

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

The data collection is designed to identify and count school students with additional educational needs, who may need extra support at school to ensure they have the same learning opportunities as other students. The focus of the data collection is primarily what level of additional support or adjustment a student requires.

An adjustment is a measure or action taken to help a student participate in education on the same basis as other students. Adjustments might include extra tuition, modified learning tools and programs or adjustments to the school such as ramps. Adjustments are made in consultation with parents and carers. These are the things that schools do now and this won't change.

2. What information is included in the data collection and will my child's personal details be included?

The data collection is underpinned by the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (DDA) and the *Standards for Education 2005*. It relies on the professional judgement of school staff to determine if a student is included in the data collection. Every year, schools will collect the following information for each student with disability:

1. whether the student is in primary or secondary school
2. the student's broad type of disability and
3. the level of adjustments made for the student.

All individual identifiers are removed by the Department of Education. No information that could reasonably enable the Australian Government Department of Education and Training to identify individual students will be provided by the Western Australian Department of Education.

3. What definition of disability is used?

The definition of disability used in the national data collection is drawn from the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (DDA) which includes a definition of disability which is also adopted in the *Disability Standards for Education 2005*. If your child's school thinks your child falls within this legal definition of disability they may seek to include them in the national data collection.

The definition is quite broad and includes conditions that people might not think of as disabilities or impairments. Having an infection, asthma or being allergic to peanuts for example, would fit into the definition. Some students who meet the definition of disability and who need very minimal assistance may also be counted in the national data collection.

Schools do not need to ask parents/carers to seek a formal diagnosis or attempt to diagnose students themselves – a formal diagnosis is not necessary to include a student in the national data collection.

Disability within the Act is defined as:

- a) total or partial loss of the person's bodily or mental functions or
- b) total or partial loss of a part of the body or
- c) the presence in the body of organisms causing disease or illness or
- d) the presence in the body of organisms capable of causing disease or illness or
- e) the malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of the person's body or
- f) a disorder or malfunction that results in the person learning differently from a person without the disorder or malfunction or



- g) a disorder, illness or disease that affects a person's thought processes, perception of reality, emotions or judgement or that results in disturbed behaviour.

This definition includes a disability that:

- a) presently exists or
- b) previously existed but no longer exists or
- c) may exist in the future (including because of a genetic predisposition to that disability)
- d) is imputed to a person.

The definition includes imputed disabilities. An imputed disability is one that a person believes another person has. This means that there is not a formal diagnosis by a medical professional or an allied health professional (psychologist, speech therapist, occupational therapist) held by the school.

There must be reasonable grounds for the belief that a student has an imputed disability. If your school has imputed a disability as part of the national data collection they will have discussed their concerns with you and also talked to you about the adjustments they have put in place to address these concerns.

One of the ways the national data collection protects the identity of individual students is to use four broad categories of disability based on the above definition when entering the data into the online census. The four broad categories are:

1. Physical
2. Cognitive
3. Sensory
4. Social/Emotional

4. What does my school mean by “reasonable adjustments” in the data collection?

A reasonable adjustment is a necessary change to learning activities including how teachers assess student performance and report to parents/carers. Adjustments also include necessary changes to the school or classroom environment. Some examples include:

- planning (documented plans, consultation with allied health professionals, alternate learning environment, adjustment to school procedures, alternate timetable)
- teaching and learning (different presentation, alternative format, alternate teaching strategies, positive behaviour support, assistive technologies, access to specialist teacher support)
- curriculum (reduced outcomes, different content, alternate curriculum, access to alternative modes of communication)
- assessment (alternate assessments, alternate criteria, additional time during assessment, alternate presentation)
- reporting (alternate or adjusted reporting formats)
- environment and infrastructure (building modifications, playground equipment, security fencing/gates).

It is important that your school consult with you and where appropriate, your child about what reasonable adjustments they are making. Necessary adjustments change during the school year and across school years. Only students who have had adjustments made for them for a period of 10 weeks since the last data collection online census will be able to be included in the national data collection.

5. What are the levels of adjustment used in the data collection?

Another way student's privacy is protected is by only recording one of four levels of teaching and learning adjustment for each child identified for the national data collection. Your child's school will decide which of the four levels of adjustment has been provided for each student with disability.

Students' needs change over time, sometimes quite quickly, and the teaching and learning adjustments will change in intensity (including where there has been no actual adjustment required in

that period, for example an existing Health Care Plan that has not been activated). This is why school teams are asked to judge which category 'more or less' describes the adjustments provided over at least a 10 week period.

There are four levels of adjustment to consider:

1. support provided within quality differentiated teaching practice
2. supplementary adjustment
3. substantial adjustment and
4. extensive adjustment.

The decision about which "level of adjustment" category best describes the student's program is based on a number of factors. The intensity and complexity of the program the student receives, whether there is an individual education plan in place, what kind of assistive technology if any is being used with the student, and whether recommendations or strategies from allied health professionals such as speech therapists, occupational therapists or psychologists are added to the student's educational plan are just some of the factors considered.

The level of adjustments a student receives may change from census to census so this decision will be reviewed each year by the school.

6. What is the benefit for my child?

The aim of the national data collection is to collect better information about school students with disability in Australia. This information will help teachers, principals, education authorities and families to better support students with disability to take part in school on the same basis as students without disability. The national data collection is an opportunity for schools to review their learning and support systems and processes to continually improve education outcomes for their students with disability.

7. Who can I talk to about this?

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.
