Nationally Consistent Collection of Data
School Students with Disability

Information for Parents/Carers

Schools across Australia are taking part in a new national data collection on school students with disability.

The data collection is being introduced in stages over three years, and started in 2013. From 2015, this information will be collected in every school across Australia, every year.

All Australian governments have agreed to this.

WHAT IS THE BENEFIT FOR MY CHILD?

All Australian governments agree that every child in an Australian school should have a high quality education. It shouldn’t matter what the individual child’s circumstances are – every child should have the same opportunity to succeed at school.

The aim of this new data collection is to have better information about school students with disability in Australia.

Better information about school students with disability will help teachers, principals and education authorities to support students with disability to take part in school on the same basis as students without disability.

WHY IS THIS DATA BEING COLLECTED?

There is nothing new about schools collecting information about students with disability – in fact, schools have had to do this by law for some time. But the type of information currently collected varies between each state and territory.

With the new data collection, every school in Australia will use the same method to collect this information – that is, a government school in suburban Sydney will collect and report data in the same way as a Catholic school in country Victoria and an independent school in the Northern Territory.

The information provided through this new national data collection will enable all Australian governments to better target support and resources to benefit students with disability. It will help to put the right supports in place for students with disability so that they have the same opportunities for a high quality education as students without a disability.

WHAT ARE SCHOOLS REQUIRED TO DO?

Every school in Australia is likely to have a student with disability at some point. Schools need to be able to support students with disability by removing any obstacles for them to participate in their education.

By law, schools are required to make reasonable adjustments where needed to assist students with disability. These responsibilities are outlined in the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 and the Disability Standards for Education 2005. This means that schools need to talk to the student and/or their parent/carer about reasonable adjustments. These are things the schools do now and this won’t change.

The new data collection will record students who have been identified by a school team as meeting the definition of disability under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 and provided with an adjustment.

WHAT IS AN ADJUSTMENT?

An adjustment is a measure or action taken to help a student with disability participate in education on the same basis as other students. Adjustments can be made across the whole school setting (like ramps into classrooms), in the classroom and at an individual student level (like extra tuition for a student with a learning difficulty).
WHAT INFORMATION WILL BE COLLECTED?
Your child’s school will collect and report information every year about:

- the level of adjustment provided
- the number of students who receive each level of adjustment
- where known, the student’s broad type of disability.

Some students who are not provided with an adjustment at the time of the collection will meet the definition of disability under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 and will be eligible to be included in the data collection.

WHO WILL COLLECT MY CHILD’S INFORMATION?
Teachers and other school staff from your child’s school will collect the above information based on:

- consultation with parents/carers
- the school team’s observations and professional judgements
- any medical diagnosis
- other relevant information.

School principals are responsible for making sure that the information collected about each student is accurate.

HOW WILL MY CHILD’S PRIVACY BE PROTECTED?
Protecting the privacy and confidentiality of all children and their families is very important. With the new data collection, this will be done in the following ways:

- Personal or confidential information will not be given to anyone not authorised to see it.
- When the information is sent by your child’s school to the local or federal education authority for combination with information from other schools, it will be by school only – student names will not be recorded as part of the data collection.
- When the information is reported from 2016 onwards, it will be by school only – student names will not be recorded as part of the data collection.

WHEN AND WHERE WILL THE DATA BE AVAILABLE?
When all Australian schools are taking part in the new data collection, the information will be reported on the My School website from 2016 onwards. It will be by school only – no student names are recorded as part of the data collection.

CAN I DECIDE WHETHER MY CHILD’S INFORMATION IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL DATA COLLECTION?
It’s your decision about whether you want your child’s information to be included in the national reporting or not.

Including every school child who is being provided with an adjustment because of disability in this new national data collection each year will help schools, education authorities and governments to better meet students’ needs.

Your school will tell you what you need to do if you don’t want to have your child’s information included in the national data collection.

Even if your child’s information is not included in the national data collection, your school is still required to provide support to your child with disability and any adjustments that may be needed to help him/her participate at school.

FURTHER INFORMATION
Contact your child’s school if you have further questions about the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability and how it may affect your child.

Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability in 2014 - Privacy Notice

Purpose

The purpose of this privacy notice is to provide students, parents and guardians with information in relation to the second phase of the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability.

Background

In May 2013 all Education Ministers from Commonwealth, state and territory governments endorsed the implementation of a nationally consistent collection of data on school students with disability in all Australian schools (government, independent and Catholic).

The nationally consistent approach to data collection will provide all Australian schools, education authorities and the community with a clear picture of the number of students with disability in schools and the adjustments they are provided to enable them to participate in education on the same basis as other students.

This national data collection is being phased in over a three year period, with the first data collection conducted in October 2013 and the second data collection to occur in the second half of 2014 (‘the 2014 national data collection’). Certain schools around Australia have been selected to participate in the 2014 national data collection.

The 2014 national data collection will involve participating schools collecting the following information at the school level:

- the number of students receiving adjustments to enable them to participate in education on the same basis as other students;
- the level of adjustment provided (no adjustment at this time, supplementary, substantial or extensive adjustment); and
- where known, the student’s type of disability.

Student names will not be captured.

Certain data collected by participating schools in the 2014 national data collection will ultimately be provided to the Australian Government Department of Education (the Department). Further detail on this, including the purposes for which the Department will use the data is set out below.
Privacy Protection

The Privacy Act 1988 regulates the handling of personal information by Australian Government agencies including the Department, the ACT Government and certain private sector organisations. Personal information is ‘information or an opinion (whether true or not and whether recorded in a material form or not) about an identified individual, or an individual who is reasonably identifiable’.

Even though students’ names will not be captured, it is recognised that there is a small possibility that a student may be reasonably identifiable from the information passed to the Department, such that it constitutes personal information.

All personal information collected by the Department is protected by the Privacy Act.

The Department’s Privacy Policy, including further information about how individuals can access and correct personal information the Department may hold, or how to make a privacy complaint to the Department, is available at www.education.gov.au/privacy.

Collection and disclosure of school level information

The information collected by schools for the purposes of the 2014 national data collection will ultimately be provided to the Department. In some cases this will involve the school passing the data directly to the Department and in other cases the school will provide the data to its state and territory government agency or other relevant body, depending on the school’s particular arrangements. The state and territory government agency or other body will further aggregate the data at the state and territory level before providing the data to the Department.

The Department, on behalf of the Joint Working Group*, will use the information collected for the purposes of preparing reports for and briefing the Australian Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Senior Officials Committee (‘AEEYSOC’) and the Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood (‘SCSEEC’) in relation to the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability. For the purposes of preparing these reports or briefing material, the Department will ensure that the information is aggregated sufficiently so that no student’s identity could reasonably be ascertained.

The aggregated information held by the Department may also be used as an input to policy development for future funding and other policy requirements as required by SCSEEC.

The Department will not otherwise disclose any personal information to third parties, including overseas recipients, without consent or unless authorised or required by law.

Contact

For further information about the collection, use or disclosure of information for the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability please contact: (02) 6240 5115 or Kimberley.McDonald@deewr.gov.au.

*The Joint Working Group to Provide Advice on Reform for Students with Disability is comprised of representative members from all state and territory government educational authorities, Independent Schools Council of Australia, the National Catholic Education Commission, the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority and the Australian Government.