

THE NEW APPLICATION TO ENROL IN A NSW GOVERNMENT SCHOOL

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

Due to changes to the enrolment process for New South Wales public schools, there are important new requirements for collecting student information that you - as a parent or caregiver - need to be aware of. This sheet outlines the new information requirements and the responsibilities of the Department of Education and Training in ensuring the collection, privacy, and protection of this information.

Ensuring the safety of our students, staff and school visitors

The Department of Education and Training has an obligation to ensure that we provide a safe working environment for our staff and students. To this end, we are required to obtain and use, as appropriate, information to ensure both the health and safety of our employees at work and of others who come onto Departmental sites, such as students, parents and members of the school community.

In this context, it is reasonable that Principals have available to them, prior to enrolment procedures being completed, information that is relevant to the assessment of a prospective student.

What information do we require?

In addition to collecting information relating to student and family details, the Application to Enrol in a NSW Government School form collects information on the student's previous history, including any history of suspension or expulsion relating to violent behaviour. This information is used by the school to conduct a risk assessment.

The application also gives parents the opportunity to provide schools with information that will help them facilitate the smooth transition of students into school. This may include health and allergy management, preparing a behaviour management plan or other appropriate strategies directed at meeting the particular needs of the student.

By disclosing all relevant background information, parents will ensure that the enrolment process is a fair and accurate assessment of your child's needs. Any action taken by schools in response to the information will help to support students in the school once enrolled and contribute to ensuring the safety of the entire school community.

Protecting the privacy of parents' and students' information

All public schools and personnel of the Department of Education and Training must abide by the *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (NSW)*. The information you provide will be used to process your child's application for enrolment and for associated purposes such as:

- General student administration
- Communication with students and parents or carers
- State and National reporting purposes
- To ensure the health and safety of students, staff and visitors to the school
- For other matters relating to the education and welfare of the student; and
- For any other purpose required by law.

The information will be stored securely. You may access or correct any personal information by contacting the school. If you have a concern or complaint about the way your personal information has been collected, used, or disclosed, you may contact the school.

Why do we collect health information?

The health-related information collected is subject to the *Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002*. It is being collected for the primary purpose of ensuring the health and safety of all students, staff and visitors to the school. It may be used and disclosed to medical practitioners, health workers, other government departments and/or schools for this primary purpose, or for other related purposes.

Do parents have to answer the questions?

The Department and the school are required by law to ensure the health and safety of students, staff and visitors on our premises. It is therefore compulsory for applicants to answer all questions on the *Application to Enrol* except those about parents' occupation and education.

The information you provide will assist the school to communicate with you and to care for your child while at school.

What happens if the information provided is not correct?

Should statements made in the *Application to Enrol* later prove to be false or misleading, any decision made as a result of the application may be reversed

Why have we asked for information about parents' occupations and education?

All Australian Education Ministers have agreed on National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-First Century.

The National Goals specifically state that the achievement of students in schools should not be affected by discrimination based on sex, language, culture and ethnicity, religion or disability; or by differences arising from social and economic background or geographic location. The goals also state that 'the learning outcomes of educationally disadvantaged students [should] improve and, over time, match those of other students'.

To help us to make sure we are achieving this goal, all parents across Australia, no matter which school their child attends, are being asked to provide information about family background. The main purpose of collecting this information is to promote an education system which is fair for all Australian students regardless of their circumstances.

We use the information to evaluate whether our policies are effective and to ensure that no group is experiencing undue disadvantage.

Providing information about your occupation and education is voluntary, but your information will help us to ensure that all students are being well served by Australian schools.

For more information on the National Goals, go to the website of the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs at <http://www.mceetya.edu.au/>. All of the State, Territory and Commonwealth Ministers for Education are represented on the Council.