Important notice for schools and school principals

From 2015, all government and non-government schools in Australia will be required to participate annually in the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability. The first data collection took place in selected schools in October 2013. Over 2013 and 2014 selected schools will participate in data collection under a phased approach before full national implementation in 2015.

This notice contains information to help prepare your school to participate in the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability in 2014.

About the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability

There is currently no national data set around students with disability. The implementation of a Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability means that for the first time, information about students with disability across Australia will be identified in a consistent, reliable and systematic way. It will strengthen approaches to supporting students with disability.

The Australian Government and all state and territory governments have agreed to a new approach to collecting data annually about students with disability as defined under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA). This new approach is based on the professional judgement of teachers about their students and the level of educational adjustments that students are being provided with to access and participate in education, consistent with the obligations of all schools under the Disability Standards for Education 2005 (the Standards).

Benefits of being involved in the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability in 2014

The next collection is scheduled for August 2014 and all selected schools (up to two-thirds of all schools nationally) are strongly encouraged to participate. Early involvement in the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability will help schools to better meet the needs of students with disability.

Involvement in the national data collection in 2014 will assist schools to:

- gain a greater understanding of their student population and how students can be best supported
- formally and consistently recognise the support and adjustments provided to students with disability in the school
- develop the professional judgement of school teams in making adjustments for students with disability rather than relying on medical/clinical diagnosis alone
- include all eligible students in the annual data collection from 2015.

Schools which participated in previous national trials of the data collection model and the 2013 data collection have reported that it had a positive impact in their school.

“Even if this new model wasn’t being implemented, we’d continue collecting the data and analysing it ourselves – that’s how valuable we regard it to be. Already, it has changed the conversations we are having about how to support a child and how we can help them move to that next level of their learning” - Principal of a school that participated in the 2013 data collection.
What information is being collected?

The new data collection will record the number of students who have been identified by your school as meeting the definition of disability under the DDA and the adjustments provided for them. Under the data collection model, teachers use their professional, informed judgment to determine:

- which students are being provided with a reasonable adjustment because of disability, as defined in the DDA
- the level of adjustment that students with disability are provided with in the classroom and whole of school context
- the broad category of disability that the student best fits within.

Students that meet the definition of disability in the DDA but are not provided with an adjustment at this time are also included in the data collection.

The information above is based on evidence held by schools about adjustments provided for students including:

- consultation with parents and carers
- the school team’s observations and professional judgments
- other relevant information, such as medical diagnosis.

How to prepare your school for the data collection in 2014

There are a number of steps you can take to help prepare your school teams, parents and students for the data collection:

- Identify the members of your school team responsible for collecting the data
- Visit the professional learning website developed by Education Services Australia (ESA) to understand more about the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability and the steps involved
- Ensure your school staff understand their obligations to students with disability under the Standards and access induction/professional learning courses on the DDA and the Standards
- Learn from schools that participated in the 2013 data collection
- Begin communicating with parents, carers and students (where applicable) about the data collection
- In consultation with parents and carers, start identifying evidence of personalised adjustments being provided to meet the learning and support needs of students with disability
- Review the national information products (frequently asked questions, case studies, fact sheets) available on the Australian Government Department of Education’s website
- Get help from your state/territory authority or sector representatives as needed at the ESA website

Your local education authority will provide further information about the 2014 data collection arrangements for your school.

Activity timelines for 2014 and beyond

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Early Term 1, 2014 and continuing into Term 2, 2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Schools complete training on the DDA and the Standards where required and the data collection model.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schools inform parents and carers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schools identify and record evidence for the data collection including adjustments.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1 August 2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Schools enter the data.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>August 2015 and beyond</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full implementation – annual collection in August – all schools in Australia collect and report data every year.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First data from the 2015 data collection on the My School website (subject to data quality).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For more information

To find out more please visit the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with a Disability website