



NATIONALLY CONSISTENT COLLECTION OF DATA – SCHOOL STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES/LEARNING DIFFICULTIES

Information for Parents/Carers

All Australian governments have agreed to implement a new annual national data collection on school students with a disability or learning difficulty. This data collection has been phased in over a three year period in 2013 – 2015. From 2015, this data collection will occur in every school, every year.

WHY INTRODUCE A NATIONAL COLLECTION OF DATA ON SCHOOL STUDENTS WITH A DISABILITY/LEARNING DIFFICULTY?

- ❖ All Australian governments agree that every child in an Australian school, regardless of his or her circumstances, has the right to a high quality and inclusive education that meets his or her needs.
- ❖ Better information about school students with a disability/learning difficulty will assist teachers, principals and education authorities to support their participation in schooling on the same basis as students without a disability/learning difficulty.

HOW WILL IT BENEFIT MY CHILD?

- ❖ There are students with disabilities/learning difficulties in every school in Australia at some point. This means that every school needs to be ready and able to support students with disabilities/learning difficulties to ensure that an obstacles to participation and achievement in their school education are identified and minimised.
- ❖ This new national data collection will reinforce the actions required of schools under the national *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* and the *Disability Standards for Education 2005*. These laws mean that schools and education systems are required to make, where needed, reasonable adjustments for students with disabilities/learning difficulties.
- ❖ An adjustment is a measure or action taken to assist a student with a disability/learning difficulty to participate in education on the same basis as other students. Adjustments can be made across the whole school setting, in the classroom and at the individual level.
- ❖ Determining the level and type of support needed for an individual student is not a new activity for Australian schools.
- ❖ Currently there is only limited and inconsistent information available at a national level about school students with disabilities/learning difficulties, their educational needs and the support provided to them.
- ❖ The information provided by this new national data collection will enable all Australian governments to better target support and resources. That will assist students with disabilities/learning difficulties in government and non-government schools across Australia to complete school and go on to further education or find employment.

WHAT INFORMATION WILL BE COLLECTED?

The following information will be collected annually at the school level:

- The level of adjustment provided;
- The number of students receiving each level of adjustment to enable them to participate in education on the same basis as other students; and
- Where known, the student's type of disability/learning difficulty.

WHO WILL COLLECT MY CHILD'S INFORMATION AND HOW WILL THEY DO IT?

School teams will collect evidence based on:

- consultation with parents/carers;
- their observations and professional judgements; and
- any medical diagnosis.

The evidence will be collected over at least a 10 week period. This evidence will help the school teams to determine:

- which students to include in the data collection;
- the levels of adjustment that are provided, both within and outside the classroom; and
- the broad category of disability.

- ❖ In line with good teaching practice and the requirements of the *Disability Standards for Education 2005*, you will continue to be provided with opportunities to discuss ways to assist your child overcome barriers and the adjustments that could be made to support you child.
- ❖ Principals and school teams will be supported with training to assist them to make accurate judgements. School principals will assure the accuracy of information.

HOW WILL MY CHILD'S PRIVACY BE PROTECTED?

Protecting the privacy and confidentiality of all children and their families is a key priority.

- ❖ Authorised staff in each school will manage the information to ensure that personal or confidential information is not disclosed.
- ❖ Transmission of data by the school will be done in such a way that the privacy and confidentiality of all students is protected.
- ❖ When data are reported it will be at the school level only and no individual student will be able to be identified in the data collection.

WHAT WILL THE INFORMATION BE USED FOR?

- ❖ It is intended that the data collected about students with disabilities/learning difficulties will be published on the *My School* website and in other national reports on schooling from 2016 onwards.
- ❖ Public reporting of these data will mean more is known about how all Australian schools and education authorities support students with disabilities/learning difficulties.
- ❖ Australian schools and education authorities will use these data as evidence to improve their support for students with disabilities/learning difficulties.