



BUCKLEY PARK COLLEGE

25 June 2014

Dear Parents, Guardians and Carers,

Along with all schools across the country, Buckley Park College is required to participate in a new national data collection on students with disabilities; a term that is defined very broadly for this process. This information will now be collected every year and will not be limited to students with diagnosed disabilities but will collect valuable information about the support needed, and provided, to a much wider group of students.

There are many conditions which may impact on a child's ability to participate in education. The *Disability Discrimination Act* (1992) describes a broad range of health and learning conditions for which schools are required provide reasonable adjustments. This definition can include health conditions such as arthritis as well as hearing impairments, vision impairments and learning difficulties.

We need to include all students where there has been an adaption or modification to the curriculum to support their learning needs. For instance, there is no adjustment to the learning program for a student with anaphylaxis but we are still required to include them in the data collection because of other supports that are put in place. For others, the adjustment will be more significant.

The data collection will help schools better meet the needs of students and will provide more accurate and complete information about the number and distribution of students with disabilities as well as the adjustments provided to support students.

Please find attached a letter that explains the data collection in more detail as well as a fact sheet.

If you do not wish for your child to participate in this Data Collection please return the opt-out form that is attached to Jessica Mc William by Friday 18th July. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact one of us at the College.

Yours Sincerely,

Nathan Chisholm
Principal

Jessica Mc William
Student Wellbeing Leader

Dear Parent/Carer/Guardian(s)

Re: Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability

Our school is participating in the Nationally Consistent Data Collection on School Students with Disability (the Data Collection) which is taking place in schools across Australia this year. This letter explains what information is being collected and what happens if you decide to opt-out of the Data Collection.

What is the Data Collection?

The Data Collection will collect information about students with a disability who require support to participate in education on the same basis as other students.

The *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (DDA) describes a very broad range of health and learning conditions. Under the DDA and the Disability Standards for Education 2005 schools have obligations to ensure that students with these conditions are able to access and participate in education on the same basis as other students. This includes providing reasonable adjustments where needed, in consultation with the student's parents, carers or guardians.

This Data Collection aims to gather information about how many students in schools have a health or learning condition requiring adjustments be made to support their access to and participation in education. The Data Collection is not limited to students with diagnosed disabilities, and will collect valuable information about supports provided to a much wider group of students than those previously included in individually targeted disability support programs such as the Program for Students with Disabilities.

Why is this information being collected?

The Data Collection aims to provide more accurate and complete information about the number and distribution of Australian school students with disability as well as the adjustments provided to enable them to access education on the same basis as students without disability. The Data Collection will inform future policy and planning for the provision of education services around the country and ensure that there is a nationally consistent approach to identifying students with disability.

What information is being collected?

The Data Collection will collect:

- whether the school is metropolitan or non-metropolitan, primary or secondary
- the total number of students enrolled at the school
- the total number of students at the school receiving adjustments to enable them to participate in education on the same basis as other students
- the level of adjustment provided to those students
- the students' broad type of disability.

How will the information be collected?

Our school will determine the number of students with disability, adjustments that are provided and the broad category of disability for each of those students.

As school principal, I will verify there is evidence to support the inclusion of these students in the Data Collection. This may include reviewing your child's learning plans and consulting with you, your child and/or their teachers.

Once the data has been collected, our school staff will de-identify the data so that no student names are captured.

What will happen to the information collected?

In August, we will record and submit numbers only to the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (the Department). The Department will then provide total numbers at a State level to the Commonwealth Department of Education. This data will be transmitted securely.

The Commonwealth Department of Education will use the information collected to inform policy development in the area of Education in the future.

Both the Department and the Commonwealth Department of Education will take steps to aggregate the data sufficiently so that no student's identity could reasonably be ascertained.

What happens if you opt-out?

Involvement in the Data Collection is optional and you may 'opt-out' at any time. There are no consequences if you choose to opt-out of the Data Collection. If you want to opt-out, complete and return the attached form by 18/7/2014 or contact me on the number below or speak with your child's teacher. Complete one opt-out form for each child.

What happens if you do not opt-out?

De-identified information about your child may be included in the 2014 Data Collection.

Accessing your child's information

You can access and correct the personal and health information about your child held by the Department. If you wish to access and correct your child's personal and/or health information, please contact me.

Questions

If you have any questions about the 2014 Data Collection, please do not hesitate to contact Jessica McWilliam] on 9331 9999 Further information about the Data Collection can be found at: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/parents/needs/Pages/nccd.aspx>

Yours sincerely



Nathan Chisholm
Principal
Buckley Park College

26/06/2014

To opt-out please return the following completed form to Jessica McWilliam at school] by 18/7/2014.

I have read the letter in relation to the 2014 Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability and request that information is not to be collected on:

(Student's name)_____

Full name of Parent/Carer/Guardian(s)_____

Date:_____

Parent/guardian signature: _____

Date: _____

Fact sheet for Parents/Carers

Schools across Australia are taking part in a new national data collection on school students with disability.

The data collection is being introduced in stages over three years, and started in 2013. From 2015, this information will be collected in every school across Australia, every year. All Australian governments have agreed to this.

WHAT IS THE BENEFIT FOR MY CHILD?

All Australian governments agree that every child in an Australian school should have a high quality education. It shouldn't matter what the individual child's circumstances are – every child should have the same opportunity to succeed at school.

The aim of this new data collection is to have better information about school students with disability in Australia.

Better information about school students with disability will help teachers, principals and education authorities to support students with disability to take part in school on the same basis as students without disability.

MY CHILD ISN'T "DISABLED", WHY IS HE/SHE BEING INCLUDED IN THE DATA COLLECTION?

There are many conditions which may impact on a child's ability to participate in education. The *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (DDA) and the *Disability Standards for Education 2005* describe a broad range of health and learning conditions for which schools are required to provide 'reasonable adjustments' to support students to participate on the same basis as other students.

This Data Collection aims to gather information about how many students in our schools have these conditions and the adjustments schools are making to support them.

It is not limited to students with diagnosed disabilities, and will collect valuable information about supports provided to a much wider group of students than those previously included in individually targeted disability support programs such as the Program for Students with Disabilities.

WHY IS THIS DATA BEING COLLECTED?

There is nothing new about schools collecting information about students with disability – in fact, schools have had to do this by law for some time. But the type of information currently collected varies between each state and territory.

With the new data collection, every school in Australia will use the same method to collect this information – that is, a government school in suburban Sydney will collect and report data in the same way as a Catholic school in country Victoria and an independent school in the Northern Territory.

The information provided through this new national data collection will enable all Australian governments to better target support and resources to benefit students with disability. It will help to put the right supports in place for students with disability so that they have the same opportunities for a high quality education as students without a disability.

WHAT ARE SCHOOLS REQUIRED TO DO?

Every school in Australia is likely to have a number of students who require educational adjustments due to disability at some point. Schools need to be able to support students with disability by removing any obstacles for them to participate in their education.

By law, schools are required to make reasonable adjustments where needed to assist students with disability. These responsibilities are outlined in the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* and the *Disability Standards for Education 2005*. This means that schools need to talk to the student and/or their parent/carer about reasonable adjustments. These are things the schools do now and this won't change.

The new data collection will record students who have been identified by a school team as meeting the definition of disability under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* and provided with an adjustment.

WHAT IS AN ADJUSTMENT?

An adjustment is a measure or action taken to help a student with disability participate in education on the same basis as other students. Adjustments can be made across the whole school setting (like ramps into classrooms), in the classroom and at an individual student level (like extra tuition for a student with a learning difficulty).

WHAT INFORMATION WILL BE COLLECTED?

Your child's school will collect and report information every year about:

- the number of students with disabilities who receive adjustments
- the level of adjustments provided
- the broad types of disability.

WHO WILL COLLECT MY CHILD'S INFORMATION?

Teachers and other school staff from your child's school will collect the above information based on:

- consultation with parents/carers
- the school team's observations and professional judgements
- any medical diagnosis
- other relevant information.

School principals are responsible for making sure that the information collected about each student is accurate.

HOW WILL MY CHILD'S PRIVACY BE PROTECTED?

Protecting the privacy and confidentiality of all children and their families is very important. With the new data collection, this will be done in the following ways:

- personal or confidential information will not be given to anyone not authorised to see it
- when the information is sent by your child's school to the local or commonwealth education authority for combination with information from other schools, it will be by school only – student names will not be recorded as part of the data collection.

WHEN AND WHERE WILL THE DATA BE AVAILABLE?

Information collected in 2013 and 2014 will not be publicly available. Education ministers will receive a report on the results of the Data Collection.

CAN I DECIDE WHETHER MY CHILD'S INFORMATION IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL DATA COLLECTION?

It's your decision about whether you want your child's information to be included in the national reporting or not.

Including every school child who is being provided with an adjustment because of disability in this new national data collection each year will help schools, education authorities and governments to better meet students' needs.

Your school will tell you what you need to do if you don't want to have your child's information included in the national data collection.

Even if your child's information is not included in the national data collection, your school is still required to provide support to your child with disability and any adjustments that may be needed to help him/her participate at school.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Contact your child's school if you have further questions about the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability and how it may affect your child.

You can also visit

www.education.gov.au/nationally-consistent-collection-data-school-students-disability