

POLICY

REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION BY AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

Responsibility of:	Schools Policy and Operations	DEET File: 2008/0196
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1 POLICY

Australian Government entities such as the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA), the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR), the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) and Centrelink regularly request information from state and territory governments as part of their role in administering Australian Government responsibilities.

Australian Government requests for information may be requests mandated by a law of the Australian Parliament and usually relate to students or Department of Education and Training (DEET) personnel. In most instances, requests for information will be directed to DEET Senior Executive by an Australian Government agency such as DEEWR; however, there will be instances where an approach may be made to schools and/or regional offices directly.

DEET personnel in general and school principals in particular are to refer all requests for information from the Australian Government to their respective manager/schools manager for approval.

Where a request involves the provision of data to the Australian Government, schools are not to provide data from their own records. Such data will be provided centrally by DEET Business Planning and Information for consistency and data quality reasons.

This policy does not constrain principals from using their professional judgment when providing information to the Australian Government of a minor or trivial nature. Where appropriate, it is good practice to diarise specific requests.

2 BUSINESS NEED

DEET Senior Executive and schools may be required by law to release certain information to the Australian Government on request. In other instances, agreements between the Australian and Northern Territory Governments may be in existence to release such information. In these instances, information should be released in accordance with the requirements of the agreement.

3 RESPONSIBILITIES

The Australian Government may request information directly from schools or through DEET Senior Executive. DEET personnel including principals will be responsible for providing requested information to the Australian Government where authorised to do so.

Schools managers will be responsible for authorising the release of such information to the Australian Government.

4 RELATED POLICIES

CM-01.1 Communicating with Commonwealth and state governments
CM-02.3 Disclosure of information to federal politicians

5 COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

Displayed on DEET website and available to the public.

6 REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed every two years.

7 GUIDELINES/PROCEDURES

Prior to releasing information to the Australian Government, DEET personnel and principals must:

- hold a copy of the request in writing;
- if appropriate, refer to the relevant section of Australian Government legislation authorising the request (legislative reference must be included in the written request);
- verify an Australian Government official's identity should a request be made in person;
- refer requests for data to the General Manager of the Business Planning and Information Division; and
- obtain the approval of their manager/schools manager to release requested information to the Australian Government.

Completed requests and a copy of information provided to the Australian Government are to be held on file for future reference.