Frequently Asked Questions for Schools

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## General

### Why is there a need for a Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability (NCCD)?

There is currently no accurate national data set on students with disability. Each state and territory currently identifies its students with disability on a different basis.

Comprehensive data is necessary to enable governments to target support and resources in schools to help students with disabilities reach their potential. In order to achieve this, the Australian government and all state and territory governments agreed to collect data annually about students with disability in a nationally consistent way.

Involvement in the national data collection 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 a medical/clinical diagnosis alone
* review their learning and support systems and continually improve educational outcomes for students with disability.

### When and how often will the national data be collected?

* Education ministers agreed that the collection would occur annually in all schools across Australia from 2015.
* Schools can start planning and collecting data for the collection at any time from the commencement of a school year.
* Most schools will implement the collection throughout Term 2. Schools must show that adjustments or support needs have been provided for a minimum period of one school term, or at least 10 weeks, in the 12 months preceding the collection.

### When do schools report the data?

* This year, the date for submission of data is Friday 5 August 2016 (the first Friday in August and the fourth week of Term 3).
* The NCCD’s reference date is the same date as the National Schools Statistics Collection (NSSC). However, the NCCD is a separate collection to the NSSC. Both collections obtain information about students with disability but the information collected is based on different definitions of disability.

### What support will Victorian government schools receive to implement the NCCD?

* A range of templates, fact sheets and resources are available on the DET NCCD website.
* The DET NCCD website has been developed to provide detailed guidance on each step of the implementation process, along with recommended timelines to ensure completion of the collection on or by Friday 5 August, 2016: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/health/Pages/datacollection.aspx>
* A free suite of eLearning modules on the Disability Standards for Education 2005 is also available:

<https://edugate.eduweb.vic.gov.au/Services/Schools/Pages/Disability-Standards-for-Education-elearning.aspx>

* Personalised support is available by calling the NCCD phone hotline throughout Term 2:  (03) 9651 3621 or by emailing the NCCD Inbox: [disability.data.collection@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:disability.data.collection@edumail.vic.gov.au)

### How do schools start preparing for the NCCD?

* The Department recommends that you:
* Nominate a school team to coordinate the data collection.
* Promote the DSE online eLearning (see eLearning modules above) for staff professional development. It is suggested that training is completed prior to undertaking the collection as in past years there has been a direct correlation between the level of training accessed and a school’s understanding and application of the NCCD. It is also recommended that refresher courses/materials be accessed if there may be potential loss of knowledge between years (e.g. due to staff turnover).

### What is different about the NCCD process in 2016?

1. No 'Collection Notice' is required this year and no consent is required to be sought from parents/guardians/carers of students whose data is included in the collection.  
     
   The reason for this is that the Australian Education Regulation 2013 was amended on 11 December 2014 to authorise the "collection of certain information by the national collection agency (currently the Australian Government Department of Education and Training), from approved authorities, for the purposes of the national data collection", see [subsection 52(3A) and section 58A of the Regulation](http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/cth/consol_reg/aer2013301).  
     
   This means that data required for this collection must now be collected by schools and reported to the Australian Government Department of Education and Training via DET.

School staff do not need to discuss the NCCD with parents/guardians/carers of students whose data is included in the collection. However, school staff should still be consulting with parents/guardians/carers of students whose data is included in the collection about any adjustments proposed and being made.

1. Data is to be submitted on, or before, 5 August 2016.

## Evidence

### What evidence do schools draw on to decide which school students are to be included?

* Schools are not required to create new or additional evidence for the purposes of the NCCD.
* Teachers and schools should rely on existing evidence to make professional judgements about the types of adjustments provided for students as part of their day to day practice.
* Evidence gathered can reflect a wide range of practices in meeting the educational needs of their students consistent with obligations under the Act, the Standards and best teaching practice.
* For a student to be included in the collection, the school should have evidence that ongoing, long-term educational adjustment/s have been provided for a minimum of one school term (or at least 10 weeks) in the 12 months preceding the national data collection.
* This evidence will be reviewed alongside the descriptions of levels of adjustment.
* See: [Levels of Adjustment Table](https://edugate.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edrms/collaboration/IAPB/NCCD/Communication%20and%20marketing%20resources%20-%20national%20and%20local%202016/Levels%20of%20Adjustment%20by%20Disability%20-%20resource.docx)
* Principals are responsible for verifying or confirming that there is evidence at the school to support the inclusion of a student in the NCCD.

### Examples of evidence

* Each school’s evidence will be contextual and reflect the individual student needs and strengths and the school’s learning and support processes and practices.
* The list below is not exhaustive but provides a guide to the range of information schools can draw on for the NCCD.
* Evidence demonstrating that a student’s needs for adjustment have been identified and arise from a disability can include:
* results of diagnostic or summative school and/or standardised assessments over time documenting an ongoing learning or socio-emotional need arising from a disability, e.g. continued and high level behaviour incidents, reading assessments or end of unit assessments
* documentation of ongoing learning needs that have a limited response to targeted intervention over time and cannot be attributed to external factors such as English as an additional language, socio-economic or non-disability related causes
* parental report of disability in conjunction with evidence of an assessed individual need
* specialist diagnosis or reports e.g. medical practitioner such as paediatrician, or a specialist, e.g. guidance officer/counsellor, speech pathologist or audiologist and
* profiles or assessment reports that identify the functional needs of a student with disability.
* For more information, see: [Individual record of evidence](https://edugate.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edrms/collaboration/IAPB/NCCD/Communication%20and%20marketing%20resources%20-%20national%20and%20local%202016/Individual%20record%20of%20evidence%20used%20to%20include%20student%20in%20NCCD%20-%20resource.docx)

## Adjustments

* The Standards clarify the obligations of schools under the Act to provide reasonable adjustments for students with disability.
* Adjustments can be made to practices, services, policies or procedures in Australian educational settings and are fundamental to ensuring that students with disability do not experience discrimination.
* An adjustment is reasonable for the purposes of the collection when it is the product of consultation and seeks to balance the interests of all parties.
* ‘On the same basis’ means that students with disability are provided with opportunities and choices that are comparable to those available to students without disability.

### What if an adjustment was provided for a past student and is now being used for a current student (i.e. a wheelchair ramp)?

* A facility such as a building modification, which already exists in the school and caters for a student’s physical disability where no additional action is required to support the student’s learning, would be an example of support provided within quality differentiated teaching practice.

### What are the difference between “Support provided within quality differentiated teaching practice” and the “Supplementary” level of adjustment categories?

* Students may be counted in the national data collection where they meet the DDA’s broad definition of disability and the functional impact of their disability is addressed by the school actively responding to their specific individual education needs within quality differentiated teaching practice. These students should be counted under the “Support provided within quality differentiated teaching practice” level of adjustment.
* Examples might include a student with a health condition such as asthma and diabetes, or a mental health condition who has strategies in place to manage the condition in consultation with medical professionals that can be provided within quality differentiated teaching practice. In both examples, the student requires no adjustments beyond support provided within regular practices and resources of the school.
* Supplementary adjustments are modifications to teaching practices beyond normal teaching practice and general resources that are made so that students can participate in schooling on the same basis as other students. An example of a supplementary adjustment might include the provision of intermittent specialist teacher support.

## Definition of disability

### I don't think the student meets the definition of 'disability' under the *Disability Discrimination Act* 1992.

* Only those students, who meet the broad definition of 'disability' under the DDA, and whose disability has a functional impact on their schooling, are eligible for inclusion in the national data collection on students with disability. If a student does not meet this broad definition, they should not be included.

### I don't think the student fits into the disability categories provided in the list.

* If a student has multiple disabilities or does not easily fit within one category, select the disability category in which there is greatest impact, based on your professional judgement, on the student’s education and which is the main driver of adjustments to support their access to, and participation in education.

### Do I include students with foetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD)?

* If the student requires ongoing long-term support, your school should identify the disability adjustments required as a result of the FASD, and then determine the appropriate disability category.

### Do I include a student with a hearing impairment?

* If the student requires ongoing long-term support to participate in education, then record the details relevant to this student.
* A student, who has a hearing impairment that is corrected through a hearing aid and who requires no adjustments by the school, would not be included in the count where the condition does not have a functional impact on their schooling.
* However, a student with a hearing impairment that does have a functional impact on their schooling (e.g. one of a substantial cohort of students in a class who suffer from otitis media) and subsequently needs educational adjustments in one or more areas that may include planning, teaching, assessment, reporting, the environment and/or resources, would be included in the collection.

### Do I include a student with dyslexia?

* If the student requires ongoing long-term support to participate in education, then record the details relevant to this student.
* Some students with dyslexia may not need educational adjustments beyond those that are reasonably expected as part of quality teaching or school practice to address disability related needs (e.g. allowing such a student additional reading time during a test). These students should be counted under the “Support provided within quality differentiated teaching practice” level of adjustment for the purposes of this collection.

### In which broad disability category do I put students with autism spectrum disorder?

* Depending on the main driver of the adjustments in place, the student could be included in either the 'cognitive' or 'social/emotional' categories.
* If adjustments are in place around both of these drivers, the selected category should be 'cognitive'.

### Do I include a student with anaphylaxis?

* Yes, if - at a minimum - a student with anaphylaxis requires ongoing monitoring and there is whole school professional learning to equip teachers and education staff with the skills and knowledge to support the student’s health needs.
* Students at risk of anaphylaxis should be considered on a case-by-case basis. For all cases, minimising a student’s exposure to known allergens, staff training in anaphylaxis management, and active monitoring of the student’s ability to manage the potential risks of their anaphylaxis are key strategies. Factors that may necessitate more active monitoring and/or intervention include the student’s age, their immediate history of effective self-management, the number of known allergens which the student is severely allergic to and the necessary actions required to minimise the risk for each allergen. Taking these factors into account, individual schools would need to determine on a case-by-case basis whether to include a student with anaphylaxis in the count. The level of intervention and/or monitoring required in order to assist the student to manage their condition would be an important determinant.
* Each education authority will have its own guidance for how its schools manage students at risk of an anaphylactic reaction.

## School arrangements

### Should someone review the information before I complete the data collection process?

* Your school principal can advise you of the review processes that apply to your school prior to the submission of data but DET recommends the school principal has the opportunity to verify the processes undertaken and that evidence is available to support the decisions that have been made during the implementation of the collection.

### I'm not sure what to do as this student attends two schools.

* Where a student is enrolled in two schools, the school where the majority of their class time is spent should record the details relevant to this student.
* When considering the level of adjustment provided to the student, consider all adjustments that the student receives to participate in education (including those provided in other educational settings).
* If the student attends another school, you may wish to contact that school to discuss the adjustments they provide if you do not already have this information.

### I’m not sure whether to include this student as he/she has attended the school for less than 10 weeks.

* Where a student has newly enrolled in the school and has attended the school for less than 10 weeks, the school may include that student only if they have evidence of the continuing need for adjustments for the student.
* For example, evidence from the previous school of long-term adjustments together with evidence that similar adjustments are required in the new school. Contact with the student’s previous school may assist to gather the evidence required. Communication with parents/carers may also provide sources of contact (e.g. health professionals) that can assist to build the evidence to support the inclusion of the student.

### My school is a special school and I am not sure how to choose the level of adjustment.

* The national data collection on students with disability applies across all educational settings and contexts, including special schools and special classes.
* These situations usually provide modified environments, including highly adjusted curriculum along with specialised equipment required by some students. There may also be specialist programs and interventions that are clearly focused or tailored to meet the educational support needs of students with similar disabilities.
* As a starting point, special schools and schools providing special classes should consider nearly all students accessing these supports as requiring 'substantial adjustments', with an upgrade to 'extensive adjustments' if additional support is provided or a downgrade to 'supplementary adjustments' if the student is particularly able. However, as with all students in the national data collection on students with disability, an assessment of the level of adjustment and category of disability should be made on an individual basis.

## Privacy

### Will students’ personal details be kept confidential?

* All data is de-identified.
* No personal or identifying data will be supplied to the Australian Government Department of Education and Training.
* The Victorian Department of Education and Training treats all data about students as confidential.