

## NESA's amended non-government school manuals

NESA is proud to introduce new and improved Manuals for registration and accreditation of non-government schools in NSW. The Manuals have been redesigned with the biggest update since they were first published almost 20 years ago. The amended Manuals are effective from **1 January 2024**.

This document explains improvements made to the Manuals':

- structure
- wording
- design.

It also provides an overview of the main amendments to evidence of compliance.

Schools that are part of a Registration System of non-government schools should be aware that some policies, procedures, records or documents may be developed and/or maintained centrally by the school's proprietor rather than by a school. The Registration System will be able to assist with any enquiries.

### Structure: The new 5 part structure makes navigating easy

Both non-government Manuals for individual schools, and Registration Systems are now presented with the same structure.

Previous Manuals had up to 13 different sections. Many of these had subsections that went as far as 4 levels deep.

This complicated structure has been replaced with a new 5 part layout:

- **Part A: Introduction** – sets out the legal framework that underpins the Manual and the responsibilities of each party involved in registering and accrediting schools.
- **Part B: Registration requirements** – details the requirements and evidence of compliance to meet registration requirements.
- **Part C: Accreditation requirements** – details the requirements and evidence of compliance for schools delivering curriculum leading toward the credentials of the RoSA and/or the HSC.
- **Part D: Processes** – explains the procedures schools and Registration Systems follow to apply for registration and accreditation, including processes for when schools require improvement or demonstrate non-compliance.
- **Part E: References** – contains a supplementary list of relevant legislation and a glossary.

Within each part, there are subsections labelled with a clear and informative heading that tells you exactly what the section is about. There is also a mini table of contents at the start of each subsection to help you find your way easily.

## Wording: The simplified language makes it easier to understand the requirements

When reviewing the Manuals, we found some repetition and unnecessary legalistic language that may have been confusing. To address this, we have used plainer language, which reduced the text by almost 25% without losing meaning.

Other improvements include:

- simpler, shorter sentences that separate ideas and increase clarity
- more lists and tables to present information clearly and efficiently
- active verbs that make it easier to understand your obligations.

## Design: The clean new look helps you find what you want at a glance

In Parts B and C, all the registration and accreditation requirements are presented in a clear and consistent order. We added colour and icons to help guide you through the material so you can quickly understand the required evidence and see what you need to do. We've also added hyperlinked cross-references so you can move around the document with ease as needed.

Whether you're an existing registered school or a proposed new school seeking registration for the first time, you'll be able to find exactly what you need to do at a glance.

each section has an alphanumeric label

requirements that schools must meet

evidence that schools must maintain

evidence that schools applying for initial registration or accreditation must prepare

each heading summarises the requirement

an existing school can ignore sections with red headings

relevant references to the Education Act are presented at the end of each requirement

**B6 Facilities**

**B6.1 Teaching and learning facilities must be adequate for the curriculum**

Schools must ensure that their educational facilities are adequate for the courses of study they provide and the number of students in each course.

Typical teaching and learning facilities include:

- general classrooms
- specialist classrooms
- digital technologies
- a library area
- indoor open space
- indoor or outdoor recreational space.

**Evidence of compliance for registered schools**

Schools must have adequate facilities for each course of study provided, taking into account:

- the number of students taking each course
- any specialist requirements of each course
- the range of student learning needs.

If a school relies on using an off-site facility for the delivery of a course, the school must have an ongoing written arrangement for use of the facility to ensure the facility is available for the duration of the course.

Schools must maintain records of assessing and monitoring the standard and state of repair of its facilities.

**Capacity to comply: evidence for schools applying for initial registration**

An applicant must show capacity to comply with requirement **B6.1**, including a description of how it will ensure:

- the school has the necessary facilities for each proposed course of study
- off-site facilities are available for the duration of each course, if applicable
- assessment and monitoring of the standard and state of repair of its proposed facilities.

**Education Act**

section 47(1)(e) Educational facilities must be adequate for the courses of study the school provides.

Extract from the NSW Registered and Accredited Individual Non-government Schools Manual (September 2023)

## Overview of amendments

NESA recognises that non-government schools are different. This is due to the context of the school, including organisational and operational structure, registered Years of schooling, accreditation status and size.

The registration and accreditation requirements set out in the Manuals have not changed. However, NESA has sought to relieve administrative tasks by making clear our expectations about the evidence of compliance required for registration and accreditation. Content has been reorganised and where possible, grouped into logical sections or headings. Schools do not need to develop any new policies or procedures due to amendments to the Manual.

NESA seeks to gain greater efficiency for schools and improve clarity of understanding. Schools should be able to use the Manual and NESA support materials to effectively monitor their own compliance and implement measures of self-assurance. A key change for the evidence of compliance sections of the Manual are clearer statements about what must be a policy, procedure and/or a record.

Schools may use externally developed policy templates that reflect relevant legislation and Manual requirements. However, schools are reminded of their responsibility to include procedural detail that sufficiently reflects the school's context, organisation and operation.

Schools may choose to combine some policies or rename requirements to reflect school operations. If the title of a policy doesn't reflect a specific registration requirement, the school must be able to demonstrate the relevant registration requirement(s) are addressed within the school's suite of policies. For example, a school's 'Student Behaviour Policy and Procedure' may incorporate evidence of compliance relating to codes of conduct, behaviour management, anti-bullying (B8.2) as well as discipline (B9.1). Schools are expected to implement their policies and procedures in the way they are described.

### Transition to the amended Manuals in 2024

The Manuals take effect from 1 January 2024. NESA understands schools will transition to adopting the amended Manuals during 2024 as they align their current policies and procedures to the Manual (September 2023).

Applications submitted to NESA in 2024 seeking initial registration (and, if applicable, accreditation) from 2025 must demonstrate capacity to comply with the Manual (September 2023).

## Overview of amendments

The below overview helps schools identify current policies and procedures that may require review and/or update.

Policy area	September 2024 Manual reference	November 2022 Manual reference	Amendment	Advice for schools
Distance education	B11.1	Individual 3.3.3, 3.6.3 Registration System 5.3.3, 5.6.3	Removed need for mandatory residential sessions.  Clarified that distance education participation, rather than attendance must be monitored.  Schools must have policies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ that suit the mode of delivery</li> <li>▪ including clear guidelines for a home supervisor</li> <li>▪ to monitor distance education student's personal and social development</li> <li>▪ and records for each distance education student.</li> </ul>	NESA will contact approved distance education providers and discuss any changes that may involve a modification to distance education policies before 2024 courses commence.
			Clarified that schools seeking distance education for the first time must apply to NESA at least 9 months in advance.	
External providers	B3.2 C3.2	Individual 3.2.3, 3.6.2, 5.3.2 Registration System 5.2.3, 5.6.2, 7.3.2	Clearer descriptions of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ an external provider</li> <li>▪ school and external provider responsibilities.</li> </ul> Identified 2 groups of external providers and reduced the records schools need to retain for Group A external providers.	This only applies to schools accessing, or seeking to access external providers.
Responsible persons	B2.1	Individual 3.9.1, 3.9.2, 3.9.5 (part)	Clarified that schools must maintain an up-to-date list of responsible persons in RANGS Online.	Review and confirm the school's responsible persons listed in RANGS Online is accurate.
	B2.2	Individual 3.9.3.4, 3.9.3.5	Clarified that a responsible person who is a responsible person for more than one school may be able to transfer across some or all of their NESA-approved governance professional learning hours.	

Policy area	September 2024 Manual reference	November 2022 Manual reference	Amendment	Advice for schools
		Registration System 5.9.3.4, 5.9.3.5	Confirmed a school-based governance induction is still required for each school.	
School management and operation documentation	B2.1 – B2.6	Individual 3.9 Registration System 5.9	Clarified, reordered and simplified what is required to demonstrate compliance relevant to the school's governance arrangements eg proprietors must have a framework or plan for managing risk.	Content reordered (Individual manual references): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 3.9.1, 3.9.2, 3.9.5 (part) = B2.1</li> <li>▪ 3.9.3, 3.9.3.1 = B2.3</li> <li>▪ 3.9.3.2, 3.9.3.3 = B2.4</li> <li>▪ 3.9.3.4, 3.9.3.5 = B2.2</li> <li>▪ 3.9.3.6, 3.9.4 = B2.5</li> <li>▪ 3.9.5 = B2.6</li> </ul>
Notifications to NESAs	B2.6	Individual 2.4.10 (part), 3.9.5 Registration System 4.6 (part), 5.9.5	Clearer presentation of notifications and timeframes.  Revised notification timeframes for situations that require a new certificate/approval from the Minister eg adding a campus timeframe extended.  Notification forms will be updated in RANGS Online to align with implementation of the Manual.	Schools seeking to make notifications are advised to check the Manual for adjusted timeframes.
Annual school report	B2.7	Individual 3.10.1 Registration System 5.10.1	Revised the mandatory information to contain in an annual school report.  Amended some previously mandatory information to optional inclusions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ priority areas for improvement</li> <li>▪ actions undertaken to promote respect and responsibility.</li> </ul> Removed some reporting requirements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ granting of the RoSA</li> <li>▪ retention of Year 10 to Year 12</li> <li>▪ details of comparisons required for HSC results</li> <li>▪ a summary of professional learning for teachers.</li> </ul>	Review information and the format of the annual school report when collating report information during 2023.  Schools must either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ submit a 2023 annual school report to NESAs by 30 June 2024 based on the new reporting requirements (schools must also make identified policies publicly available and link to the annual school report)</li> </ul> OR <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ submit a 2023 annual school report to NESAs by 30 June 2024 based on previous reporting requirements. If this option is chosen, the new reporting requirements must be in place for the 2024 annual school report submitted in 2025.</li> </ul>

Policy area	September 2024 Manual reference	November 2022 Manual reference	Amendment	Advice for schools
		Individual 3.10.2 Registration System 5.10.2	Removed evidence of compliance related to reporting to the Minister. Schools are still responsible for providing data to the Minister, if requested.	A policy to manage this is no longer required. If requested, a school must provide data to the Minister.
Child protection	B8.1	Individual 3.6.1 Registration System 5.6.1	Clarified evidence of compliance and provided additional context.  Reordered content relevant to specific legislation identified in the Education Act.	
Student welfare	B8.2	Individual 3.6.2 Registration System 5.6.2	Clarified and reordered content under headings.  Confirmed that some evidence of compliance only requires procedures or records.  Student attendance policies and procedures moved into the attendance requirement.	NESA recognises schools may choose to have supplementary welfare policies not identified in the Manual. This is a school decision.
Attendance	B7.1	Individual 3.6.2 (part), 3.8 Registration System 5.6.2 (part), 5.8	Evidence of compliance related to enrolment and attendance previously included in student welfare and educational reporting have been consolidated in the attendance requirement.	Schools may choose whether to integrate some or all enrolment and attendance policies. This is a school decision.
Discipline	B9.1	Individual 3.7.1, 3.7.2 Registration System 5.7.1, 5.7.2	Clarified and updated description of exclusion.  Content related to not allowing corporal punishment incorporated into discipline. Confirmed that a separate policy is not required.	

Policy area	September 2024 Manual reference	November 2022 Manual reference	Amendment	Advice for schools
<p>Some policies must be publicly available:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ child protection</li> <li>▪ anti-bullying</li> <li>▪ discipline</li> <li>▪ complaints</li> <li>▪ enrolment</li> <li>▪ annual school report.</li> </ul>	B2.7 B7.2 B8.1 B8.2 B9.1	<p>Individual</p> <p>3.6.1, 3.6.2, 3.7.1, 3.7.2, 3.8, 3.10.1</p> <p>Registration System</p> <p>5.6.1, 5.6.2, 5.7.1, 5.7.2, 5.8, 5.10.1</p>	<p>Clarified that the identified policies must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ be made available on the school's publicly accessible website</li> <li>▪ not be protected behind a firewall or login</li> <li>▪ be provided to parents/guardians in hardcopy if requested.</li> </ul>	<p>Following review of school policies, ensure updated versions are published no later than December 2024.</p> <p>Schools can continue publishing documented policies that cover more than one requirement. For example, a school complaint handling policy may also include procedures for managing stakeholder complaint processes regarding staff misconduct and employee reportable conduct. Relevant requirements should be identified in the policy if an alternate policy title is used.</p> <p>Schools may choose to include contact details for school personnel in some of their policies eg child protection rather than generic school contact details. The school community must be aware of the relevant method to contact the school. A policy that is published publicly may refer parents to a portal that requires login details to access specific staff contact details. This is a school decision.</p>
Premises and buildings	B5.1	<p>Individual</p> <p>3.4</p> <p>Registration System</p> <p>5.4</p>	<p>Clarified the procedures and records that are required to be maintained.</p> <p>Removed background information from the requirement - a list of other legislation schools should be aware about is contained in E1.1 and published in a fact sheet available on the NESA website.</p>	

Policy area	September 2024 Manual reference	November 2022 Manual reference	Amendment	Advice for schools
Boarding	B10.1	Individual 3.11, 3.11.1, 3.11.2, 3.11.3, 3.11.4, 3.11.5, 3.11.6, 3.11.7, 3.11.8  Registration System	Restructured and reduced repetition of evidence of compliance.  Clarified that boarding schools may have separate boarding policies and procedures or integrate them into the day school policies and procedures.	
		5.11, 5.11.1, 5.11.2, 5.11.3, 5.11.4, 5.11.5, 5.11.6, 5.11.7, 5.11.8	Clarified that schools seeking to provide a boarding facility for the first time must apply to NESAs at least 9 months in advance.	
School of a kind	B4.4	Individual 3.3.4  Registration System  5.3.4	Removed the requirement to monitor teacher qualifications.	Only relevant to schools with this class of registration.  NSW schools must employ accredited teachers.
Accreditation	Part C	Individual 5.1, 5.2.1, 5.3, 5.3.1, 5.3.2, 5.3.3  Registration System 7.1, 7.2.1, 7.3, 7.3.1, 7.3.2, 7.3.3	Clarified that seeking accreditation is optional, and in addition to a school's registration.  Schools are responsible for ensuring they have policies and procedures in line with ACE website requirements relevant to their operation, student cohort and credential(s) they are offering.	



## Further resources for schools

**Self-assurance audit tool** A new self-assurance audit tool is available and aligns with the required evidence of compliance in the Manuals. NESAs encourages schools to ensure compliance is the foundation of everyday practice within the school. This approach will support a school's self-assurance of its ongoing compliance.

Schools are not required to submit the audit tool to NESAs. It could be used by a school as a document to track, monitor and manage self-reviews of documentation related to school registration, and if applicable, accreditation requirements.

The individual(s) completing the audit must be aware of the school's approved registration and accreditation to ensure they complete all relevant sections.

**NESA website** The regulation section of the [NESAs website](#) includes supplementary information, fact sheets, explanatory videos, guides and templates to help schools understand the requirements. Many of the support materials will assist schools with their self-assurance processes and when preparing applications and notifications to NESAs.

## We welcome your feedback

We aim to continuously improve and will provide ongoing support for schools by:

- reducing technical jargon
- providing clear expectations in evidence of compliance
- describing roles and definitions
- reviewing how schools locate and use information
- providing support materials to help schools implement their own assurance processes
- consistently reviewing our risk-based regulatory practices.

If you have any feedback on the Manual or suggestions for support materials, please email: [schoolrego@nesa.nsw.edu.au](mailto:schoolrego@nesa.nsw.edu.au).