For Parents/Carers and Students

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1. **What is the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability?**

The Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability is a collection of data from schools about the number of school students with disability. It provides an approach to achieving a national set of data on school students with disability. From 2015, this information will be collected in every school across Australian, every year.

The Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability 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.
The first national data collection took place on 18 October 2013 and involved around 20% of schools nationally. More school will be participating in 2014. All Australian schools will be recording data in 2015.

2. **Why has the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability been introduced?**

There hasn’t been a nationally consistent picture of Australian school students with disability as the type of information currently collected by Australian schools has varied between each state and territory.

The Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability will mean for the first time, this information is transparent, consistent and reliable at a national level.

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. The data will also enable all governments to better target and more consistently support students with disability wherever they live and whatever school they attend so that they can participate in schooling on the same basis as other students.

In time, the processes around the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability will help reinforce the actions required of schools under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (DDA) and the *Disability Standards for Education 2005* (the Standards).

It is also part of a wider suite of intersecting reforms to improve the lives of people with disability, including the National Disability Strategy 2012-2020 and the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

3. **Isn’t data on school students with disability collected now?**

Although some data is currently collected, the method by which this is done varies significantly according to the state/territory of the student’s school.

A nationally consistent approach to collecting data on schools students with disability will provide evidence about the diversity of the Australian population of schools students with disability, how many school students with disability there are, where they are and the level of adjustments provided for them.

The implementation of the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability acknowledges the work already undertaken in schools across Australia to support students with disability. It will change and strengthen approaches to supporting school students with disability.
4. How does the data for the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability get collected?

The Model for the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability has been developed over a number of years and trialled in 2011 and 2012 with support from all states and territories. It applies across all educational settings and contexts, including regular or mainstream schools and classes as well as special schools and special classes. Under the Model, teachers use their professional, informed judgement to determine:

- which of their students are being provided with a reasonable adjustment because of disability, as defined in the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA) and the Disability Standards for Education 2005 (the Standards)
- the level of adjustment that students with disability are provided in both the classroom and whole of school context
- the broad category of disability under which the student best fits (physical, cognitive, sensory or social/emotional).

Where there is evidence at the school to demonstrate that a student is being provided with an adjustment to meet specific needs associated with disability, in consultation with the student or their parents or carers, the student is eligible to be counted in the national data collection on students with disability. Students who are not provided with an adjustment but who meet the definition of disability under the DDA are also eligible to be counted.

Education ministers agreed that 2013 and 2014 will be transition years so that all Australian schools and sectors have time to prepare for the data collection, including undertaking professional learning and refining processes, prior to full implementation in 2015.

5. How is the data from the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability being reported?

Data collected in 2013 and 2014 will not be publicly available. The aggregated, school-level data collected in 2015 is expected to be available on My School from 2016, subject to the confirmation of data quality.

6. Will parents/carers have a choice about whether their child is included in the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability?

Parents/carers do have a choice about whether they want their child’s information to be included in the information provided by schools for the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability. Names and personal information do not form part of the count for the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability.

Parents/carers will receive information from their school about the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability and what they need to do if they don’t
want to have their child’s information included. As part of this process, parents/carers will be advised that their child’s privacy will be protected at all times.

Even if a student with a disability is not included in the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability, the school is still required to consult, provide adjustments and meet their obligations in relation to the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA) and the Disability Standards for Education 2005 (the Standards). Parents/carers will be engaged in consultations with school staff as required under the Standards. This is an important part of the evidence gathering process for the national data collection.

7. How will a school student’s personal details be protected? Is this information part of the count for the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability?

Names and personal information do not form part of the count for the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability. Protecting the privacy and confidentiality of all children and their families is a key priority.

In determining which students are counted in the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability, schools will draw on a range of evidences available in the school about the provision of personalised adjustments to meet the learning and support needs of their students with disability. In keeping with best practice, schools retain relevant evidence of their provisions for students at the school.

School principals are responsible for verifying or confirming that there is evidence at the school to support the inclusion of a school student in the data collection.

It is important to note that schools are essentially doing a count and then aggregating data at the primary/secondary level (if relevant) about the:

- number of students receiving each level of adjustment (No adjustment at this time; Supplementary adjustment; Substantial adjustment; Extensive adjustment).
- broad category of disability under four groupings which the student best fits (physical, cognitive, sensory or social/emotional).

8. Why is my child being included in the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability? She/he does not have a disability.

The national data collection is underpinned by the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA) and the Disability Standards for Education 2005 (the Standards). The DDA and Standards use a very broad and inclusive definition of what constitutes a disability, it does not require a medical or professional diagnosis.

The decision as to whether a particular child falls within this definition for this data collection relies on the professional judgement of school staff about each child’s additional educational needs. A decision as to whether a child should be included in the data collection
will occur in consultation with you, as a parent or carer, and requires your consent. No names or personal information is collected as part of the collection process.

The focus of the data collection is primarily what level of additional support or ‘adjustment’ a student is provided with so that they can take part in education activities like all other children. Adjustments might include such things as extra tuition, modified learning tools and programs or physical adjustments to the school environment such as ramps. These are the things that schools do now and this won’t change. Students with disability whose needs are being accommodated in the ordinary course of school and teaching practice are considered as not being provided with an adjustment for the purposes of the data collection and will be recorded under the category ‘no adjustment.’

The data collection is being implemented so that for the first time there will be a consistent national picture of school students requiring additional support, to help schools, education authorities and governments make sure all children receive the extra help they need.

Should you have any questions regarding the data collection in your child’s school, you should contact your child’s school in the first instance.

9. I am a parent/carer. Where can I go for more information about the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability?

Parents/carers with questions regarding the data collection in their child’s school should contact the school in the first instance.

Further information regarding the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on Students with Disability is available from the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability page on the Australian Government Department of Education website.