

REPORT OF 2016 NAPLAN TEST INCIDENTS

Introduction

The National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) tests are held during May each year. In 2016 the tests were held on 10, 11 and 12 May and, in total, approximately five million tests were sat by over one million students nationally.

The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) is responsible for the central management of NAPLAN. The Test Administration Authority (TAA) in each state and territory is responsible for the administration of the tests in schools.

ACARA works with state, territory and non-government representatives to ensure the NAPLAN tests are delivered in accordance with nationally agreed protocols so that the results validly, reliably and fairly capture student achievement. The *National Protocols for Test Administration* (the 'Protocols') provide detailed information on all aspects of the administration of the tests and specify security requirements, uniform processes and procedures. This is to ensure students complete the tests under standardised conditions so that all students' results are comparable across Australia. Where individual students require special arrangements to complete the tests these are provided at the school in consultation with the student, their parents/carers, and the relevant TAA.

In the context of the more than one million students and just over 9,500 schools participating in NAPLAN across the country in 2016, there were very few allegations of breaches of the Protocols. Where an allegation is made that the Protocols have been breached, the relevant responsible entity* investigates and takes appropriate action in response. Reports are provided to ACARA summarising the test incident, including investigations and outcomes. This information is then compiled by ACARA and used to produce this test incidents report.

ACARA, in cooperation with states and territories, reviews the Protocols annually to ensure they effectively support educators to administer the NAPLAN tests as required. This review is informed by analysis of the test incident information reported to ACARA, to improve processes and education about the program.

NAPLAN test incidents are defined as follows:

- Cheating (C)** A breach of the *National Protocols for Test Administration* amounting to cheating occurs when there is intent to gain an unfair advantage or improperly influence test results. This category does not include instances of student cheating which, in itself, is not considered a breach of the Protocols. Such incidents are dealt with through schools' existing procedures.
- Security (S)** A breach of the *National Protocols for Test Administration* affecting test security occurs when early knowledge of test content is obtained which has the potential to compromise the integrity of the test results. Breaches of test security committed with intent to gain an unfair advantage are considered as cheating.
- General (G)** General breaches of the *National Protocols for Test Administration* include all other mal-administrative practices that are not in accordance with the agreed protocols, but which do not amount to cheating or affect test security.

* For the purpose of investigating breaches of the *National Protocols for Test Administration* the relevant 'responsible entity' will depend on the school governance arrangements and any existing agreements which allocate the responsibility for this activity. Responsible entities can include individuals, such as principals, or organisations such as school boards or system authorities (including public education authorities), which have authority to receive and assess initial reports of test incidents. More information on investigating test incidents is provided in the *Guidelines for managing test incidents in schools* on the NAP website.

This report does not identify individuals or schools but provides information on breaches of the Protocols in two tables as follows:

- **Table 1** summarises information about the number of allegations of cheating, security breaches or general breaches of test protocols, and;
- **Table 2** provides further information about the substantiated cases, including a description of the incident, and information on what action has been taken as a consequence.

Analysis of 2016 NAPLAN Test Incidents

The *Report of 2016 NAPLAN Test Incidents* reinforces the fact that teachers and schools work hard to ensure the integrity of the tests. This is evidenced both through the very small number of incidents across the entire country, as well as through the increasing numbers of schools reporting their own inadvertent breaches.

This report also plays an important educative role in reminding schools of correct procedure. The transparency and concern shown by schools in reporting incidents demonstrates their commitment to ensuring that the information they and their students receive from the tests is as useful as possible.

In summary:

- In 2016, out of the approximately five million NAPLAN tests sat by students nationally, only 47 test incidents were substantiated, affecting only a very small number of students and schools across the nation.
- Of these 47 test incidents, only two cheating breaches on the part of schools were substantiated.
- Where incidents are substantiated (refer Table 2), TAAs consider whether affected students' results are valid. This year's incidents demonstrate that in almost all of the situations where students might have had access to unauthorised assistance, there was no evidence that assistance led to their results being compromised.
- The majority of incidents, 29, were general breaches which relate to maladministration. There were 16 security breaches that included instances of opening test materials earlier than allowed and test materials not being kept secure during the test security period.
- As in previous years, the majority of substantiated incidents were directly reported to the TAA by the schools, representing a broad level understanding of the Protocols and significant efforts by schools to ensure transparency in their processes. This is testimony to the professionalism of teachers and school administrators.
- In 2015, there were 11 under investigation test incidents as at 6 October 2015. TAAs have since worked to resolve these incidents. Of the 11 under investigation incidents, 6 were substantiated and 5 were unsubstantiated.

TABLE 1: Summary of Reported Incidents (as at 26 September 2016)

Incident category	Substantiated	Unsubstantiated	Under investigation	Total	Average totals 2010-15
Cheating breach (C)	2	-	6	8	19
Security breach (S)	16	-	1	17	19
General breach (G)	29	14	2	45	38
Total	47	14	9	70	76
Total schools affected	46	14	9	69	73

TABLE 2: Incidents investigated and substantiated (as at 26 September 2016)

Ref. #	State/ Territory	Incident Category (C, S, G)	2016 National Protocol clause/s breached	Description of incident	Action taken and outcome
1.	NSW	S	2.4.1 4.3.5	Test materials opened earlier than allowed. Relevant to one school.	School undertook to improve procedures for future years. No evidence of any effect on the data.
2.	NSW	S	2.4.1 4.3.5	Test materials opened earlier than allowed. Relevant to one school.	School undertook to improve procedures for future years. No evidence of any effect on the data.
3.	NSW	S	8.9.1	Test materials not kept secure during the test security period. Relevant to three schools.	Schools undertook to improve administration procedures for future years. No evidence of any effect on the data.
4.	NSW	S	4.3.9 8.6.7	Test material made public during the test security period. Relevant to one student in one school.	Secure content promptly removed. School was briefed and undertook to improve test administration procedures for future testing.
5.	NSW	G	8.4.6	Some tests administered outside of sanctioned timetable. Relevant to two schools.	School undertook to improve procedures for future years. No evidence of any effect on the data.
6.	NSW	G	6.5	Protocols for use of a scribe as a disability adjustment for the writing test not followed. Relevant to numerous students in a number of schools.	Response sent to relevant schools outlining breach and scribe protocols. Data withheld where NAPLAN protocols not followed.
7.	Vic.	G	8.8.1	Incorrect time provided to complete the test. Relevant to one year level in one school.	School was counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. No evidence results were compromised.

Ref. #	State/ Territory	Incident Category (C, S, G)	2016 National Protocol clause/s breached	Description of incident	Action taken and outcome
8.	Vic.	G	8.7.1	Incomplete preparatory instructions given for test. Relevant to one class in one school.	School was counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. No evidence results were compromised.
9.	Vic.	G	8.8.1	Incorrect time provided to complete the test. Relevant to one class in one school.	School was counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. No evidence results were compromised.
10.	Vic.	S	4.3.11	Unauthorised photograph taken during test session made public. No test material was visible in photograph. Relevant to two classes in one school.	School counselled on the need to ensure confidentiality of all test material up to the end of the secure period. Content promptly removed.
11.	Vic.	S	2.4.1	Test materials not kept secure during test security period. Relevant to one school.	The principal counselled the teacher on appropriate administrative protocols. School counselled on the need to ensure confidentiality of all test material up to the end of the secure period.
12.	Vic.	G	2.2.3 8.7.1	Test administration procedures not fully followed. Relevant to one class in one school.	School was counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. No evidence results were compromised.
13.	Vic.	G	8.6.11	Test administration procedures not followed. Test administrator read items not permitted to be read aloud. Relevant to one student in one school.	School undertook to improve procedures for future years. No evidence results were compromised.

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14.	Vic.	G	8.8.1	Incorrect time provided to complete the test. Relevant to one class in one school.	School undertook to improve procedures for future years. No evidence results were compromised.
15.	Qld	S	2.4.1 4.3.5	Test materials opened earlier than allowed. Relevant to one school.	School counselled to improve processes. No evidence of any effect on the data.
16.	Qld	S	2.4.1 4.3.5	Test materials opened earlier than allowed. Relevant to one school.	School counselled to improve processes. No evidence of any effect on the data.
17.	Qld	S	4.3.5	Test materials opened earlier than allowed. Relevant to one school.	School counselled to improve processes. No evidence of any effect on the data.
18.	Qld	G	6	Protocols for use of adjustment for students with disability test not followed. Relevant to 14 students in one school.	Investigation by an external person involving interviews and review of documentation. Comprehensive report received. School counselled to improve processes. No evidence of any effect on the data.
19.	Qld	G	8.4.1 8.4.3	Tests administered in incorrect order. Relevant to one school.	School undertook to improve procedures for future testing. Data not compromised.
20.	SA	S	8.9.1	Test materials not kept secure during the test security period. Relevant to one student in one school.	School undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.

Ref. #	State/ Territory	Incident Category (C, S, G)	2016 National Protocol clause/s breached	Description of incident	Action taken and outcome
21.	SA	G	8.7.1	Test instructions not followed. Relevant to one class in one school.	School undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
22.	SA	G	8.4.1 8.4.3	Tests administered in incorrect order. Relevant to one class in one school.	School undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
23.	SA	G	8.4.1 8.4.3	Tests administered in incorrect order. Relevant to one class in one school.	School undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
24.	SA	S	8.6.1	Test materials not kept secure during the test security period Relevant to five students in one school.	School undertook to improve processes for future years. TAA advised students were not to complete catch up test.
25.	SA	G	6.5.1	Protocols for use of a scribe as a disability adjustment for the writing test not followed. Relevant to one student in one school.	School undertook to improve processes for future years. Data not compromised.
26.	SA	G	8.4.4	Test administration procedures not followed. Relevant to one class in one school.	School undertook to improve processes for future years. Data not compromised.
27.	WA	G	8.4.1 8.4.3	Test administration procedures not followed. Tests administered in incorrect order. Relevant to one class in one school.	School undertook to improve processes for future years. Data not compromised.

Ref. #	State/ Territory	Incident Category (C, S, G)	2016 National Protocol clause/s breached	Description of incident	Action taken and outcome
28.	WA	G	8.5.2	Inappropriate assistance available to student during test. Relevant to one student in one school.	School undertook to improve processes for future years. Staff member counselled regarding the matter and reminded of the protocols. Data not compromised.
29.	WA	G	8.9.3	Test responses copied by test administrator. Relevant to one class in one school.	School undertook to improve processes for future years. Staff member counselled regarding the matter and reminded of the protocols. Data not compromised.
30.	WA	G	8.6.7 8.6.8	Unauthorised materials in test environment. Relevant to one student in one school.	School undertook to improve processes for future years. Staff member counselled regarding the matter and reminded of the protocols. Data not compromised.
31.	WA	G	8.6.11	Test administration procedures not followed. Test administrator read items not permitted to be read aloud. Relevant to one student in one school.	School undertook to improve processes for future years. Reminded staff of responsibilities. Data not compromised.
32.	WA	G	8.4.1 8.4.3	Test distributed in incorrect order. Relevant to one class in one school.	School undertook investigation and undertook to improve processes for future years. Reminded staff of responsibilities. Data not compromised.
33.	WA	G	6.2.3 8.6.11	Test administration procedures not followed. Test administrators read items not permitted to be read aloud. Relevant to three students in one school.	School undertook investigation and undertook to improve processes for future years. Reminded staff of responsibilities. Data not compromised.

Ref. #	State/ Territory	Incident Category (C, S, G)	2016 National Protocol clause/s breached	Description of incident	Action taken and outcome
34.	WA	G	8.6.11 8.8.1	Incorrect time provided to complete the test. Relevant to one class in one school.	School undertook to improve procedures for future years. No evidence results were compromised.
35.	WA	C	8.6.1	Inappropriate assistance provided to students. Relevant to four students in one school.	School undertook to improve procedures for future years. Staff member counselled and reminded of the importance of following test protocols. No evidence results were compromised.
36.	WA	S	2.4.2 8.6.1 8.6.3	Test procedures not followed correctly. Relevant to one year group in one school.	School undertook to improve procedures for future years. Staff member counselled and reminded of the importance of following test protocols. No evidence results were compromised.
37.	WA	S	2.4.1 2.4.4 4.3.1 4.3.2 4.3.9 4.3.13	Test papers not secured and provided to members of public during test security period. Relevant to one school.	System authority advised school administration of security breach. Review of internal processes required for NAPLAN 2017. Data not compromised.
38.	WA	G	8.4.1 8.4.3	Tests administered in incorrect order. Relevant to one class in one school.	Local Improvement Action process undertaken and completed. Staff member counselled re the matter and reminded of the protocols. Data not compromised.
39.	WA	G	6.5 (6.5.2, 6.5.3, 6.5.4, 6.5.6)	Protocols for use of a scribe as a disability adjustment for the writing test not followed. Relevant to one student in one school.	School undertook to improve procedures for future years. No evidence of any effect on the data.

Ref. #	State/ Territory	Incident Category (C, S, G)	2016 National Protocol clause/s breached	Description of incident	Action taken and outcome
40.	Tas.	S	2.4.1	Test materials not kept secure during the test period. Relevant to one class in one school.	School undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
41.	Tas.	C	2.4.2 8.6.1	Inappropriate assistance provided to students during test session. Relevant to one class in one school.	Importance of adherence to protocols emphasised to responsible party. School was counselled and undertook to improve test administration procedures for future years. No evidence of any effect on the data.
42.	Tas.	G	2.2.5 6.6.4	Inappropriate assistance provided to students during test session. Relevant to one class in one school.	School undertook to improve procedures for future years. No evidence of any effect on the data.
43.	NT	G	8.4.1	Tests administered in incorrect order. Relevant to four classes in one school.	School undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
44.	NT	G	2.2.8	Test materials were supplied to students with missing pages. Relevant to three students in one school.	School undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
45.	ACT	S	8.4.1	Tests administered in incorrect order. Relevant to one class in one school.	School undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
46.	ACT	S	2.4.1	Test materials opened earlier than allowed. Relevant to one school.	School undertook to improve procedures for future years. No evidence of any effect on the data.

Ref. #	State/ Territory	Incident Category (C, S, G)	2016 National Protocol clause/s breached	Description of incident	Action taken and outcome
47.	ACT	G	2.1.2	Report of undue influence to withdraw student from testing. Relevant to one student.	Incident investigated. No strong evidence of undue influence. School reminded of protocol for student participation.