

New School Leaving Age

Information for employers



As of January 2010, New South Wales will have a new school leaving age, meaning students will complete Year 10 and then have a number of options in which to participate until at least age 17.

From 1943 until 2009 it has been compulsory for students in NSW to attend school until the age of 15. In line with other states, NSW has now passed legislation to change the years of compulsory schooling.

There is a great deal of Australian and international evidence which demonstrates a high correlation between students' level of education and their prospects in life.

The research shows that early school leavers are two and a half times more likely to be unemployed, earn lower wages and have poorer quality of life outcomes.

The purpose of the new legislation, therefore, is to ensure that all young people have the best possible chances in life.

Under the new arrangements, all students must complete Year 10, after which they have several options.

They can continue at school. They can do an apprenticeship or a traineeship. They can study vocational courses at TAFE. They can do a course in higher education. They can do other approved education or training. Provided they are 15, they can be in employment, as long as it is full-time, paid work. They can also do a combination of a number of these.

Students who choose full-time work may be asked to provide a letter from their employer to the Principal which confirms their employment. Should the employment cease, it is the responsibility of the young person (and their parents) to re-engage in education or training.

What's New?

1. From 2010, all NSW students must complete Year 10.
2. After Year 10 and until the age of 17 students must be:
 - a. in school, or registered for home schooling OR
 - b. in approved education or training OR
 - c. in full-time, paid employment (average 25 hours/week) OR
 - d. in a combination of these
3. This applies to students who complete Year 10 in 2009 and to all subsequent years.

More information
www.schools.nsw.edu.au