

Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability

Background to the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability

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.

The Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability (the national data collection) is being phased in over a three year period. The first limited data collection occurred in October 2013 and the second in August 2014. Selected schools in Australia were chosen to participate in the 2013 and 2014 data collections.

From 2015, all Australian schools will participate in the NCCD, with the first comprehensive collection occurring in August 2015.

Authority for the collection of information for the purposes of the NCCD

The *Australian Education Regulation 2013* (the Regulation) (www.comlaw.gov.au/Details/F2014L01723) requires the operators of government and non-government schools (approved authorities) to provide information to the Australian Government Department of Education and Training (the department) for the purposes of the NCCD.

The information that approved authorities must give to the department is set out at subsection 58A(2) of the Regulation. This includes, in relation to each student with a disability at a school operated by the approved authority:

- the student's level of education (i.e. primary or secondary)

- the student’s category of disability (i.e. physical, cognitive, sensory or social/emotional)
- the student’s level of adjustment (i.e. support provided within quality differentiated teaching practice, supplementary, substantial or extensive adjustment).

The information **will not identify individual students** (subsection 58A(3) of the Regulation); no information that could reasonably enable the department to identify individual students will be provided by approved authorities to the department¹.

Other details about the information to be collected and the format in which the information is to be provided to the department, will be contained in guidelines approved by the Education Council (the committee of the Council of Australian Governments comprising the Commonwealth and state and territory Ministers responsible for education). The NCCD guidelines for the 2015 data collection are expected to be finalised by May 2015 and will be available on the department’s website.

Collection and disclosure of school level information

The information collected by schools for the purposes of the 2015 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 de-identify school level data, and may aggregate the data at the state and territory level, before providing the data to the department.

The department, on behalf of the Joint Working Group², 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 and the Education Council in relation to the NCCD. For the purposes of preparing these reports or briefing

¹ In the event that NCCD information given by an approved authority to the department does indirectly enable the department to reasonably identify an individual, the disclosure of that information by the approved authority, and the collection of that information by the department, are both authorised by law for the purposes of the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth). Nevertheless, the department will seek to de-identify NCCD information that inadvertently contains identifying information.

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.

² 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.

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 the Education Council.

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 NCCD please contact: SWDPolicyTeam@education.gov.au.