The Model for the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability

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

   The Model is a step by step process for determining which students need to be included in the data collection.

   Under the Model, 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/carers, the student is eligible to be counted in the national data collection on students with disability. Students with a disability who are not provided with an adjustment but who meet the definition of disability under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (DDA) are also eligible to be counted. Professional
learning is provided to teachers online to develop their understanding and application of the model.

Using the Model for the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability, schools will collect and report on the:

- number of school students being provided with a reasonable adjustment to enable them to participate in education on the same basis as other students
- level of adjustment provided (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).

If a student has multiple disabilities, the school team, using professional judgment, should select whichever broad category of disability has the greatest impact on the student’s access to education for which adjustments are being provided.

The data will be aggregated across each school (according to primary/secondary levels if relevant to that school). The names of students and any student identification numbers will not be transmitted as part of the reporting.

2. How was the Model for the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability developed?

Since 2008, the implementation of a Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability has been a high priority of the Council of Australian Governments (COAG). All government and non-government education authorities have worked together to achieve this objective.

The Model for the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability was developed and trialed in 2011 and 2012 in selected schools throughout Australia with support from all states and territories. The Model applied across all educational settings and contexts, including regular or mainstream schools and classes as well as special schools and special classes.

In May 2013, all education ministers agreed to implement the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability in a phased approach that began in October 2013. From 2015, all schools in Australia will collect and report data each year.

More 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.
3. How do schools determine whether a student should be included in the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability?

The Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability acknowledges the work already being undertaken in schools to support students with disability.

All Australian schools have obligations to students with disability under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (DDA) and the *Disability Standards for Education 2005* (the Standards).

The Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability counts all school students who have a disability as defined by the DDA. It also captures information about the levels of adjustment that they are being provided to enable their access and participation in education on the same basis as students without a disability - no matter where they live, the school they attend or their family background.

The first step in identifying whether a school student is eligible to be included in the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability is to determine whether they are being provided with an adjustment to address a disability under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (DDA).

The DDA has a broad definition of disability. Disability can include health conditions such as asthma and arthritis as well as hearing impairments, vision impairments, and learning difficulties.

The *Disability Standards for Education 2005* (the Standards) were formulated under the DDA and are subordinate legislation. The Standards clarify the obligations of education and training providers so students with disability are able to access and participate in education on the same basis as students without disability.

The Standards require that all Australian schools:

- ensure that students with disability are able to access and participate in education on the same basis as those without disability
- make or provide 'reasonable adjustments' for students where necessary to enable their access and participation
- consult with the student and/or their parent or carer about the reasonable adjustments required.

4. How will the information being captured under the Model for the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students be used?

The information provided by this new national data collection will help education authorities and schools better target programs and resourcing decisions, contributing to more effective outcomes and a quality learning experience for all young Australians.
The Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability will also provide all governments with a better insight about the number of students with disability in Australian schools, where they are located, and what adjustments are provided to them. It will inform the development of a funding loading for students with disability that is fair and accurately reflects the provisions provided to students.

5. **Will parents/careers 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.

6. **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).

7. I am a teacher. Where can I get more information about the Model for the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability?

A nationally available resource for principals and school teams to learn about the Model and its application is the online professional learning module developed by Educational Services Australia available at www.schooldisabilitydatapla.edu.au. This resource identifies and guides participants through the four steps for completing the data collection.

Professional learning on the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA) and the the Disability Standards for Education 2005 (the Standards) will also be available to reinforce the importance of embedding them into everyday practice and to help provide a high quality learning experience for every school student with disability.

Education authorities will advise schools early in 2014 about the professional learning opportunities available at the local level.

8. I am a school principal. Where can I get more information about the Model for the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data for my school?

Educational leaders will play a critical role in delivering the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability. In recognition of the shift in thinking and practice that will be required, the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability will be phased in over three years to allow schools and schooling systems time to prepare for full implementation in 2015.

At a national level, the Joint Working Group to Provide Advice on Reform for Students with Disability has developed some communication products that are available to help schools with understanding the Model for the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability.

There are also some materials to help with advising parents of the school’s participation in the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability, including some translated fact sheets for parents/carers. For more information, please visit the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability page on the Australian Government Department of Education website.

The Joint Working Group to Provide Advice on Reform for Students with Disability is developing more national communication products to support the 2014 data collection process and this should start arriving in schools in early February 2014.
In addition to the above, some individual jurisdictions, sectors and schools have developed their own communication materials. For more information about these communications products, you should contact your local education authority.