

Dear Parent/Carer

Re: Consent to Australian Early Development Census (AEDC)

This letter includes 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 in 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. 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. The Privacy Statement contained on the AEDC website provides more detail on how their information will be protected and shared, and can be found at www.aedc.gov.au/parents/privacy-statement.

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.

If you consent to the collection of your child's information, you do not need to do anything.

If you do not consent to the collection of your child's information, please contact Lisa.heath@smcmepplingnth.catholic.edu.au **before 21/7/2024** and no information about your child will be collected. You can also withdraw your consent after this time. If you do so, then the Australian Government Department of Education will stop using your child's information and will not provide it to anyone else.

To find out more about the AEDC, please read the frequently asked questions section on the AEDC website at <https://www.aedc.gov.au/parents/faqs> or phone 1800 092 548.

Thank you for supporting the AEDC.

Lisa Heath

Deputy Principal Wellbeing

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.

Researchers

Researchers can request anonymised AEDC data, and AEDC data that is linked to other data to answer research questions. For examples on how researchers have used AEDC data visit <https://www.aedc.gov.au/snapshots>. Anonymised AEDC data is also shared with research institutes that contribute to the AEDC program. In some cases, anonymised data may be provided to overseas research institutes.

AEDC Data Management Agency

Personal information and anonymised AEDC results are held and managed on behalf of the Australian Government Department of Education by a nominated Data Management Agency. The AEDC Data Management Agency is carefully selected to ensure that AEDC data are managed in accordance with the highest security standards. The current AEDC Data Management Agency is the Social Research Centre.