

National Reporting on Student Outcomes

The purpose of this information sheet is to advise parents (or caregivers) of data collection requirements arising from the decisions of State, Territory and Australian Government Education Ministers to improve the quality and national consistency of public reporting on student achievement. Ministers expect all government and non-government school systems and schools to comply with the new data collection and reporting arrangements.

What is the purpose of national reporting?

- The primary purpose of national reporting is to improve the educational outcomes of our young people by informing the Australian public, and especially the education community and parents, about progress towards achieving the *National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-First Century*.
- For more information on the *National Goals*, go to <http://www.scseec.edu.au>

What is the situation now with the collection and reporting of information on students' performance?

- All school authorities must collect certain information from parents and/or students to fulfil their functions and obligations under State, Territory and Australian Government legislation, including accountability for spending public money.
- Governments must provide the community with information about school performance and the steps they are taking to improve student outcomes.
- Information on students' performance is reported in the annual *National Report on Schooling in Australia*, and on the *MySchool* website published by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA).

What are the requirements for the collection of information on student background characteristics?

- State, Territory and Australian Government Education Ministers have agreed to common approaches across all States and Territories, in both government and non-government schools, to the collection and reporting of information on the sex, Indigenous status, geographic location, socioeconomic background and language background of school students.

What are the benefits for schools and students?

- Linking student background characteristics with students' results in national assessments in priority areas of schooling will allow schools to identify individual students' strengths and weaknesses; evaluate the influence of particular factors on student performance; judge the effectiveness of policies aimed at reducing the impact of such factors, and, as necessary, take appropriate steps to improve students' performance.
- The new arrangements will also provide parents with accurate and timely information on their child's progress compared with other Australian students of the same age and a measure of the child's achievement against national benchmarks or standards.

What information is required from parents?

- Parents will be asked for information on the following:
 - the sex of the student
 - the Indigenous status of the student
 - the parents' occupations (in very broad terms)
 - the parents' educational qualifications (also in very broad terms)
 - the student's country of birth, and
 - the main language spoken at home by the student and each of the student's parents or guardians.
- Most of this information is already collected by schools but it will now be collected in a uniform way across the country.

Why are schools required to collect information on the educational and occupational background of parents?

- Information is being collected on the educational and occupational background of parents so that school education authorities can evaluate the influence of socioeconomic background on students' educational outcomes across and within jurisdictions, and over time.
- This will allow critical evaluation of the effectiveness of policies aimed at reducing the impact of social or economic disadvantage on student performance, and assist school systems and schools in taking steps aimed at promoting an education system which is fair for all Australian students.
- Ministers have been concerned to ensure that the questions asked of parents are not overly intrusive. Parents will therefore not be asked to provide specific details of their education or income but, rather, will be asked to select an appropriate response from a limited number of broad educational categories.

What safeguards are there to protect the privacy and confidentiality of personal information?

- All States and Territories have privacy or freedom of information legislation encompassing such matters as the manner and purpose of collection of personal information, storage and security of data, and access to information.
- There is also Commonwealth privacy legislation, which imposes certain obligations on non-government schools in relation to the collection and handling of personal information to protect the privacy of individuals.
- Schools and school systems have in place comprehensive confidentiality and security policies and procedures for the collection and handling of personal information. Such policies set out the types of information collected, used and disclosed, the purpose for which it is collected, and matters relating to access and collection of information.
- All information which could identify or would reasonably identify individual students to whom particular background characteristics belong is removed for national reporting so that no personal information is reported publicly.
- Strict reporting protocols and standards apply to data presentation in all publications of the Ministerial Council on Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs.

Enrolment Information Collection Notice

1. Archdiocesan Catholic schools collect personal information, including sensitive information, about students and parents or guardians before and during the course of the students' enrolment. The primary purpose of collecting this information is to enable schooling to be provided for the students.
2. Some of the information collected is to satisfy a school's legal obligations, particularly to enable the discharge of its duty of care to the students.
3. Certain laws governing or relating to the operation of schools require that certain information be collected. These include the Education Act, Public Health and Child Protection Laws.
4. Health information about students is sensitive information within the terms of the National Privacy Principles under the Privacy Act. Schools require medical reports about students from time to time to enable the schools to discharge their duty of care to their students.
5. From time to time personal and sensitive information is disclosed to others for administrative and educational purposes. This includes disclosure to other schools, government departments, the Catholic Education Office (CEO) and Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn, the Archdiocesan Catholic Education Commission (CEC) and the NSW Catholic Education Commission (CEC,NSW) and the National Catholic Education Commission (NCEC), the local Catholic Archdiocese and the parish, medical practitioners, CatholicCare and people providing services to the school, including specialist visiting teachers, counsellors, coaches and volunteers.
6. In addition to the agencies and purposes cited at 5 above, personal information relating to students and parents may also be made available, in accordance with Australian Government requirements, to the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) for the purpose of publishing certain school information relating to the circumstances of parents and students on the MySchool website.
7. If the information referred to above is not obtained, the enrolment or ongoing enrolment of a student may not be able to continue.
8. Personal information collected from students is regularly disclosed to their parents or guardians. On occasions, information such as academic and sporting achievements, student activities and other news is published in school, college, CEO or Archdiocesan newsletters and magazines and/or websites.
9. Parents may seek access to personal information collected about them and their son/daughter by contacting the school/schools where the child/children is/are enrolled. Students may also seek access to personal information collected about them. However, there will be occasions when access is denied. Such occasions would include where access would have an unreasonable impact on the privacy of others, where access may result in a breach of the school's/CEO's duty of care to the student, or where students have provided information in confidence.
10. From time to time Catholic schools within the Archdiocese engage in fundraising activities. Information received from you may be used to make an appeal to you. It may also be disclosed to organisations that assist in the school's and the Archdiocese's fundraising activities. Your personal information will not be disclosed to third parties for their own marketing purposes without your consent.
11. Your contact details may be included in school/Archdiocese contact lists and directories. If you do not agree to this you must advise the school.
12. If you provide the personal information of others, such as doctors or emergency contacts, you are encouraged to inform them that you are disclosing that information and why you are disclosing the information and that the information is usually not disclosed to third parties, so that they can access that information if they wish.
13. The school or CEO may utilise service providers to provide certain services including data storage to the school and its staff and students and to the CEO. The school and the CEO may provide your personal information to such service providers in connection with the provision of these services. The school and the CEO's email service providers may store and process emails and store data outside Australia.