

# Report of 2024 NAPLAN test incidents

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# 1 Introduction

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From 2023, the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) tests are held during March each year. Prior to 2023, the tests were held in May. In 2024, the tests were held between 13 and 25 March 2024. In total, approximately 4.4 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* 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. The protocols 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 over 1.2 million students at approximately 9,400 schools across the country participating in NAPLAN in 2024, 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<sup>1</sup> 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 2024, only schools using an approved alternative curriculum continued to complete all NAPLAN tests on paper. In total 35 schools completed NAPLAN 2024 on paper.

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 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.

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<sup>1</sup> For the purpose of investigating breaches of the *NAPLAN national protocols for test administration*, the relevant “responsible entity” will be determined by 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.

## General (G)

General breaches of the protocols include all other maladministration 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 2 tables as follows:

- **Table 1** provides a summary of the total number of incidents, as well as the total number after incidents are aggregated. These relate to allegations of cheating, security breaches or general breaches of the protocols. They include all cases that are substantiated, unsubstantiated and still under investigation at the time of reporting.
- **Table 2** provides further information about the substantiated cases only, including the aggregated substantiated cases. It provides a brief description of each incident and information on what action has been taken as a consequence.

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

## 2 Analysis of 2024 NAPLAN test incidents

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The report of 2024 NAPLAN test incidents reinforces the fact that teachers and schools continue to 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 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 total number of incidents in 2024:

- Of the approximately 4.4 million NAPLAN tests sat by students nationally, 284 test incidents were substantiated, affecting 261 schools across the nation.
- Of the 284 substantiated test incidents, there was only one substantiated cheating breach on the part of a school at the time of reporting.
- There was a total of 53 substantiated incidents after aggregation; this is slightly less than in 2023 (61).
- The majority of total substantiated incidents were general breaches (220) that related to maladministration practices that are not in accordance with the agreed protocols, but that do not amount to cheating or affect test security. This includes instances of test procedures not being followed correctly, and/or tests being delivered in the incorrect sequence. Schools and TAAs are increasingly identifying and reporting these types of breaches.
- Where incidents are substantiated (refer to Table 2), TAAs consider whether this affected students' results. This year's incidents demonstrate that in most of the situations where students might have had access to an unauthorised device, there was no evidence that this led to their results being compromised.
- Of the total substantiated incidents, there were 63 substantiated security breaches that included instances of test materials not being kept secure during the test security period, and/or photos being taken during testing that were posted on social media.
- Some of the 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.

**Table 1: Summary of reported incidents – all allegations of cheating breaches, security breaches and general breaches of test protocols, 2024**

Incident category	Substantiated	Unsubstantiated	Under investigation	Total
Cheating (C)	1	1	2	4
Security breach (S)	63	0	0	63
General breach (G)	220	7	1	228
<b>Total incidents</b>	<b>284</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>295</b>
<b>Total incidents after aggregation*</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>64</b>
<b>Total schools affected</b>	<b>261</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>272</b>

\* Test incidents (within jurisdictions) were 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.

Caution should be taken when making comparisons with previous reports' test incident figures.

**Table 2: Incidents investigated and substantiated, 2024**

	State/ Territory	Incident category (C, S, G)	2024 National protocols clause(s) breached	Description of incident	Action taken and outcome
1	ACT	G	8.5.2	Tests provided/distributed to students in incorrect sequence. Relevant to 6 classes across 2 schools.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
2	NSW	G	8.8.1	Inappropriate assistance available to student/s during the test. Relevant to 3 students at one school.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. No evidence that data were compromised.
3	NSW	S	4.3.11	Photo taken of test environment and made public during test security period. Relevant to 25 schools.	Schools counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. No evidence that data were compromised.
4	NSW	G	8.9.11	Inappropriate assistance provided to students prior to and/or during test.	Schools counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years.

	State/ Territory	Incident category (C, S, G)	2024 National protocols clause(s) breached	Description of incident	Action taken and outcome
				Relevant to 3 students across 2 schools.	Data compromised and withheld.
5	NSW	G	3.3.2	Test administration procedures not followed relating to exemption. Relevant to one student.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. No evidence that data were compromised.
6	NSW	G	3.3.2	Test administration procedures not followed relating to withdrawals. Relevant to 2 students at one school.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. No evidence that data were compromised.
7	NSW	G	2.3.3	Test administration procedures not followed correctly relating to test environment. Relevant to one student.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. No evidence that data were compromised.
8	NSW	G	8.6.2	Catch-up test administered outside the test week. Relevant to 7 schools.	Schools counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. No evidence that data were compromised
9	NSW	G	6.9.9	Permission granted for a scribe, but scribe rules not followed. Relevant to 65 students across 44 schools.	Schools counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data compromised and withheld.
10	NSW	G	6.9.9	Permission granted for a scribe, but scribe rules only partially followed. Relevant to 3 students across 3 schools.	Schools counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data compromised and withheld.
11	NSW	G	6.9.8	Permission not granted for the use of a scribe and scribe rules not followed. Relevant to 3 students across 3 schools.	Schools counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data compromised and withheld.

	State/ Territory	Incident category (C, S, G)	2024 National protocols clause(s) breached	Description of incident	Action taken and outcome
12	NSW	G	6.9.8	Permission not granted for the use of a scribe, but scribe rules followed. Relevant to 2 students across 2 schools.	Schools counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data compromised and withheld.
13	NT	G	3.3.2	Test administration procedures not followed correctly relating to participating year levels. Relevant to one class at one school	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. No evidence that data were compromised.
14	NT	G	5.2.2	Process for student exemption not followed. Relevant to one student at one school.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
15	NT	S	8.5.2	Tests provided/distributed to students in incorrect sequence. Relevant to 2 schools.	Schools counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. No evidence that data were compromised.
16	NT	S	4.3.11	Test content made public by the school during test security period. Relevant to one school.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. No evidence that data were compromised.
17	NT	S	4.3.11	Test content made public by the school in school newsletter. Relevant to one school.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. No evidence that data were compromised.
18	Qld	G	8.5.2	Tests provided/distributed to students in incorrect sequence. Relevant to 37 schools.	Schools counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
19	Qld	G	3.3.2 8.2.1 8.8.1	Test administration procedures not followed correctly relating to the platform. Relevant to 9 schools.	Schools counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.

	State/ Territory	Incident category (C, S, G)	2024 National protocols clause(s) breached	Description of incident	Action taken and outcome
20	Qld	G	8.5.1 8.6.2	Test administered outside the test window. Relevant to 3 students across 3 schools.	Schools counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
21	Qld	G	4.3.11	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.
22	Qld	S	2.5.1 4.3.3	Test materials not kept secure in a school during the test security period. Relevant to one school.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
23	Qld	G	3.3.2	Test administration procedures not followed correctly relating to the platform. Relevant to one student.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
24	Qld	G	3.3.2	Inappropriate assistance provided to students prior to and/or during test. Relevant to 2 students across 2 schools.	Schools counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
25	Qld	G	6.5.1 6.6.2 6.9	Permission not granted for the use of a scribe. Relevant to 19 students across 16 schools.	Schools counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
26	Qld	G	6.5.1 6.6.2 6.11	Adjustment/s provided without appropriate approval. Relevant to 16 students across 14 schools.	Schools counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
27	SA	G	8.5.2	Tests provided/distributed to students in incorrect sequence. Relevant to 4 classes across 3 schools.	Schools counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
28	SA	G	8.9.9	Unauthorised access to device. Relevant to 2 students across 2 schools.	Schools counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years.

	State/ Territory	Incident category (C, S, G)	2024 National protocols clause(s) breached	Description of incident	Action taken and outcome
					No evidence that data were compromised.
29	SA	G	8.9.4	Inappropriate assistance available to student/s during the test. Relevant to one student at one school.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. No evidence that data were compromised.
30	SA	G	8.10.1	Inappropriate assistance provided while test administration instructions were given to students. Relevant to one class at one school.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. No evidence that data were compromised.
31	SA	S	4.3.11	Photo taken of test environment and made public during test security period. Relevant to 3 schools.	Schools counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
32	Tas	S	4.3.11	Test content made public by the school during test security period. Relevant to 3 schools.	Schools counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. No evidence that data were compromised.
33	Tas	S	8.5.4	Pre-test administration procedures not followed correctly. Relevant to one year level at one school.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
34	Tas	G	8.6.2	Test administration procedures not followed correctly relating to catch-up test. Relevant to one year level at one school.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
35	Vic	G	2.3.2	Unauthorised access to material during the test. Relevant to 2 students across 2 schools.	Schools counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
36	Vic	S	4.3.11	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.



	State/ Territory	Incident category (C, S, G)	2024 National protocols clause(s) breached	Description of incident	Action taken and outcome
37	Vic	S	4.3.11	Photo taken of test environment and made public during test security period. Relevant to 14 classes across 14 schools.	Schools counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
38	Vic	G	6.9.9	Permission granted for a scribe, but scribe rules not followed. Relevant to 2 students across 2 schools.	Schools counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data compromised and withheld.
39	Vic	S	8.5.1	Test administration procedures not followed relating to test schedule. Relevant to 2 classes across 2 schools.	Schools counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. No evidence that data were compromised.
40	Vic	G	8.5.2	Tests provided/distributed to students in incorrect sequence. Relevant to 19 schools.	Schools counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
41	Vic	G	8.5.2	Test administration procedures not followed relating to test timetable. Relevant to 2 schools.	Schools counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
42	Vic	S	8.5.4	Test materials not collected and stored securely at the end of the tests. Relevant to one class at one school.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
43	Vic	G	8.6.2	Test administration procedures not followed relating to test timetable. Relevant to 11 students at one school.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
44	Vic	S	8.6.2	Test administration procedures not followed relating to test timetable; test administered outside the test window. Relevant to 9 schools.	Schools counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data compromised and withheld.

	State/ Territory	Incident category (C, S, G)	2024 National protocols clause(s) breached	Description of incident	Action taken and outcome
45	Vic	G	8.9.9	Unauthorised access to device. Relevant to 5 students across 4 schools.	Schools counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
46	Vic	G	8.9.9	Inappropriate assistance available to student/s during the test. Relevant to one class at one school.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
47	Vic	G	2.3.1	Test materials not maintained securely by school in line with correct procedures. Relevant to one school.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Some data compromised and withheld.
48	WA	C	8.9.1	Inappropriate assistance available to student/s during the test. Relevant to 19 students at one school.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data compromised and withheld.
49	WA	G	5.1.1	Test administration procedures not followed correctly relating to participating year levels. Relevant to 8 students at one school.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
50	WA	G	4.3.11	Test content made public by the school during test security period. Relevant to one school.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
51	WA	G	8.9.10, 8.8.1	Incorrect test administration instructions given to students. Relevant to 3 students across 2 schools.	Schools counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data compromised and withheld.
52	WA	G	6.9.9	Scribe rules not followed. Relevant to 3 students at one school.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data compromised and withheld.

	State/ Territory	Incident category (C, S, G)	2024 National protocols clause(s) breached	Description of incident	Action taken and outcome
53	WA	G	8.5.2	Tests provided/distributed to students in incorrect sequence. Relevant to 2 classes across 2 schools.	Schools counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.

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At the time of reporting there were 3 incidents still under investigation in Qld.