

Notice for schools and school principals

All government and non-government schools in Australia are required to participate in the annual Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability (the national data collection). The first national data collection took place in selected schools in October 2013. Over 2013 to 2015 schools participated in the national data collection under a phased implementation approach. Since 2015 all Australian schools have completed the data collection. This marks a significant achievement by all government, Catholic and independent education sectors.

This notice contains information to help prepare your school to participate in the 2017 national data collection.

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

The national data collection counts students who have been identified by a school team as receiving an adjustment to address a disability as defined under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (the DDA). The national data collection is based on the professional judgement of teachers about their students with disability and the level of reasonable adjustment they receive to access and participate in education on the same basis as other students. This is consistent with the obligations of all schools under the Disability Standards for Education 2005 (the Standards). The DDA and the Standards are both available on the ComLaw website at www.comlaw.gov.au.

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

The national data collection collects information about students who are receiving adjustments because of disability across Australia in a consistent, reliable and systematic way. This collection strengthens existing approaches to supporting students with disability and draws on evidence of the ongoing work of teachers and education staff throughout the year to provide personalised learning and support for students with disability.

The national data collection assists schools to:

- gain a greater understanding of their students with disability population and how they can be best supported
- formally and consistently recognise the support and adjustments provided to students with disability
- develop the professional judgement of school teams in making educational adjustments for students with disability, rather than relying on a medical or clinical diagnosis alone
- review their learning and support systems and processes to continually improve educational outcomes for their students with disability.

The national data collection aims to, over time, lead to nationally consistent, high quality data that will enable schools, education authorities and governments to gain a more complete understanding of students who are receiving adjustments because of disability in schools in Australia, and how best to support them.

What information is being collected?

The national data collection records the number of students receiving an adjustment to participate in education because of disability, consistent with definitions and obligations under the DDA and the Standards, and the reasonable adjustments they receive. Under the data collection model, teachers use their professional judgement to determine:

- which students are being provided with a reasonable adjustment because of disability
- 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 who meet the definition of disability set out in the DDA and whose disability related needs are being met through quality differentiated teaching practice may also be included in the national data collection. A student is eligible to be included in the national data collection if they satisfy three criteria:

1. The student meets the definition of a person with disability as defined under the DDA.
2. The functional impact of the student's disability results in the school actively addressing their individual education needs arising from their disability, by providing adjustments.
3. There is evidence at the school that the student has been provided with an adjustment/s for a minimum period of 10 weeks of school education (excluding school holiday periods), in the 12 months preceding **4 August 2017**.

Further information on the inclusion of students receiving an adjustment due to disability is available in the NCCD 2017 Guidelines at <https://docs.education.gov.au/node/43346> and on the national professional learning website developed by Education Services Australia (ESA) at www.schooldisabilitydatapl.edu.au.

School team judgements should be evidence based and formally documented. Examples of evidence include:

- consultation with parents and carers in the course of determining and providing reasonable adjustments
- the school team's observations and professional judgements
- other relevant information, such as a medical or clinical diagnosis.

Further information about evidence is available at <http://www.schooldisabilitydatapl.edu.au/data-collection-steps/do-you-have-evidence>.

Who is responsible for the data collection at my school?

The national data collection is a collaborative process involving teachers, principals and other school staff. The 'Quick Guide' available on the ESA hosted website provides clear guidance on good practice relating to establishment of a school leadership team for the national data collection. School teams are responsible for ensuring the collection is undertaken in accordance with the NCCD 2017 Guidelines at <https://docs.education.gov.au/node/43346>.

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

How to prepare your school for the national data collection

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

- Identify the members of your school team responsible for collecting the data.

- Visit the professional learning website developed by ESA to understand more about the national data collection and the steps involved.
- Ensure your school staff understand their obligations to students with disability under the Standards and they access induction/professional learning on the DDA and the Standards. (Speak to your principal or contact your local education authority about professional learning on the DDA and the Standards that is available to your school.)
- Begin communicating with parents, carers and students (where applicable) about the national data collection. The Public Information Notice at <https://docs.education.gov.au/node/33415> provides students, parents and carers with important privacy information in relation to the national data collection.
- Start identifying evidence of reasonable adjustments being provided to meet the learning and support needs of individual students with disability.
- Review the support materials (for example, the NCCD 2017 Guidelines at <https://docs.education.gov.au/node/43346>, frequently asked questions, fact sheets) available on the Australian Government Department of Education and Training website at www.education.gov.au/nationally-consistent-collection-data-school-students-disability.
- Seek further information or assistance from your state or territory authority or sector representatives as needed. Contact details are available on the ESA website (<http://www.schoolsdisabilitydatapl.edu.au/other-pages/contact-us>).

Activity timelines for 2017 and beyond

Term 1 and continuing into Term 2, 2017
Schools complete training on the DDA and the Standards (where required) and the data collection model. Schools identify evidence for the national data collection.
4 August 2017
Reference date for schools to report data.
August 2017 and beyond
The annual collection reference date is in August each year – all schools in Australia collect and report data annually.

For more information

To find out more please visit:

- the ESA professional learning website at www.schooldisabilitydatapl.edu.au/.
- the Australian Government Department of Education and Training website at www.education.gov.au/nationally-consistent-collection-data-school-students-disability.
- the ComLaw website to obtain a copy of the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* and the Disability Standards for Education 2005 www.comlaw.gov.au.