

**Alice Springs School of the Air**  
**Access to STARS Policy**  
**Approved by School Council May 2021**

### **Introduction**

At ASSOA video conferencing, or Interactive Distance Learning (IDL), is used as part of the teaching and learning process. The Remote Education and Conferencing Tool (REACT) software is used by students to access their daily IDL lessons. An internet connection is required to access IDL. Internet can be supplied via the Department of Education STARS satellite, or through a private company. The Department of Education provide a monthly subsidy to families who pay for their own internet connection for education. REACT traffic is unmetered on Telstra mobile- i.e. IDL can be accessed and it will not be counted towards the family's data usage.

In order to enrol with Alice Springs School of the Air (ASSOA) students must meet the eligibility requirements as outlined in the Department of Education Enrolment in Distance Education Schools Guidelines. One of the eligibility requirements is the intention to enrol for a minimum of one semester. Students of ASSOA are able to access their learning without IDL lessons, as is the case for many travelling students and new enrolments.

### **Background**

As satellite dish installations are costly to install, and are a cost borne by ASSOA, there needs to be a demonstrated commitment to living geographically isolated. This can be demonstrated by either having already lived in the location, or by being an existing enrolment with ASSOA, for approximately a term.

It is not possible to specify an exact length of time between enrolment and installation as there are a number of variables.

The school does not transport or install the pole that the dish is mounted on; this is the responsibility of the family, with advice from the ASSOA Information Communication Technology Coordinator (ICTC).

This policy does not apply to students who are located at a remote school.

If families wish to use the Department of Education STARS satellite for their internet connection for education, the installation of the STARS equipment will commence after the student has been enrolled at ASSOA for approximately one term. If they have already been residents of their current location for more than 10 weeks before enrolling with ASSOA the school will work to ensure an installation occurs as soon as possible after enrolment. There is no cost to the family, except for the transport and installation of the pole.

The principal has discretion over the timing of satellite dish installations as there can be a variety of factors impacting this decision.

The principal has discretion over the use of the portable satellite trailers, which can be used as an alternative to a permanent install as a result of a variety of factors which may include but are not confined to: an existing family who move to another location that may be temporary; a location where the cost to do a permanent install is prohibitive; itinerant families (not travelers) who frequently move locations as a requirement of their job.

The equipment necessary to access IDL includes:

- Satellite dish system and pole
- STARS modem
- Windows based PC
- Microphone, speaker, web camera

Once a family is no longer enrolled with ASSOA the satellite dish will remain at the location, with the permission of the landowner, if it is possible another family will reside there at a later date, or until it is required elsewhere. ASSOA reserves the right to retrieve the dish system when it is not in use, at

their discretion. ASSOA owns the satellite dish and the pole and they cannot be moved without the permission of the school.

If the satellite dish is already in place when the family enrolls and it is in a working condition, the family can liaise with the ICTC to evaluate if the dish is aligned correctly. This is determined by the family plugging in a modem, and the ICTC remotely evaluating if the dish is aligned correctly. If so the student can access IDL immediately. If the dish is not aligned correctly the ICTC will arrange to visit within a few weeks or as soon as practicable in order to repoint the dish.

#### Guidelines

1. Once it has been established that the student/s' family is likely to stay in the location the Principal will notify the ICTC to start the process.
2. ICTC ensures the school has the equipment required for Install.
3. ICTC communicates with family to determine location for the pole to go.
4. Family sends in pictures so ICTC can confirm location is viable.
5. ICTC organises quotes with contractors for install and finds out contractor's availability.
6. Principal signs off on install based on quote and advice.
7. Family organises transport and cementing in of dish pole in agreed location.
8. ICTC organises the equipment for install as well as IDL equipment package.
9. ICTC works with the Satellite Management Centre (SMC) to get proposed new site approved and modem configured.
10. Once pole is in ICTC organises with family and contractor a suitable time for install.
11. Contractor collects equipment for install from ASSOA, once ICTC has checked all equipment, including spares, and provides the required information for the site.
12. Contractor takes the dish and equipment from the school and sets up on site, points the antenna, does cabling.
13. Contractor confirms with SMC that the setup is satisfactory.
14. If satisfactory the install is marked as complete.
15. Family sets up computer, printer/scanner, mouse, mic and speaker, web camera.