

Data access – policy

Read this document with the Data access protocol document series.

Policy

The department will manage access to data and information as well as the data security and any risk associated with access to information held by the Department of Education (department).

The *Information Act 2002* (the Act) outlines that public sector organisations should make information, where possible, available to the public. The Act also states that a public sector organisation must take reasonable steps to protect the personal information it holds from misuse, loss, unauthorised access, modification or disclosure. Care must be taken in providing access to information held by the department to minimise the risk of disclosing inappropriate information about individuals, communities or organisations.

Information collected and stored by the department's employees and those acting on behalf of the department, is the property of the department. It is a corporate resource that is utilised wherever possible to improve student outcomes in educational programs and enhance strategic and operational data driven decision making. Data is collected by the department on behalf of other organisations; under these circumstances there is a shared role in data management between that organisation and the department.

The department periodically undertakes data collections and extracts from the department's operational systems. This data provides:

- support to local and national decision making
- reporting against high level educational agreements such as the National Education Agreement, and National Partnerships
- ad hoc and periodic reporting to internal and external clients.

The department must use personal information for the purpose for which it was collected and take reasonable steps to acquire consent for disclosure to third parties. Personal information is only used or disclosed for another purpose if that purpose is related to the primary purpose and the person would reasonably expect the information to be used or disclosed or the individual has consented to the use or disclosure.

The department may also use or disclose personal information for any other purpose if it is required or authorised by law or the use or disclosure is believed necessary to prevent a threat to an individual's or the public's health and safety.

Provided that individuals cannot be identified, the department may provide information at the school, community or organisation level, excluding Australian Early Development Census and non-government school level data. Summary level information will be provided with a level of aggregation such that the identity of individuals cannot be reasonably identified.

Business need

Departmental staff frequently require data for a number of purposes as part of their job. It is appropriate to provide data to authorised employees of the department as required to perform their duties. Information obtained in these circumstances must be used in accordance with this policy, the Information Privacy Principles as scheduled in the Act as well as any other applicable regulations.

Scope

This policy covers all data that is held by the department.

Roles and responsibilities

Data owner

The data owner is responsible for the quality, integrity and timeliness of the data, as well as making decisions about the collection, management and access to a data set.

Data custodian

The data custodian is responsible for making decisions on behalf of the data owner where it is impractical to seek permission from the data owner themselves. For example, seeking permission from all school principals to publish data about Northern Territory schools.

Strategic Reporting and Performance

Strategic Reporting and Performance are responsible for the oversight of the management, governance and delivery of data including research and analysis to support evidence-based policy and service delivery.

Quality Assurance Services

Quality Assurance Services, in Quality Standards and Regulation, provide advice regarding whether provision of personal information is permitted under the Act.

Definitions

Term	Definition
Data custodian	The officer who acts on behalf of the data owner
Data owner	The entity that has responsibility for a data set
Responsible officer	The officer who is acting on behalf of either a Chief Executive Officer, a data owner or a data custodian

Related legislation and policies

Care and Protection of Children Act 2007 – <https://legislation.nt.gov.au/en/Legislation/CARE-AND-PROTECTION-OF-CHILDREN-ACT-2007>

Data access protocol – https://education.nt.gov.au/policies/conduct#data_access

Information Act 2002 – <https://legislation.nt.gov.au/en/Legislation/INFORMATION-ACT-2002>

Information statement – https://education.nt.gov.au/policies/conduct#information_statement

Document title	Data access – policy
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Approved by	Executive Director Strategic Policy, Projects and Performance
Date approved	October 2023
TRM number	50:D22:79199

Version	Date	Author	Changes made
1	February 2013	Performance and Data Management	First version
1.1	2014	Performance and Data Management	Links updated
2	Month 2023	Strategic Reporting and Performance	Review and administrative amendments to align roles and responsibilities to the structural alignment in effect from 1 July 2022, including NTG template and minor formatting, use of correct terminology, and refined to reflect practice.