



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

No. 281

WRITTEN QUESTION

J Davis to the Minister for Education and Training, Hon Jo-Anne Hersey MLA

Students with Disability

1. **Of students with disability enrolled in NT government schools, what proportion are in mainstream schools, special schools, and flexible learning settings respectively?**

All educational settings are required to complete the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data (NCCD) Age Grade Census. The census does not include a field that identifies or classifies a student's educational setting as a mainstream school, special school, or flexible learning setting.

While the Department of Education and Training (the department) collects information on students with disability through established reporting processes, the specific breakdown requested is not collected, collated, or verified through the Age Grade Census.

- a. **How has that breakdown changed over the five years to 2025-26?**

Not applicable.

- b. **Where a figure for an individual setting is too small to report, please provide the Territory-wide total for each setting type.**

Not applicable.

2. **How many students are identified through the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data (NCCD) at each adjustment level supplementary, substantial and extensive?**

In 2025, for students from transition to Year 12 in NT government schools:

- 4,294 students were identified at the supplementary level
- 3,245 at the substantial level
- 1,917 at the extensive level.

- a. **How does that compare with the number of students formally identified as having disability on enrolment records?**

Verified data on students identified as having disability through enrolment records is not available for comparison with the NCCD figures.

- b. **Where a figure at an individual adjustment level is too small to report, please provide the Territory-wide total.**

Not applicable.

3. **How many students registered for home education listed a medical condition as their reason, and of those, how many had been enrolled in an NT government school within the previous three years?**

The home education application form enables parents to provide a reason for choosing home education such as medical, geographical, cultural or other reason. This is not mandatory; therefore, a complete dataset is not available.

In 2025, based on 228 applications received, 43 students were identified by the parent as having been enrolled in home education for medical reasons. Of these 43 students:

- 18 had attended a government school in the last 3 years
- 1 had attended a non-government school in the last 3 years
- 6 had attended a school interstate or overseas in the last 3 years
- 18 declined to provide a reason.

4. **Does the Department track whether students who move to home education do so following concerns about access, adjustments, safety or inclusion at their previous school?**

The home education application form records any reason parents choose to provide, including medical, geographical, cultural or other reason. This is not mandatory; therefore, a complete dataset is not available.

This information is not systematically captured, categorised, or reported in a way that identifies a trend.

- a. **If not, why not — and how does the department distinguish between families choosing home education and families pushed out of the system?**

The department's role is to assess home education applications for compliance with the legislative framework, collect evidence of learning to monitor whether the approved program is being delivered and assessed, and establish and maintain productive communication with home educating families.

The department does not seek to determine whether a family's decision reflects a preference for home education or circumstances arising from their experience in a school setting. Accordingly, the department is unable to provide a verified assessment of the factors influencing individual decisions to participate in home education.

5. How many students with disability were enrolled but attended less than 20 per cent of available school days, and what action does the Department take in those cases?

The department records student attendance information and maintains records relating to attendance. Data is not available on specific attendance patterns of students with disability.

a. In how many of those cases was a documented action taken, and what record is made of it?

N/A

6. How many students with disability received more than one, more than three, and more than five suspensions in a school year, and how many accumulated more than 20 suspension days?

The department publishes biannual suspension data, available at [School suspensions data | Department of Education and Training](#). The available verified data does not provide disability-specific figures, the number of students within each repeat-suspension band, or the number who accumulated more than 20 suspension days.

a. Where the figure in the highest band is too small to report, please provide the Territory-wide total for students with more than one suspension.

Not applicable.

7. Of students with disability who were suspended, what proportion were identified in the NCCD as requiring substantial or extensive adjustments?

A verified proportion cannot be provided because the available suspension information does not include a breakdown by NCCD adjustment level.

a. If NCCD adjustment level is not recorded against a suspension, please state which system holds each record, whether the two can be linked, and what would be required to link them.

NCCD data is recorded by schools in the Student Achievement Information System (SAIS) and captured as part of the August Age Grade Census.

Student suspension data is recorded in the Student Administration Management System (SAMS). SAIS and SAMS are currently not integrated, preventing direct reporting across the 2 systems.

The department continues to explore opportunities to improve alignment and integration across student information and reporting systems to support more efficient and accurate reporting.

8. Does the Department collect data on students being sent home outside formal suspension processes, students directed not to attend without being formally suspended, or students placed on reduced timetables or part-time arrangements?

The Department does not collect data on students being sent home outside formal suspension processes, students directed not to attend school without being formally suspended, or students placed on reduced timetables or part-time attendance arrangements. Any formal suspensions are recorded in departmental systems in accordance with established policy and procedures.

a. If yes, how many students with disability are affected?

Not applicable

b. If no, how does the Department maintain an accurate picture of whether students with disability are genuinely participating in education?

The department runs a rigorous moderation and quality assurance process for NCCD data, though a verified dataset relating to students with disability genuinely participating in education is not maintained. The department is therefore unable to report verified prevalence or trend data for these circumstances.

A range of departmental services, school-based processes, and regional support teams work with students and families to monitor attendance, engagement, wellbeing, and participation in education.

9. Where a student with disability is consistently sent home early, placed on a reduced timetable, or moved toward home education, none of that appears in suspension data. What systems exist to detect and respond to those forms of exclusion, and what do they show?

The department does not maintain a verified dataset relating to these criteria. It is therefore unable to report verified prevalence or trend data for these circumstances.

Departmental services, school-based processes and regional support teams work with students and families to monitor attendance, engagement, wellbeing and participation. Where concerns are identified, schools and departmental staff may work with students, parents and carers, and support services to respond to individual circumstances.

Students, parents, carers, and community members may raise concerns regarding educational access, inclusion, adjustments, wellbeing, or other matters affecting a student's participation in schooling. Concerns can be identified, reviewed, and addressed at the individual case level through the department's Complaints Resolution Framework or the independent Student Advocacy Service, which is funded by the department.

In addition, the department has regard to the findings and recommendations of the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability in its approach to supporting students with disability and promoting inclusive educational practices.

Information from school-level processes, advocacy services, complaints mechanisms and individual case management is not routinely collated, categorised or verified in a way that enables reporting on the specific forms of exclusion identified. The department is therefore unable to provide verified data on what these mechanisms show.

10. Where a student is identified in the NCCD as requiring substantial or extensive adjustments, what obligation does the school have to provide those adjustments, and how does the Department verify they are being delivered?

Schools must provide the substantial or extensive adjustments a student needs to access education on the same basis as students without disability, in line with the Disability Standards for Education. School principals are responsible for ensuring these adjustments are delivered. The department monitors implementation through NCCD quality assurance processes, service delivery oversight, and complaints and advocacy pathways available to families.