

REPORT OF 2022 NAPLAN TEST INCIDENTS

INTRODUCTION

The National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) tests are held during May each year. In 2022, the tests were held between 10 and 20 May. In total, approximately 4.7 million tests were sat by over 1.2 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 *NAPLAN national protocols for test administration - online* and the *NAPLAN national protocols for test administration - alternative format (paper)* (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 1.2 million students at approximately 9300 schools across the country participating in NAPLAN in 2022, 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.

In 2022, all schools transitioned to the online NAPLAN test. Only schools using an approved alternative curriculum continued to complete all NAPLAN tests on paper. In total 45 schools completed NAPLAN on paper. The report breaks down incidents into those that occurred during paper testing and those that occurred during online testing, as well as indicating the total number of incidents. While online and paper incidents are reported separately, the

¹ For the purpose of investigating breaches of the *NAPLAN 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.

report does not provide commentary on the relative frequencies of online versus paper incidents as the numbers are too small for meaningful analysis.

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 protocols.

NAPLAN test incidents are defined as follows:

- Cheating (C)** A breach of the protocols 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 protocols 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 protocols 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.

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 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 2022 NAPLAN TEST INCIDENTS

The report of 2022 NAPLAN test incidents reinforce 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 2022:

- Of the approximately 4.7 million NAPLAN tests sat by students nationally, 230 test incidents were substantiated, affecting 228 schools across the nation.

- Of the 230 total substantiated test incidents², there was only one substantiated cheating breach on the part of a school at the time of reporting.
- There was a total of 48 aggregated substantiated incidents, this is less than the number of aggregated substantiated incidents in 2021 (65) and 2019 (88).
- 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 an unauthorised device or assistance, there was no evidence that led to their results being compromised.
- The majority of total substantiated incidents (197) were general breaches that related to maladministration. This includes instances of test procedures not being followed correctly, and tests being delivered in the incorrect order. Schools and TAAs are increasingly identifying and reporting these types of breaches.
- Of the total substantiated incidents, there were 32 substantiated security breaches that included instances of test materials not being kept secure during the test security period, and photos being taken during testing that were posted on social media.
- 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.
- As of 29 September 2022, there were 2 test incidents under investigation. ACARA continues to follow up with relevant authorities until all cases are resolved.

² Test incident reports prior to 2019 did not report 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, 2022

Incident category	Substantiated		Unsubstantiated		Under investigation		Total
	P	O	P	O	P	O	
Paper (P) or Online (O)							
Cheating breach (C)	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Security breach (S)	1	31	0	0	1	0	33
General breach (G)	0	197	0	4	0	1	202
Total incidents	230		4		2		236
Total aggregated incidents*	48		2		2		52
Total schools affected	228		4		2		234

* Test incidents (within jurisdictions) were aggregated where incidents are of a similar nature and where the outcomes were the same. Total aggregated incidents show the total of each type of incident, where one or more schools was impacted within a jurisdiction. See Table 2 for details of substantiated incidents and aggregations.

The format of this table was revised in 2019 through consultation with the National Testing Working Group (NTWG), so caution should be taken when making comparisons with previous reports' test incident figures.

- Table 1 reports *Total incidents* (disaggregated) as well as *Total aggregated incidents* and *Total schools affected*.
- Table 2 continues to report incidents investigated and substantiated in more detail.

TABLE 2: Incidents investigated and substantiated

	State/ territory	Incident category (C, S, G)	Paper or online (O, P)	2022 National protocol clause(s) breached	Description of incident	Action taken and outcome
1	ACT	C	O	8.9.11	Inappropriate assistance provided to students 1 class, 1 student	Training to be improved / Communication reinforced Data removed.
2	ACT	G	O	8.9.4	Students passing notes. 1 class, 2 students	Training to be improved / Communication reinforced No evidence data was compromised.
3	NSW	S	O	4.3.2	Insufficient security measures for platform access. 1 school.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
4*	NSW	S	O	4.3.10	Photo taken of test environment and made public during test security period. 3 schools.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
5*	NSW	G	O	8.5.1	Test sat outside of sanctioned timetable. 11 schools, multiple year levels	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
6*	NSW	G	O	8.5.2	Tests provided/distributed to student in incorrect sequence. 4 schools, multiple year levels	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
7*	NSW	G	O	8.6.5	Catch-up test administered outside the test week. 2 schools, 5 students.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
8*	NSW	G	O	5.0.1	Tests provided/distributed to student in incorrect year level. 2 schools, 2 students.	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)	2022 National protocol clause(s) breached	Description of incident	Action taken and outcome
9	NSW	G	O	8.9.3	Test administration procedures not followed correctly: Test administrator signed on as an absent student. 1 school, 1 student	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data compromised and withheld.
10*	NSW	G	O	8.9.7	Test administration procedures not followed correctly: Insufficient supervision 4 schools, 4 students.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
11*	NSW	G	O	8.9.9	Test administration procedures not followed correctly: Unauthorised access to device. 2 schools, 2 classes.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. No evidence that data was compromised
12	NSW	G	O	8.11.1	Test administration procedures not followed correctly: Insufficient time provided to complete test. 1 school, 1 student	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
13*	NSW	G	O	8.12.3	Completed test booklets copied for retention at the school. 2 schools, 2 year levels.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
14*	NSW	G	O	6.8.9	Scribe rules not followed. 8 schools, 9 students.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data compromised and withheld.
15*	NSW	G	O	6.8.9 6.8.8	Permission not sought for the use of a scribe and scribe rules not followed. 5 schools, 5 students.	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)	2022 National protocol clause(s) breached	Description of incident	Action taken and outcome
16*	NSW	G	O	6.8.8	Permission not sought for the use of a scribe. 13 schools, 16 students.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
17	NSW	G	O	6.15.2	Scribe provided for a temporary injury. 1 school, 1 student	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data compromised and withheld.
18*	NSW	G	O	6.15.4	Adjustment provided without TAA approval. 2 schools, 2 students	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
19	NT	S	O	4.3.10	Photo taken of test environment and made public during test security period. 1 school	Improved training for NAPLAN 2023. No evidence that data were compromised.
20	NT	G	O	8.6.1	Students assigned and began/completed tests in incorrect year levels. 1 school, 15 students	Students given the opportunity to test at the correct year level as advised by TAA after consultation with ACARA. Raised the issue; provided advice to school about why students must sit the test at their year level. No evidence that data were compromised.
21	NT	G	O	5.3.1 2.1.3	Influence exerted on parents/carers to withdraw their child from testing. 1 school	School provided with advice about different participation statuses and protocols. Improved training for NAPLAN 2023. No evidence that data were compromised.
22*	NT	G	O	8.6.1	Students completed tests in the wrong order. 6 schools	Support changes to test order for 2023. No evidence that data were compromised.

	State/ territory	Incident category (C, S, G)	Paper or online (O, P)	2022 National protocol clause(s) breached	Description of incident	Action taken and outcome
23*	QLD	S	O	4.3.3 4.3.4	Lost grid cards 22 schools	Training - School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised
24	QLD	S	P	4.3.3 4.3.4	Test materials opened and sorted earlier than allowed. 1 school, 1 year level.	Training - School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised
25*	QLD	G	O	8.5.2	Students sat tests out of order. 30 schools, 4 year levels.	Training - School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised
26*	QLD	G	O	8.5.2	Writing test not scheduled on correct day. 2 schools, 3 year levels.	Training - School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised
27	QLD	G	O	8.9.1	Inappropriate instructions provided to student during test. 1 school, 1 student	Training - School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised
28*	QLD	G	O	8.8.1 8.8.2	Student logged in to test with wrong student's slip. 15 schools, 16 students.	Training - School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised
29*	QLD	G	O	8.9.7 8.9.8 8.9.9	Student unauthorised use of device in test room. 8 schools, 9 students.	Training - School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised
30	QLD	G	O	4.3.10	Photo taken of test environment and made public during test security period. 1 school	Training - 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)	2022 National protocol clause(s) breached	Description of incident	Action taken and outcome
31	SA	G	O	4.3.9	Education support officer facilitated classroom activity with exempt/withdrawn students using the test materials 1 school, 5 students.	School to ensure security of test materials maintained and access only provided to authorised staff / students. Data not compromised.
32*	SA	G	O	5.5.2	Unapproved use of sanctioned abandonment. During NAPLAN testing and security period, there was significant experience of COVID and flu amongst students and staff. 40 schools, 68 students.	No action taken. Data not compromised.
33*	SA	G	O	8.5.2	Schools completed tests in wrong order. 11 schools, 152 students.	No action taken Data not compromised
34	SA	G	O	8.5.1	Test begun outside of sanctioned timetable. Test administrator conducted year 3 writing test on Monday, 9 May 2022. Students had access to the reading prompt for 3 minutes. NAPCo collected test booklets and securely stored materials. 1 school, 7 students.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
35	SA	G	O	8.9.8	TA collected blank piece of paper following test and found a cheat sheet under student's laptop. 1 school, 1 student.	No action taken. Data not compromised.
36	SA	G	O	8.9.9	Student caught with phone during test. 1 school, 1 student.	No action taken. Data not compromised.
37	SA	G	O	8.9.9	Predictive text not turned off for student. School ceased testing and worked with IT to identify the issue. 1 school, 1 student.	Identified issue will be added to Device Issues document in future. Data not compromised.

	State/ territory	Incident category (C, S, G)	Paper or online (O, P)	2022 National protocol clause(s) breached	Description of incident	Action taken and outcome
38	TAS	S	O	4.3.10	Photo taken of test environment and made public during test security period. 1 school, fewer than 7 students	School was contacted, reminded of relevant protocol and removed image. No data affected.
39	TAS	S	O	4.2.3	Test materials mislaid by Contractor in transit. 1 school, 1 cohort	Investigation conducted with contractor. Processes implemented to prevent recurrence. No evidence of test security breach, no data affected.
40*	TAS	G	O	5.5.2	Status of Sanctioned Abandoned entered into Platform without verification from TAA 5 schools, 8 students	Schools to be contacted and advised of need to adhere to protocol. Data not compromised.
41*	VIC	S	O	4.3.10	Photo taken of test environment and made public during test security period. 2 schools, 2 year levels, 2 classes	School counselled on the need to ensure confidentiality of all test material up to the end of the secure period. Data not compromised.
42	VIC	G	O	2.2.4	Test not administered per NAPLAN protocols with regards to timing and administrative instructions. Class did not have the full test time. 1 school, 1 class	School counselled regarding the importance of ensuring test sessions are run per NAPLAN protocols. TAA agreed to reopen tests for the class to give them the full test time if required. The school declined this offer. Data not compromised.
43*	VIC	G	O	8.5.2	Administrative error resulting in tests not administered per NAPLAN protocols sequence. 2 schools, 2 year levels, multiple classes	School counselled regarding the importance of ensuring test sessions are run per NAPLAN protocols. Data not compromised.

	State/ territory	Incident category (C, S, G)	Paper or online (O, P)	2022 National protocol clause(s) breached	Description of incident	Action taken and outcome
44	VIC	G	O	8.9.7	Test not supervised per NAPLAN protocols. Students were found to have passed a note. 1 school, 1 year level, 1 class, 2 students.	School counselled regarding the importance of active test supervision at all times during the test. TAA reviewed the tests of the students involved. No advantage was found and results were released
45*	VIC	G	O	8.9.9	Students found with unauthorised devices. No intent found to gain advantage. 3 schools, 1 year level, 4 students.	School counselled regarding the importance of not allowing unauthorised items in a test session. TAA reviewed test results of the students involved. No advantage was found and results were released.
46*	VIC	G	O	8.9.9	Students detected with an unauthorised device. Intent to gain advantage was identified. 3 schools, 3 year levels, 3 students.	School counselled regarding the importance of not allowing unauthorised items in a test session. TAA reviewed test results of the students involved. No advantage was found and results were released.
47	VIC	G	O	6.11.5	Test not administered as per NAPLAN protocols with regards to the use of a support person- the test was read to a student. 1 school, 1 student	School counselled regarding the importance of ensuring that the test sessions are run as per NAPLAN protocols. Data compromised and withheld.
48	WA	G	O	2.2.5	Test administration procedures not followed correctly: Insufficient supervision. 1 school, 1 year level, 1 class	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.

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

In addition to those detailed in Table 2, at the time of reporting there were 2 incidents still under investigation in QLD.