July 17, 2014

Dear Parents

During Term 3, St John’s Lutheran School along with all Government Schools and some Independent Schools will be involved in the Commonwealth Department of Education’s “Collection of Data on School Students with a Disability”. While this is a Federal Government and DEECD directive we have concerns about the choice of wording used in the information provided to us and to you as a parent or caregiver, and want to alleviate any concerns you may have. We don’t want to alarm you by the word ‘disability’ and we are certainly not labelling children as disabled. What we are doing is explicitly identifying those students whose education has some form of adjustment.

Firstly, for the purpose of this data collection, the definition of the word ‘disability’ is very broad and includes students who require adjustments in their education, for a health or learning condition, not just those who have been formally diagnosed. This may include and is not limited to students with dyslexia, dyspraxia, Anaphylaxis, Asthma, Autism, ADHD, ODD, Speech Therapy, Psychologist support and more.

Secondly, we acknowledge that there are students who have a diagnosed ‘disability’ and the School, in partnership with the family, make adjustments for their learning. This collection of data is an opportunity for the School to be recognised in making other educational adjustments for students who require it. This may involve an Individual Learning Plan, Behaviour Management Plan, Anaphylaxis and Asthma Management Plan, Student Support Groups and other in-class adjustments.

Why is this information being collected?
The Data Collection aims to provide more accurate and complete information about the number and distribution of Australian school students with disability as well as the adjustments provided to enable them to access education on the same basis as students without disability.

The Data Collection will inform future policy and planning for the provision of educational services around Australia and ensure that there is a nationally consistent approach to identifying students with disability.

What information is being collected?
The Data Collection will collect:

- Whether the school is metropolitan or non-metropolitan
- Whether the school is primary, secondary, combined or special
- The total number of students enrolled at the school
- The total number of students at the school receiving adjustments to enable them to participate in the education on the same basis as other students
- The level of adjustment provided to those students
- The student’s type of disability
How will the information be collected?
Our School will determine the number of students with adjustments that are provided and the broad category for each of those students.

As Head of School, I will verify that there is evidence to support the inclusion of these students in the Data Collection. This may include reviewing your child’s learning plans and/or consulting with you, your child and their teachers.

Once the data has been collected, our staff will de-identify the data so that no student names are passed to anyone outside of the School.

In essence, the information we collect is collated into 4 categories of adjustment:
1. No adjustment at this time (may be an Anaphylaxis Plan)
2. Supplementary (Individual Learning Plans)
3. Substantial (Addresses the specific nature of the condition)
4. Extensive (Highly individualised, specific and ongoing)

There are also 4 categories of disability that we are required to indicate for students identified for this collection of information. They are:
1. Physical (Related to the body)
2. Cognitive (Intellectual)
3. Sensory (Loss of bodily or mental functions)
4. Social/Emotional (Affecting a person’s thought process/behaviours)

Further information about this data collection can be found at: https://education.gov.au/nationally-consistent-collection-data-school-students-disability

You do have an option to ‘opt-out’ and a slip is provided below should you wish to do so.

We hope to keep this process as smooth and easy for you and also for our staff. We appreciate your support in this process. If your child is considered eligible for this survey, further information will be sent home in the near future.

Yours sincerely

Brian Schultz
Head of School

To OPT OUT – please return the following completed form to the School Office by Friday 25 July.

I have read the letter in relation to the 2014 Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability and request that information is not to be collected regarding:

Student Name: ________________________________________________________________

Full Name of Parent/Carer/Guardian: _____________________________________________

Signature: ___________________________ Date: __________________________