Australian Government
Department of Education

Census and special circumstance applications privacy collection notice

About

The Australian Government Department of Education (the department) would like to advise all staff, parents, guardians and students (where applicable) that it will collect certain information about your school, its staff and student body as part of the non-government schools census collection (the census) and special circumstance applications.

How and what information is collected for the census?

Census information is provided to the department by your school's legal entity (the approved authority) via the Education Funding System (EFS).

The census provides information about your school and the number and characteristics of the school's staff and student body during a specific reference period. Information and characteristics collected through the census include:

- teaching and non-teaching staff
- students' year level and workload
- students' gender and age (as on 1 July 2026)
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and students
- students with disability
- students receiving distance education
- day, boarding and overseas students.

The names of students and staff are not collected, apart from the name, position and contact details of the staff member nominated as the primary contact for the census.

Census special circumstance applications

A census special circumstance application is for a student who did not attend during the census reference period and/or did not have a pattern of regular attendance at a school during the year but otherwise meet the non-government schools census eligibility requirements. Schools can apply to have a student individually considered for inclusion in the census through a census special circumstance application. Any information provided to the department through this application should be de-identified by the school.

Purpose of the census collection

The information provided during the census is collected by the department in accordance with the *Australian Education Act 2013* (the Act) and the Australian Education Regulations 2023 (the Regulations). The Act and the Regulations require the legal entity responsible for the administration of the school (the approved authority) to provide this information to the department to:

- ensure the provision of Australian Government funding to schools is properly calculated and appropriately managed
- conduct research, statistical analysis and develop school education policy for the Australian Government
- meet national and international reporting obligations on school students in Australia
- publish and provide information about schools to the public.

Use and disclosure of personal information

Your personal information is protected by law under the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth) (Privacy Act). Personal information is information or an opinion about an identified individual or an individual who is reasonably identifiable.

Any use or disclosure of your personal information must occur in accordance with the Privacy Act and the Act and Regulations and any other applicable laws.

Your personal information provided to the department through the census may be:

- Used or disclosed by the department for the purposes outlined above under the heading Purposes of the census collection.
- Disclosed to the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) to publish on the My School website and include as high-level data for ACARA's National Report on Schooling in Australia.
- Disclosed to state and territory government departments and authorities in accordance with the Act and Regulations.
- Disclosed to Australian Government departments and authorities in accordance with the Act and Regulations.
- Disclosed to non-government school representative bodies in accordance with the Act and Regulations.

- Disclosed to a contracted auditor where the department decides to audit or verify the information provided by an approved authority about a school. The contracted auditor may use previously collected information or request access to individual student records for comparison purposes. The contractors may pass this information onto officers within the department, if there is a discrepancy in the data provided by the school and the school's records and further investigation is required. The contracted auditor must handle personal information in accordance with the Privacy Act.
- Disclosed to its service providers for the purposes of the provision of information and communications technology support services to the department.
- Used to validate data from other collections undertaken by the department.
- Used or disclosed where it is otherwise required or authorised by law including under the Act or Regulations, or otherwise permitted under the Privacy Act.

Other than in exceptional circumstances (for example, investigation of fraud relating to overseas students), the department does not disclose any of the personal information collected to overseas recipients.

You can find the department's privacy policy on the Department of Education website or request a copy from the department at privacy@education.gov.au. The privacy policy includes information about how to access or correct personal information held about you or your child, how to make a complaint about a breach of the Australian Privacy Principles and how the department will deal with such a complaint.

What do you need to do?

You are not required to do anything. The approved authority of the school is responsible for providing the information to the department.

Contacts for further information

Your school can provide information about data provided for you or your child for the purposes of the census. To find out more about the census collection and reporting, visit EducationHUB.