

NAPLAN 2026

report of test incidents

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1 Introduction

The National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) tests are held during March each year. In 2026, the tests were held between 11 and 23 March 2026. In total, approximately 4.8 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 the schools in their jurisdiction.

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* (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 more than 1.2 million students at approximately 9,400 schools across the country participating in NAPLAN in 2026, 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.

All schools administer online tests, with the exception that Year 3 students continue to complete the writing test on paper and schools using an approved alternative curriculum. In total 34 schools completed NAPLAN 2026 on paper.

Technical issues and difficulties associated with the online platform are not considered test incidents for the purposes of this report, unless they result in a breach of the protocols. The recording and reporting of IT-related issues are undertaken through a separate process managed by ACARA, in consultation with TAAs and in line with the *NAPLAN Service Resilience Framework and Communications Playbook*.

NAPLAN test incidents are defined as follows:

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| 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 |

¹ 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.

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 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 the following 2 tables:

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 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 substantiated cases after aggregation. 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 2026 NAPLAN test incidents

The 2026 NAPLAN test incidents report 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 demonstrate the schools' commitment to ensuring that the information they and their students receive from the tests is as useful as possible.

The summary that follows, reports on the total number of incidents in 2026.

- Across approximately 4.8 million NAPLAN tests sat by students nationally, 435 test incidents were substantiated, affecting 355 schools across the nation.
- Of the 435 substantiated test incidents, there were no substantiated cheating breaches on the part of a school.
- The significant increase in reported incidents was largely due to the Tasmanian government schools' industrial action during NAPLAN 2026. Caution should be taken when making comparisons with test incident figures from previous test incident reports.
- Test incidents were only aggregated within jurisdictions, where incidents were of a similar nature and the outcomes were the same. After aggregating, there was a total of 68 substantiated aggregated incidents, higher than the reported total in 2025 (51).
- The majority of total substantiated incidents were general breaches (395) 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.
- Of the total substantiated incidents, there were 40 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 all reported incidents – all allegations of cheating breaches, security breaches and general breaches of test protocols, 2026

Incident category	Substantiated	Unsubstantiated	Under investigation	Total
Cheating (C)	0	0	0	0
Security breach (S)	40	0	0	40
General breach (G)	395	2	0	397
Total incidents	435	2	0	437
Total incidents after aggregation*	68	2	0	70
Total schools affected	355 ²	2	0	357

* Test incidents (within jurisdictions) were aggregated where incidents were of a similar nature and where the outcomes were the same. Total incidents after aggregation 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.

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

Table 2: Substantiated incidents only – after aggregation, 2026

	State/ Territory	Incident category (C, S, G)	2026 National protocols clause(s) breached	Description of incident	Action taken and outcome
1	ACT	G	6.11.9	Scribe rules not followed. Relevant to one student at one school.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. No evidence that data were compromised.
2	ACT	G	8.5.10	Unauthorised access to device. Relevant to one student at one school.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. No evidence that data were compromised.
3	ACT	G	1.2.2	School administered test in incorrect sequence.	School counselled and undertook to improve

² Eighty schools in incident 35 are subset of 110 schools in incident 36 and are only counted once in the total schools affected in Table 1.

	State/ Territory	Incident category (C, S, G)	2026 National protocols clause(s) breached	Description of incident	Action taken and outcome
				Relevant to 2 students at one school.	procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
4	NSW	G	1.2.2	School administered tests in the incorrect sequence. Relevant to 5 schools.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
5	NSW	G	1.2.3	Test administration procedures not followed relating to test timetable. Relevant to 2 students across 2 schools.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
6	NSW	G	2.2.2	Test administration procedures not followed correctly relating to participating year levels. Relevant to 2 students at 2 schools.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data compromised and withheld for one student.
7	NSW	G	2.3.8	Unauthorised access to material during test. Relevant to one student at one school.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
8	NSW	S	4.3.13	Photo taken of test environment and made public during test security period. Relevant to 12 schools.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
9	NSW	S	4.3.2	Test materials not collected and stored securely at the end of the tests. Relevant to one student at one school.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
10	NSW	G	6.11.8	Permission not granted for the use of scribe. Relevant to 20 students across 13 schools.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data compromised and withheld for 14 students.
11	NSW	G	6.11.9	Scribe rules not followed.	School counselled and undertook to improve

	State/ Territory	Incident category (C, S, G)	2026 National protocols clause(s) breached	Description of incident	Action taken and outcome
				Relevant to 21 students across 19 schools.	procedures for future years. Data compromised and withheld.
12	NSW	G	6.12.2	Test administration procedures not followed relating to NAPLAN support person. Relevant to one student at one school.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data compromised and withheld.
13	NSW	G	6.21.2	Student used a scribe due to a temporary injury. Relevant to 3 students across 3 schools.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data compromised and withheld for 2 students.
14	NSW	G	8.5.11	Incorrect test administration instructions given to students – unauthorised access to device. Relevant to 48 students at one school.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
15	NSW	G	8.5.8	Test administration procedures not followed relating to administering tests – appropriate behaviours. Relevant to 2 students at one school.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
16	NSW	G	6.17.1	Adjustment/s provided without appropriate approval. Relevant to 2 students across 2 schools.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data compromised and withheld for one student.
17	NSW	G	6.17.4	Adjustment/s provided with appropriate approval; however, scribe rules not followed. Relevant to one student at one school.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data compromised and withheld.
18	NT	G	2.2.5	Process for student withdrawals not followed. Relevant to one school.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years.

	State/ Territory	Incident category (C, S, G)	2026 National protocols clause(s) breached	Description of incident	Action taken and outcome
					No evidence that data were compromised.
19	NT	G	1.2.3	School administered test in incorrect sequence. Relevant to one student at one school.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
20	NT	G	5.2 8.5.3	Process for student exemption not followed and inappropriate assistance provided to student during test. Relevant to one student at one school.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data compromised and withheld.
21	NT	G	1.4.1	Test administration procedures not followed correctly relating to scheduling NAPLAN tests. Relevant to one school.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
22	NT	G	1.2.4	Test administration procedures not followed relating to catch-up test; test administered outside the test window. Relevant to one student at one school.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data compromised and withheld.
23	NT	G	5.4.1	Test administration procedures not followed relating to administering tests – appropriate behaviours. Relevant to 6 students at one school.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. No evidence that data were compromised.
24	Qld	G	1.2.3	Test administration procedures not followed relating to test timetable. Relevant to 6 schools.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
25	Qld	G	1.2.2	School administered tests in incorrect sequence. Relevant to 5 schools.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
26	Qld	G	3.3.2 6.6.1	Adjustment/s provided without appropriate approval.	School counselled and undertook to improve

	State/ Territory	Incident category (C, S, G)	2026 National protocols clause(s) breached	Description of incident	Action taken and outcome
				Relevant to 33 students across 22 schools.	procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
27	Qld	S	4.3.13	Photo taken of test environment and made public during test security period. Relevant to 13 schools.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
28	Qld	S	4.3.11	Test materials accessed earlier than allowed. Relevant to 2 schools.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
29	Qld	G	8.5.4 8.5.10	Unauthorised access to device. Relevant to 5 students across 5 schools.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
30	SA	G	2.3.9	Unauthorised access to browser. Relevant to one student at one school.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
31	SA	G	1.2.2	School administered tests in incorrect sequence. Relevant to 5 students at one school.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
32	SA	G	8.5.4	Test administration procedures not followed relating to administering tests – appropriate behaviours. Relevant to 2 students at one school.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
33	SA	G	8.5.10	Unauthorised access to device. Relevant to 2 students across 2 schools.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.

	State/ Territory	Incident category (C, S, G)	2026 National protocols clause(s) breached	Description of incident	Action taken and outcome
34	SA	G	4.3.13	Photo taken of test environment and made public during test security period. Relevant to one school.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
35	Tas	G	8.8.2	Post-test administration procedures not followed correctly relating to collection of test materials. Related to 80 schools (due to industrial action).	Materials returned following lift of industrial action. No evidence that data were compromised.
36	Tas	G	2.2.1	Test administration procedures not followed correctly relating to participation. Related to 110 schools (due to industrial action).	TAA validated participation numbers for reporting. No evidence that data were compromised.
37	Tas	G	1.2.2	School administered test in incorrect sequence. Relevant to 2 schools (due to industrial action).	Schools directed to complete where possible. No evidence that data were compromised.
38	Tas	S	2.5	Test administration procedures not followed correctly relating to test security of paper materials. Relevant to one school.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. No evidence that data were compromised.
39	Tas	G	6.11.9	Scribe rules not followed. Relevant to 12 students across 10 schools (due to industrial action causing staff changes and training gaps).	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. No evidence that data were compromised.
40	Tas	G	6.11.9	Scribe rules not followed. Relevant to 7 students across 5 schools (due to industrial action causing staff changes and training gaps).	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data compromised and withheld.
41	Tas	G	6.11.8	Permission not granted for the use of scribe. Relevant to 2 students across 2 schools (due to industrial action causing	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years.

	State/ Territory	Incident category (C, S, G)	2026 National protocols clause(s) breached	Description of incident	Action taken and outcome
				staff changes and training gaps).	No evidence that data were compromised.
42	Tas	G	6.11.9	Scribe rules not followed. Relevant to 9 students across 6 schools.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. No evidence that data were compromised.
43	Tas	G	6.11.9	Scribe rules not followed. Relevant to 5 students across 5 schools.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data compromised and withheld.
44	Tas	G	6.11.8	Permission not granted for the use of scribe. Relevant to 2 students across 2 schools.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. No evidence that data were compromised.
45	Tas	G	2.3.4	Test administration procedures not followed correctly relating to appropriate administration. Relevant to 2 students across 2 schools.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. No evidence that data were compromised.
46	Tas	G	1.4.1	Test administration procedures not followed relating to catch-up test; test administered outside the test window. Relevant to 10 students across 3 schools.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. No evidence that data were compromised.
47	Tas	G	1.2.2	School administered test in incorrect sequence. Relevant to 2 schools.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. No evidence that data were compromised.
48	Vic	S	4.3.13	Photo taken of test environment and made public during test security period. Relevant to 4 schools.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.

	State/ Territory	Incident category (C, S, G)	2026 National protocols clause(s) breached	Description of incident	Action taken and outcome
49	Vic	S	1.4.2	Test administration procedures not followed relating to test timetable; test administered outside the test window. Relevant to 5 schools.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data compromised and withheld.
50	Vic	G	2.3.6	Inappropriate assistance provided to students prior to and/or during test. Relevant to 2 schools.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. No evidence that data were compromised.
51	Vic	G	1.2.2	School administered tests in the incorrect sequence. Relevant to 13 schools	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
52	Vic	G	2.3.4	Test administration procedures not followed relating to appropriate administration. Relevant to 2 students across 2 schools.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
53	Vic	G	2.2.4	Test administration procedures not followed relating to disability adjustments. Relevant to one student at one school.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
54	Vic	G	4.11	Test materials stolen and not recovered after the test. Relevant to one year level across 2 schools.	Improved processes. Contractor counselled regarding the importance of security and integrity of test materials. Students' writing results were marked Sanctioned Abandoned.
55	Vic	G	6.11.9	Scribe rules not followed. Relevant to 3 students across 3 schools.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data compromised and withheld.

	State/ Territory	Incident category (C, S, G)	2026 National protocols clause(s) breached	Description of incident	Action taken and outcome
56	Vic	G	8.1.1	Test administration procedures not followed relating to administering tests to homeschool students. Relevant to 6 students across 2 schools.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
57	Vic	G	2.3.8	Unauthorised access to a device/material during test. Relevant to 3 students across 3 schools.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
58	Vic	G	2.3.8	Unauthorised access to a device/material during test. Relevant to 4 students across 3 schools.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data compromised and withheld.
59	Vic	G	2.3.8	Unauthorised access to a device/material during test. Relevant to 3 students across 2 schools.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. No evidence that data were compromised.
60	Vic	G	8.5	Test administration procedures not followed relating to administering tests – appropriate behaviours. Relevant to 4 students across 4 schools.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
61	Vic	G	8.5	Test administration procedures not followed relating to administering tests – appropriate behaviours. Relevant to 2 students at one school.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data compromised and withheld.
62	WA	S	4.3.13	Photo taken of test environment and made public during test security period. Relevant to 2 schools.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. No evidence that data were compromised.

	State/ Territory	Incident category (C, S, G)	2026 National protocols clause(s) breached	Description of incident	Action taken and outcome
63	WA	G	2.2.2	Test administration procedures not followed correctly relating to registration and participation. Relevant to one student at one school.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data compromised and withheld.
64	WA	G	1.4.1	Test administration procedures not followed correctly relating to scheduling NAPLAN tests. Relevant to 2 schools.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
65	WA	G	8.6.1	Incorrect test administration instructions given to students. Relevant to one student at one school.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data not compromised.
66	WA	G	6.11.9	Scribe rules not followed. Relevant to 6 students across 6 schools.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data compromised and withheld.
67	WA	G	1.4.3	Test administration procedures not followed relating to test attempts. Relevant to 4 students across 4 schools.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. Data compromised and withheld.
68	WA	G	1.2.2	School administered tests in incorrect sequence. Relevant to 10 schools.	School counselled and undertook to improve procedures for future years. No evidence that data were compromised.