

REPORT OF 2019 NAPLAN TEST INCIDENTS

INTRODUCTION

The National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) tests are held during May each year. In 2019, the tests were held between 12 and 22 May. In total, approximately 5.7 million tests were sat by over 1.15 million students.

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 achievements. The *National Protocols for Test Administration - NAPLAN 2019* and the *National Protocols for Test Administration - NAPLAN 2019 Online* (collectively known as the 'National Protocols for Test Administration' or 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 1.15 million students at approximately 9,500 school campuses across the country participating in NAPLAN in 2019, there were very few allegations of breaches of the Protocols. Where an allegation is made that the Protocols have been breached, the relevant responsible entity¹ investigates and takes appropriate action. 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.

As 2019 is the second year of dual mode NAPLAN assessment, the report breaks down incidents by paper and online and total across both modes. While online and paper incidents are reported separately, the Report does not provide commentary on the relative frequencies of online versus paper incidents as the numbers are too small for meaningful analysis.

¹ 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 that 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.

Technical issues associated with NAPLAN online are **not** considered test incidents for the purposes of this report, unless they result in a breach of the national protocols.

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 a 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 maladministrative practices that are not in accordance with the agreed protocols, but that do not amount to cheating or affect test security.

Note: In 2019 some students were disrupted by connectivity issues. In specific instances where schools attempted to respond to technical disruptions and acted outside the agreed protocols, and/or were unable to, or not required to, contact their Test Administration Authority for advice, these instances have not been logged as formal test incidents. Such incidents exclude any that may be considered cheating or a breach of security.

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

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

Test incidents are aggregated within jurisdictions where incidents are of a similar nature and where the outcomes were the same.

ANALYSIS OF 2019 NAPLAN TEST INCIDENTS

The Report of 2019 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 small number of incidents across the entire country, and through the increasing number of schools reporting their own inadvertent breaches.

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

The below summary reports on the number of total incidents in 2019:

- Of the approximately 5.7 million NAPLAN tests sat by students nationally, 216 test incidents were substantiated, affecting 204 schools across the nation.
- Of the 216 total test incidents², only one cheating breach on the part of a school was substantiated at the time of reporting.
- Test incidents were aggregated where test incidents were of a similar nature and where the outcomes were the same, within jurisdictions.
- There was a total of 88 aggregated incidents, consistent with the number of aggregated incidents in 2018 (90).
- Where incidents are substantiated (refer to Table 2), TAAs consider whether affected students' results are valid. This year's incidents demonstrate that in most 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 total substantiated incidents (167) were general breaches that relate to maladministration. This includes instances of test procedures not being followed correctly. Schools and TAAs are increasingly identifying and reporting these types of breaches.
- Of the total substantiated incidents, there were 48 substantiated security breaches that included instances of opening test materials earlier than allowed or 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 of 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 2019, there were four test incidents under investigation as at 22 October 2019, the time of reporting. ACARA continues to follow up with relevant authorities until all cases are resolved.

² Previous test incident reports have not reported the total of disaggregated incidents, so caution should be taken when making comparisons with previous test incident figures.

Table 1: Summary of reported incidents - all allegations of cheating breaches, security breaches and general breaches of test protocols, 2019

Incident category	Substantiated		Unsubstantiated		Under investigation		Total
	P	O	P	O	P	O	
Cheating breach (C)	0	1	2	4	2	0	9
Security breach (S)	21	27	0	2	1	0	51
General breach (G)	61	106	1	3	0	1	172
Total incidents	216		12		4		232
Total aggregated incidents*	88		10		4		102
Total schools affected	204		12		4		220

* Test incidents are aggregated where incidents are of a similar nature and where the outcomes were the same. See Table 2 for details of substantiated incidents and aggregations.

The format of this table has been amended, so caution should be taken when making comparisons with previous reports' test incident figures.

- Table 1 now reports *Total incidents* (disaggregated) as well as *Total aggregated incidents* and *Total schools affected*.
- The column *Average totals 2010-2018* has been removed.

TABLE 2: Incidents investigated and substantiated

	State/ territory	Incident category (C, S, G)	Paper or online (O, P)	2019 National protocol clause(s) breached	Description of incident	Action taken and outcome
1	NSW	S	P	4.3.11	Secure test content made public by the school during the test security period. Relevant to 15 schools.	Schools counselled on the need to ensure confidentiality of all test material up to the end of the secure period. Data not compromised.
2	NSW	S	O	4.3.10	Secure test content made public by the school during the test security period. Relevant to five schools.	Schools counselled on the need to ensure confidentiality of all test material up to the end of the secure period. Data not compromised.
3	NSW	G	O	8.4.2	Tests administered in incorrect order. Relevant to 18 schools.	Schools counselled regarding importance of administering the tests in the correct order. Data not compromised.
4	NSW	G	P	6.5.6	Scribe rules not followed. Relevant to nine students at eight schools.	Schools counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data compromised and withheld.
5	NSW	G	O	6.5.6	Scribe rules not followed. Relevant to seven students at five schools.	Schools counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data compromised and withheld.
6	NSW	G	P	6.5.4	Permission not sought for the use of a scribe. Relevant to 19 students at 13 schools.	Schools counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data compromised and withheld.
7	NSW	G	O	6.5.4	Permission not sought for the use of a scribe. Relevant to seven students at six schools.	Schools counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data compromised and withheld.

	State/ territory	Incident category (C, S, G)	Paper or online (O, P)	2019 National protocol clause(s) breached	Description of incident	Action taken and outcome
8	NSW	G	P	6.5.4	Permission not sought for the use of a scribe. Relevant to three students at three schools.	Schools counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
9	NSW	G	O	6.5.4	Permission not sought for the use of a scribe. Relevant to two students at two schools.	Schools counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
10	NSW	G	P	6.10.2	Scribe provided for a temporary injury. Relevant to five students at five schools.	Schools counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years Data compromised and withheld.
11	NSW	G	O	6.9.2	Scribe provided for a temporary injury. Relevant to six students at five schools.	Schools counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years Data compromised and withheld.
12	NSW	G	P	6.4.1	Adjustment provided without TAA approval. Relevant to one student at one school.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data compromised and withheld.
13	NSW	G	P	6.4.1	Adjustment provided without TAA approval Relevant to four students at three schools.	Schools counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
14	NSW	G	P	6.4.1	School did not provide a TAA approved disability adjustment. Relevant to one student at one school.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.

	State/ territory	Incident category (C, S, G)	Paper or online (O, P)	2019 National protocol clause(s) breached	Description of incident	Action taken and outcome
15	NSW	G	P	8.6.11	Inappropriate assistance provided to students during the test. Relevant to one student in one school.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data compromised and withheld.
16	NSW	G	O	8.6.10	Inappropriate assistance provided to students during the test. Relevant to one student in one school.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data compromised and withheld.
17	NSW	C	O	8.6.1	Inappropriate assistance available to students during the test. Relevant to three students at one school.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data compromised and withheld.
18	NSW	G	O	8.5.1 8.5.2	Inappropriate assistance accessible on students' devices. Relevant to 70 students at five schools.	Schools counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data compromised and withheld.
19	NSW	G	O	8.6.7 8.6.8	Unauthorised materials in test environment. Relevant to three schools.	Schools counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Unauthorised material not accessed. Data not compromised.
20	NSW	G	O	8.6.7 8.6.8	Unauthorised materials in test environment. Relevant to two students at one school.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Unauthorised material used under additional supervision. Data not compromised.
21	NSW	G	O	8.4.2 8.4.9 8.4.10	Test administered on incorrect day. Relevant to two schools.	Schools counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.

	State/ territory	Incident category (C, S, G)	Paper or online (O, P)	2019 National protocol clause(s) breached	Description of incident	Action taken and outcome
22	NSW	S	P	10.4	Test procedures not followed correctly. Incorrect test materials provided to students. Relevant to one year group at one school.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
23	NSW	S	O	2.6.2	Test procedures not followed correctly. Relevant to one year group at one school.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data compromised and withheld.
24	NSW	G	P	5.2.3	Process for student exemptions not followed. Relevant to 10 students at one school.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
25	Vic.	S	P	2.4.1	Test materials opened earlier than allowed. Relevant to two year levels at two schools.	Schools counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
26	Vic.	G	P	2.1.2	Process for student exemptions not followed. Relevant to one student in one school.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
27	Vic.	S	P	2.4.2	Test materials not kept secure during test security period. Relevant to one year level at one school.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
28	Vic.	G	P	2.2.7	Unauthorised materials in test environment Relevant to five students in three schools.	Schools counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
29	Vic.	G	O	2.2.7	Inappropriate assistance accessible on student's device. Relevant to four students in one school.	Relevant body has been notified of the issue to be resolved for 2020. Data not compromised.

	State/ territory	Incident category (C, S, G)	Paper or online (O, P)	2019 National protocol clause(s) breached	Description of incident	Action taken and outcome
30	Vic.	G	P	2.2.3	Tests not properly administered according to test protocols. Relevant to one class in one school.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
31	Vic.	G	P	2.2.4	Tests not properly administered according to test protocols. Relevant to one class in one school.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
32	Vic.	S	P	2.4.4	Test materials not kept secure during test security period. Relevant to one class at one school.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
33	Vic.	G	O	8.4.1	Tests administered in incorrect order. Relevant to two year levels in one school.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
34	Vic.	S	O	2.4	Secure test content made public by the school during the test security period. Relevant to one school.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
35	Vic.	S	P	2.4.6	Test materials not kept secure during test security period. Relevant to one class at one school.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
36	SA	S	P	8.4.1 8.4.2	Tests administered in incorrect order. Relevant to five students in one school.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
37	SA	G	O	8.6.3 8.6.10	Inappropriate assistance provided to students during the test. Relevant to one student in one school.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
38	SA	G	O	6.5.4	Protocols for use of a scribe not followed for writing test. Relevant to one student in one school.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.

	State/ territory	Incident category (C, S, G)	Paper or online (O, P)	2019 National protocol clause(s) breached	Description of incident	Action taken and outcome
39	SA	G	O	8.6.8	Unauthorised materials in test environment. Relevant to three students in two schools.	Schools counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
40	SA	G	O	5.5.4	Process for sanctioned abandonment not followed. Relevant to one student in one school.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
41	SA	G	O	5.1.3	Tests not administered for relevant year level (due to disability). Relevant to two students in one school.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data compromised and withheld.
42	SA	G	O	5.5.2	Adjustment provided without TAA approval. Relevant to multiple students in 13 schools.	Schools counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
43	SA	G	P	5.5.2	Adjustment provided without TAA approval. Relevant to multiple students in nine schools.	Schools counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
44	SA	S	O	8.9.3	Test materials not kept secure. Relevant to multiple students in one school.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
45	SA	G	O	2.1.2	Process for student withdrawals not followed. Relevant to multiple students in one school.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
46	SA	G	P	8.6.3	Inappropriate assistance provided to student during the test. Relevant to one student in one school.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
47	SA	S	P	8.9.1	Post-test procedures not followed correctly. Relevant to one student in one school.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.

	State/ territory	Incident category (C, S, G)	Paper or online (O, P)	2019 National protocol clause(s) breached	Description of incident	Action taken and outcome
48	SA	G	O	8.7.1	Test administration procedures not followed correctly. Relevant to two year levels in one school.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
49	SA	G	O	2.2.7	Inappropriate assistance accessible on students' devices. Relevant to one student in one school.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
50	SA	G	P	8.4.6	Test administration procedures not followed correctly. Relevant to five students in one school.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
51	WA	G	O	8.6.8	Unauthorised materials in test environment. Relevant to two students in two schools.	Schools counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. No evidence data was compromised.
52	WA	G	O	8.6.8	Unauthorised materials in test environment. Relevant to one student in one school.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data compromised and adjusted.
53	WA	G	O	6.9.2	Scribe provided for a temporary injury. Relevant to one student in one school.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. No evidence data was compromised.
54	WA	S	O	4.3.10	Test material made public during test security period. Relevant to two schools.	Schools counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
55	WA	G	P	8.6.8	Unauthorised materials in test environment. Relevant to one student in one school.	Removed before use. No evidence data was compromised.

	State/ territory	Incident category (C, S, G)	Paper or online (O, P)	2019 National protocol clause(s) breached	Description of incident	Action taken and outcome
56	WA	G	O	8.6.10	Inappropriate assistance provided to students during test. Relevant to six students in one school.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. No evidence data was compromised.
57	Tas.	G	O	8.4.1	Online tests administered in incorrect order. Relevant to one student in one school.	School counselled and undertook to improve training and processes. No evidence that data were compromised.
58	Tas.	G	P	6.5.6	Scribe rules not followed. Relevant to three students in one school.	School counselled and undertook to improve training and processes. Data compromised and withheld.
59	Tas.	G	O	2.6.2	Test administration procedures not followed. Relevant to 15 students in one school.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
60	Tas.	G	P	8.8.1	Test administration procedures not followed correctly. Relevant to 30 students in one school.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
61	Tas.	G	O	8.6.10	Inappropriate assistance provided to students during tests. Relevant to one student in one school.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data compromised and withheld.
62	Tas.	G	O	8.4.1	Online tests administered in incorrect order. Relevant to 30 students in one school.	School counselled and undertook to improve training and processes. Data not compromised.
63	Tas.	G	P	8.4	Students completed tests in incorrect order. Relevant to two students in one school.	School counselled and undertook to improve training and processes. Data not compromised.
64	Tas.	G	P	8.4	Students accessed test materials ahead of scheduled test event. Relevant to 13 students in two schools.	Schools counselled and undertook to improve training and processes. Data not compromised.

	State/ territory	Incident category (C, S, G)	Paper or online (O, P)	2019 National protocol clause(s) breached	Description of incident	Action taken and outcome
65	Tas.	G	P	8.1.3	Central helpdesk provided inaccurate information. Relevant to two students in one school.	Internal processes reviewed. Data not compromised.
66	Tas.	S	P	2.4.6	Test materials not kept secure during test security period. Relevant to 30 students in one school.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data compromised and withheld.
67	NT	S	O	2.4.1	Test materials potentially accessed earlier than allowed. Relevant to one school.	School counselled and undertook to improve security procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
68	NT	S	O	3.3.1	Test administration procedure not followed. Relevant to one school	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
69	NT	S	O	8.4.1	Tests administered in incorrect order. Relevant to one class in one school.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
70	NT	G	O	8.6.7	Unauthorised material in test environment. Relevant to one student in one school.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
71	NT	S	P	8.4.1	Test materials distributed in incorrect order. Relevant to two classes in one school.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
72	NT	G	O	8.4.1	Test materials distributed in incorrect order. Relevant to three students in one school.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
73	NT	S	P	2.4.2	Test materials not kept secure during test security period. Relevant to one school.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.

	State/ territory	Incident category (C, S, G)	Paper or online (O, P)	2019 National protocol clause(s) breached	Description of incident	Action taken and outcome
74	ACT	S	O	8.6.8	Unauthorised materials in the test environment. Relevant to one student in one school.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
75	ACT	S	O	4.3.10	Test material made public during test security period. Relevant to one class in one school.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
76	ACT	G	O	2.6.2	Test administration procedures not followed. Relevant to three students in one school.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
77	QLD	S	P	4.3.9	Test material made available ahead of scheduled test event. Relevant to one class in one school.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
78	QLD	S	P	4.3.5	Test materials opened earlier than allowed Relevant to one school.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
79	QLD	S	P	8.9.1	Post-test procedures not followed correctly. Relevant to one student in one school.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
80	QLD	G	P	6	Protocols for use of adjustment not followed. Relevant to one student in one school.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
81	QLD	G	P	6.5.4	Protocols for use of a scribe not followed. Relevant to one student in one school.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data compromised and withheld.
82	QLD	G	P	6.5.4	Protocols for use of a scribe not followed. Relevant to two students in one school.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data compromised and withheld.

	State/ territory	Incident category (C, S, G)	Paper or online (O, P)	2019 National protocol clause(s) breached	Description of incident	Action taken and outcome
83	QLD	G	O	6.10.2	Protocols for extra time adjustment not followed. Relevant to one student on one school.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. No evidence that data were compromised.
84	QLD	G	O	8.4.2	Tests administered in incorrect order. Relevant to 93 students at six schools.	Schools counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
85	QLD	S	P	2.4 4.3.7	Test materials opened earlier than allowed. Tamper bags Relevant to one school.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
86	QLD	S	O	4.3.10	Secure test content made public by the school during the test security period. Relevant to two classes in two schools.	Schools counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
87	QLD	S	P	4.3.10	Secure test content made public by the school during the test security period. Relevant to one class in one school.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
88	QLD	G	P	8.6.3	Inappropriate assistance provided to students during the test. Relevant to one class in one school.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.