

**Important note:**

Fill in the highlighted fields for your school, paste the letter content onto your school letterhead and distribute to parents at least two weeks before your teachers begin completing Instruments.

Apart from adding your school's data collection start date and details on who to contact to opt out, contact method and by when, the content of the letter should not be altered.

The Parent information letter is also available for download in a number of community languages from the 'Help centre'.

The content of the Parent information letter has been approved by the Royal Children's Hospital Human Research Ethics Committee.

Dear Parent/Carer

Re: Consent to Australian Early Development Census (AEDC)

This letter and the attached [Fact Sheet](#) include important information about the Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) and the proposed handling of your child/children's personal information.

Our school will take part in the AEDC between May and July this year. The AEDC is a national census that is conducted every three years by the Australian Government, in partnership with state and territory governments. It measures how children have developed by the time they start their first year of full-time school.

The AEDC is voluntary and it does not measure how well children are doing at school, nor how their school compares to other schools. Instead, it shows how children are growing and progressing in five key areas, what is being done well and what can be improved. AEDC data is used by schools, early childhood organisations, researchers and governments to help plan and improve services and supports for children and families. This is why it is important for all children in their first year of school to be included in the AEDC. You can learn more about the ways AEDC data is used at <https://www.aedc.gov.au/>.

What does this mean for your child?

The AEDC is completed by teachers based on their knowledge of the children. Children do not need to do anything to be included in the census and will attend class as usual while the census is conducted. The census will start on 20/5/2024.

Teachers will answer questions about the five key areas of early childhood development, which are: physical health and wellbeing, emotional maturity, social competence, language and cognitive skills (school-based), and communication skills and general knowledge. You can see all the questions at <https://www.aedc.gov.au/avedi>.

You can be confident that your child's privacy will be protected.

We understand how important it is to keep your child's information private. This is why the AEDC uses a secure website to collect and keep their information.

More information about how AEDC data (including your child's information) is collected, protected and used is in the Fact Sheet.

What do parents need to do?

For the purposes of the AEDC, the Australian Government Department of Education seeks your consent to collect personal information about your child from our school. This includes known information about your child's health.

FACT SHEET – COLLECTING, PROTECTING AND USING AEDC DATA

What information is collected?

Data collected as part of the AEDC will include personal information about your child, including names, addresses, cultural and linguistic background, and information about their health. This information may be taken from school records, to help teachers complete the AEDC.

When completing the AEDC, teachers may be supported by cultural consultants who are employees or contractors of our school and can help them understand the cultural context of First Nations children.

How is AEDC data managed?

The AEDC is managed in accordance with the Australian Privacy Principles (APPs). The APPs regulate the collection, use, disclosure and storage of personal information by Australian government agencies, and some private sector organisations, and is part of the *Privacy Act 1998* (Cth).

Personal information about your child will be used to link AEDC data with information from other organisations, such as health departments, which will keep it confidential. Your child's AEDC results will be kept separate from their identifying information and no-one will be able to access both at the same time.

AEDC results for individual children are never reported, and all published AEDC data is anonymised, meaning that names, ages, addresses and other identifying information are removed before the data is published.

You can see how data is collected and presented by visiting www.aedc.gov.au/data. Data from the 2024 collection will be presented in a similar way.

Who is AEDC data shared with and how is it shared?

Schools

Eligible schools receive a summary of the AEDC results in the form of school profiles. School profiles do not report any AEDC results about individual children. Schools may share their profiles with other organisations or people in confidence for purposes like better supporting children, but cannot make the profiles public. To further protect the privacy of children, schools with less than six children participating in the AEDC will not receive a school profile.

Governments and school sector peak bodies

State and Territory government departments and Catholic and Independent schools' peak bodies will receive anonymised information for all children in their school sector.

Integrating authorities and data linkage units

Selected agencies will receive personal information about children participating in the AEDC to link their AEDC results with other data. Depending on the mechanisms used for data linkage, they may also receive anonymised AEDC results. These agencies include Commonwealth agencies, State and Territory governments, universities and research institutes that have demonstrated to have secure enough systems to protect the privacy of children.