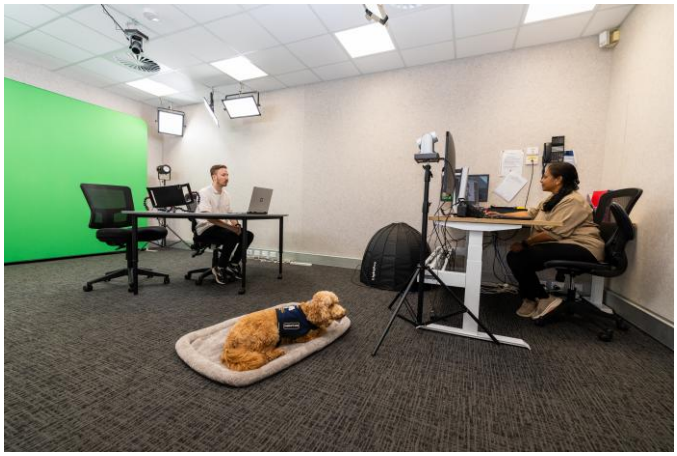
learning in partnership

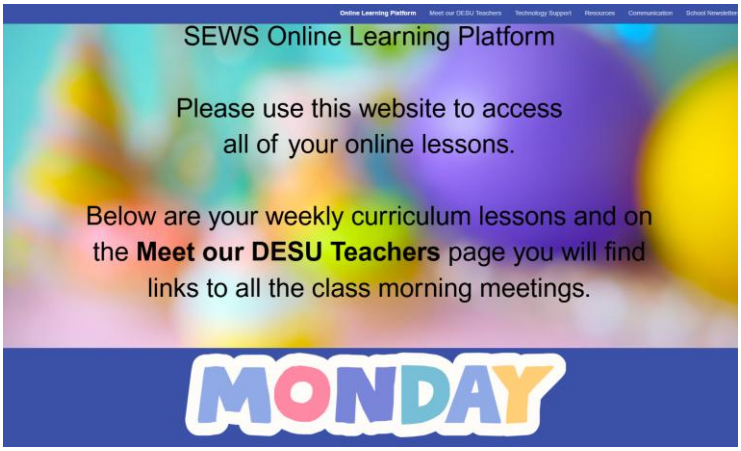
Sir Eric Woodward School

Distance Education Support Unit (DESU)

Information Booklet







Welcome to the Distance Education Support Unit (DESU), Sir Eric Woodward School (SEWS)

We warmly welcome you and your child to the Distance Education Support Unit at Sir Eric Woodward School. We are proud to offer tailored, highly differentiated learning programs that respond to each student's individual strengths, needs and goals.

Our inclusive school community values every learner, and we work in close partnership with families to support meaningful attendance and engagement, wellbeing and progress.

Our highly dedicated and professional teachers bring expertise, care and flexibility to distance education, ensuring students remain connected to learning and to the wider Sir Eric Woodward School community.

Through regular communication, shared activities and opportunities to participate in school events and initiatives, we aim to foster a strong sense of belonging for every student and family.

We also respectfully share our school's Acknowledgement of Country, reflecting our commitment to honouring the Traditional Custodians of the land and embedding respect, connection and cultural understanding within our learning community.

We look forward to working alongside you to support your child's learning journey.

Acknowledgement of Country

We stand on the land
And under the sky
We thank First Nations people
Now and forever

We care for the land
We care for the water
We care for our friends
Now and forever.

The Role of the Tutor

The success of the students' distance education program depends very much on the tutor!

The DESU teacher and the tutor work closely together as a team and support each other so that the student receives the best possible education.

The role of the tutor includes:

- Supervising the student's DESU program for 20 hours per week.
- Providing a suitable learning space for the student.
- Developing a schedule for the student that includes their online meetings and learning.
- Assisting the student to locate and organise resources needed for lessons.
- Working one-to-one with the student, using the strategies suggested by the teacher.
- Providing specific verbal and written feedback about the student to the teacher using various online platforms.
- Returning completed work/ evidence of activities via Teams or Seesaw.
- Regularly speaking with the teacher via phone or Teams call.
- Participating in all Personalised Learning Plan (PLP) meetings with the teacher.
- Supporting and encouraging the student.

The Importance of Feedback

In Distance Education, mutual feedback is an important part of the relationship between the teacher, tutor, and student to ensure successful student learning. The feedback tutors provide is vital. Even the most experienced distance education teacher won't be able to fine-tune a student's program and provide instructional strategies without feedback. Feedback is important for planning next steps and for determining when to move the student to a new learning goal.

What exactly is feedback?

Feedback is information that tells us how easy or hard the student found the activity, and the amount and type of supports that were needed to complete the task. It is great for us to know how much they enjoyed the activity as well.

Tutors can provide feedback by sending work samples, annotated photos, or short videos of the student working, by uploading them to Teams or Seesaw.

Observational notes and prompting levels can also be communicated to the teacher. Regular phone calls at agreed-upon times are another way to provide feedback and discuss student progress.

Feedback works best when it is two-way. The class teacher will also provide the tutor with feedback and support, including evidence-based explicit teaching strategies for delivering the work and improving student outcomes. Support may include instructional videos; Teams calls and collaborative opportunities to learn from each other.

SEWS teachers are committed to providing the best, most up-to-date online learning available and to being responsive to students' needs.

At different times, there will be the opportunity to provide the school with feedback. This will include student's voice using 'My Say My Way.'

Attendance guide

Student attendance is recorded by the class teacher at 9:45 am each morning during roll call. The NSW Department of Education (DoE) requires all schools to maintain a record of students' daily attendance. At SEWS:

- Teachers will post a video greeting in the General channel in Teams so that **parents/carers or tutors can complete the daily roll call before 9:30 am each day.** Students, tutors and families/carers are encouraged to use the photo or video function to upload a daily video, picture or greeting.

- The Administration Team will contact parents/carers/tutors of any student with an unexplained absence via School Bytes text at 10 am each day. The roll will be updated if a satisfactory response is received. If a response is not received, the teacher will attempt to make contact each day until contact is made.

- If a student is unwell or has an appointment, it is helpful to let the teacher know beforehand, where possible. This will support accurate roll marking and avoid unnecessary follow-up. Please email the class teacher before 9:30 am with an explanation of any absence

- If a student is unable to attend their program for three or more days, the parent/carer is required to provide a written request for leave. The parent/carer is also required to provide supporting documentation, such as a medical certificate, for an absence of 3 or more days.

- Students wishing to travel during the school term must complete an extended leave travel application and submit it to the principal for review. Please speak to the class teacher about any leave requests that need to be approved by the principal.

- **DESU students are required to complete 20 hours of schoolwork each week**, and if applicable, work experience, post-school options or Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET). The 20 hours may also include the student's attendance at school incursions/excursions, medical, OT, speech therapy or other related appointments that support the student's learning.

Sir Eric Woodward School follows the DoE Attendance policy and procedures on the DoE website. DoE attendance policy

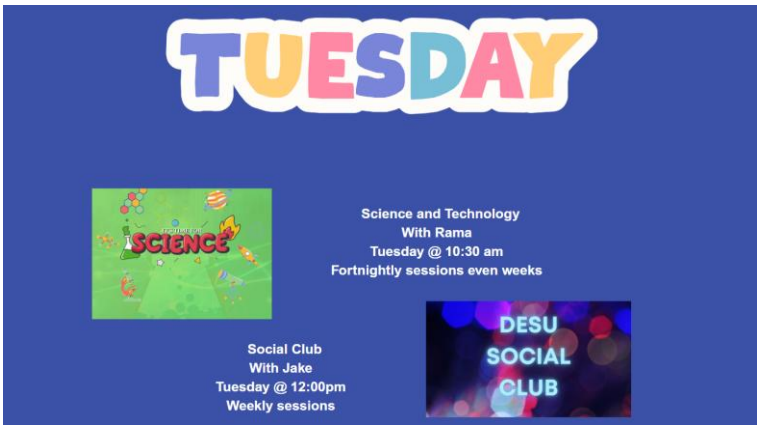
It is a legal requirement that all students between the ages of 6 and 17 years must attend school daily.

Engagement guide

Student engagement is monitored and recorded by the class teacher each day.

The following are some examples of how student engagement is tracked and monitored, but not limited to:

- The regular return of set work through daily uploads of work samples, observations, annotated photographs, or short videos on Seesaw or Teams that show evidence of engagement in individualised programs.
- Attendance and participation **in 2 live class Teams morning meetings** and **2 live Key Learning Areas (KLAs) / subjects each week.**
- Engagement in additional timetabled Teams lessons e.g. cooking, music and library.
- Regular phone calls to the tutor that confirm the student's engagement in learning.



Student review of placement

All enrolled DESU students undergo an annual review of their placement to determine whether DESU remains the most appropriate setting.

The review documentation is sent via School Bytes and must be reviewed, signed by the parent/carer and returned to the school.

If, for some reason, the student's circumstances change, the review cycle can be changed.

Introducing SEWS Online Platforms: keeping our school community connected

School Bytes

School Bytes is a comprehensive school management platform providing schools with the tools they need to operate smoothly and efficiently. The parent communication module allows schools to send personalised email correspondence to parents/carers as well as newsletters and general notifications. School Bytes also has a parent portal. The parent portal allows you to view your child's information, give consent for events, process payments online, and view the school calendar.

Getting Started with School Bytes

Here's how to get started:

- Access the Parent Portal in School Bytes.
- Create an Account: Click "Create a new account." Fill in your first name, last name, email address (the one provided to the school), and set a password.
- Click "Create account."
- Check your email to verify your account. For detailed instructions, please refer to the School Bytes Parent Guide located on the Login page. There's a user guide link on the bottom right underneath the login panel. Or, within the portal: on the top right of every screen in the parent portal, on the white bar underneath the parent's or carer's name
- Link your child(ren) to your account: After logging in, select "Link other student."
- Search for our school's name.
- Enter your child's first name, last name, and current year level.
- Click "Search" and follow the prompts to link your child.

If you already have a School Bytes account for a child at a different school, you can conveniently link additional children and schools by selecting "link other student" at the bottom of your account.

Benefits of School Bytes

- School Bytes is now being used for a variety of essential functions, including:
- Giving permission for excursions and incursions
- 'Make online Payment' related to the cost per student of an excursion or incursion
- Viewing student reports, PLPs and Learning and Support adjustments
- Providing reasons for absences
- Facilitating communication between the school and parents/carers.

Microsoft Teams

Each student is placed in their class on the Microsoft Teams Platform. This is where the teacher will set the student's work to be accessed online. Each day, by 9:30 am, students are required to register their attendance by completing a daily online roll call in the General channel of their class team, either by uploading a brief video/photo or by posting a reflection.

Tutors, students and families/carers are encouraged to use the photo or video function in the General channel to upload a daily picture or greeting. Uploading a picture, short video or greeting is encouraged if the student is unable to attend a scheduled live online lesson that day.

Students can also access all our additional online learning opportunities on the Teams platform.

Seesaw

Seesaw is an easy-to-use digital learning platform for students to create, document, and showcase their learning through a personal, interactive portfolio. Students upload photos, videos, and evidence of completed work, often with support from the parent/carer tutor, which teachers use for real-time feedback and assessment of learning. Your teacher will provide you with links to these platforms.

IT Support

IT support is available for any technology issues or concerns. Please contact your class teacher if you need any support. Technology support is available for all students and parent/carer tutors to help with logging in to Teams and with questions about devices, connectivity, and general troubleshooting. We are here to assist.

Additional Resources (SEWS 'Blue' bags)

To support students' individual learning programs and online interaction during timetabled lessons, teachers may send additional resources, such as counters, art and craft materials, booklets, worksheets, and library books in SEWS Blue bags. Detailed tutor instructions outline how to use the resources and when to return them to the school using the blue bags. Mail is sent out on Tuesdays and Thursdays. This may happen once or twice a term, or as required.

Contact Details

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ST IVES NSW 2075

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GORDON NSW 2072

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Mailing Instructions for Tutors

In a Distance Education program, resources may need to be sent to families.

When returning resources to school, please use the blue postal bag shown below.

Resources to be returned may include paint, books, switch devices, sensory toys or games (please remove batteries if applicable and pack separately inside the bag)

- Place the return mail label on the front of the address pocket to display your teacher's name and the reply-paid address. Please remove all Aust Post labels from the bag before sending.
- Remove the plastic tie that is in the address label pocket. Zip up the bag.
- Seal the bag using the plastic tie. Do not pull the tie too tight, as this makes the bag difficult to open upon return to the DESU.

For larger bags, loop the tie through the two eyelets on the end of the bag and tighten.