

## 2010 NAPLAN TEST INCIDENTS REPORT

### STATEMENT ON 2010 NAPLAN TEST INCIDENTS

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

The NAPLAN tests are held during May each year. In 2010 the tests were held on 11, 12 and 13 May. In total approximately 5 million tests were sat by over 1 million students nationally.

All states and territories administer the tests in accordance with nationally agreed protocols. The *National Protocols for Test Administration* provides detailed information on all aspects of the administration of the tests. They specify security requirements, uniform processes and procedures to ensure students complete the tests under similar conditions. In cases where individual students require special arrangements to complete the tests these are provided at the school in consultation with the relevant TAA.

Where an allegation is made that the national protocols have been breached, the relevant entity with authority will undertake an investigation of the allegation. TAAs should be notified of allegations and the outcomes of investigations and then provide this information to ACARA.

ACARA will publish a statement reporting NAPLAN test incidents for each year of testing. The report includes a register of incidents. The register has two tables. Table 1 summarises information about the number of allegations of (a) cheating or (b) security breaches or (c) other breaches of test protocols. Table 2 in the register provides further information about the substantiated cases, including a description of the incident, and information on what action has been taken as a consequence. The register does not identify individuals or schools but reports all relevant details of each case. Only 34 incidents were substantiated across approximately five million tests undertaken nationally.

ACARA, in cooperation with states and territories, will continue to review *The National Protocols for Test Administration* and current processes and practices in schools in light of reported test incidents to eliminate or minimise the number of such incidents that occur during testing, and to provide further clarity about the investigation and reporting of these.

### SUMMARY OF REPORTED INCIDENTS

Incident Categories:

- 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.
- Test Security (S)** A breach of the *National Protocols for Test Administration* affecting test security occurs when early knowledge of test content is obtained which has the potential to compromise the integrity of the test results. Breaches of test security committed with intent to gain an unfair advantage are considered as cheating.
- General (G)** General breaches of the *National Protocols for Test Administration* include all other mal-administrative practices that are not in accordance with the agreed protocols, but which do not amount to cheating or affect test security.

**TABLE 1: SUMMARY OF REPORTED INCIDENTS**

Incident Category	Substantiated	Unsubstantiated	Under Investigation	Total
Cheating Breach (C)	12	14	3	29
Security Breach (S)	10	3	0	13
General Breach (G)	12	9	0	21
<b>Total</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>63</b>
Total schools affected	34	26	3	63

**TABLE 2: INCIDENTS INVESTIGATED AND SUBSTANTIATED**

#	State/Territory	Incident category	Description of incident	Action taken and outcome
1	NSW	S	Students were exposed to the test content before the scheduled test days. A spelling list was provided for practice which matched the words tested in the Language Conventions test. Relevant to: whole year level in one school	Formal investigation was undertaken including school visits and interviews with students. The investigation was expanded to other tests. No further information on outcomes or actions taken is available.
2	NSW	C	Teacher provided unauthorised assistance to a student during the Numeracy test. Relevant to: one student	Formal investigation including analysis of Numeracy tests was conducted and further books from the particular class checked. Clear evidence of rubbing out for one question, but answer was not replaced. No further information on outcomes or actions taken is available.
3	NSW	C	Following the release of results, a parent alleged that a teacher had intervened during the Language Conventions test. This included verbal prompts and placing sticky notes on answers that needed to be changed. Parent indicated that the child's results were higher than expected.	A formal investigation, including analysis of Language Conventions and Writing tests was undertaken and the allegation sustained.
4	NSW	G	Unauthorised use of a scribe during Writing test. Scribe did not follow scribe rules. Relevant to: one student	Analysis of Writing script demonstrated evidence of incorrect assistance of scribe. School advised that Writing test was not processed.
5	NSW	G	Unauthorised support given to student during Language Conventions test. Relevant to: one student	Analysis of Language Conventions test demonstrated evidence that answers were corrected. School and sector advised that Language Conventions test was not processed.
6	NSW	G	Unauthorised use of a scribe. Relevant to: two students	Analysis of Writing tests was undertaken and allegation substantiated. No further information on outcomes or actions taken is available.
7	NT	G	Students undertook some of the tests prior to the mandated test times. The tests were performed under test conditions and in isolation from other students. Relevant to: two students	The acting principal and NAPLAN coordinator were formally censured.
8	QLD	S	Test materials were opened before the allowable date. A copy of the Writing stimulus was provided to a Year 7 class teacher.	Formal letter of caution issued.

9	QLD	S	Reading test stimulus not secured after test and provided to national radio and placed on their website during the week of testing.	No evidence was found for the source of the protocol breach.
10	QLD	S	Staff member opened the tests prior to the designated time.	Formal letter of caution issued.
11	QLD	C	A teacher assisted students outside allowable time limits. Relevant to: year 5 students at one school	Formal letter of caution issued.
12	QLD	C	Student/s asked by principal to amend test answers the day after the test. Relevant to: at least one student	Matter referred for disciplinary action.
13	QLD	C	Teachers at a school were instructed to provide extra time to enable students to complete the exam, guided students to correct answers, and sat with students to review their papers. Relevant to: unknown number of students	Matter referred for disciplinary action.
14	QLD	C	A teacher provided students with answers.	Teacher no longer employed by sector.
15	QLD	C	A school employee inappropriately assisted a number of students	Matter referred for disciplinary action.
16	QLD	C	Principal told students prior to the tests that an eraser placed on an answer meant that the answer was incorrect and that the student should erase that answer, and also called 2 students back after school to answer omitted questions. Relevant to: unknown number of students at one school	Matter referred for disciplinary action.
17	QLD	G	School employee returned the writing booklets to students to work on further and assisted with spelling. Relevant to: unknown number of students	Matter referred for disciplinary action.
18	QLD	G	A school principal took test papers home and assessed them, and collated the results before sending tests in for official marking.	School staff reminded of obligations to adhere to national testing protocols.
19	QLD	G	Support material was on display in the test room in one school. Relevant to: unknown number of students	Matter referred for disciplinary action.
20	SA	S	Prior knowledge of writing prompt in a school. Relevant to: 24 students	Approximately 50% of affected students completed the alternative prompt and papers were double marked by senior markers. After investigation, the teacher stood aside, and was later re-instated.
21	SA	C	Teacher changed results of random students. Relevant to: approximately 24 students	An investigation was conducted, and all students completed secure alternate test. Disciplinary action taken against teacher.
22	SA	C	Teacher provided hints during test. Relevant to: approximately 41 students	Investigation found teacher had provided unreasonable hints. Approximately 50% completed secure alternate test conducted by invigilators. Teacher formally reprimanded.
23	TAS	G	Two tests at a school were administered a day earlier than the scheduled date. Relevant to: one school, two year levels	Detailed investigation undertaken and the allegation found to be substantiated. Principal educated about responsibilities relating to security for future NAPLAN testing.
24	TAS	G	One test administered one day earlier than the scheduled date at a school. An error was made in timetabling this test and, once recognised, it was logistically impossible to reschedule. Relevant to: one school, one year level	Investigation found that a technical breach occurred, but no evidence of any student being unfairly advantaged or disadvantaged as a result of this breach. Principal has been made aware of the need to comply with NAPLAN protocols in relation to test administration and security.

25	VIC	S	Tests to be administered at home by the parents of a child who was ill during test week. Relevant to: one student	Investigation determined that the integrity of the tests remained secure. The principal will ensure that extra briefings for staff and parents are provided at the school for NAPLAN 2011.
26	VIC	S	School showed some tests to a parent prior to the start of testing so that the parent could decide whether their child was capable of participating or not. Relevant to: one student	Investigation determined that the integrity of the tests remained secure. The school has been counselled on the correct way to store and administer the tests and has undertaken to conduct a NAPLAN briefing for all staff prior to the 2011 tests.
27	VIC	S	School provided copies of some tests to the media after the first day of testing.	The school received incorrect advice from a third party that the tests could be released prior to the agreed period of embargo had ended. The TAA will ensure that requirements for test security are better understood by stakeholders prior to the commencement of the NAPLAN 2011 tests.
28	VIC	C	Teacher provided answers to some students during one test session. Relevant to: unknown number of students	An investigation was conducted, the allegation was found to be substantiated and the teacher received a written reprimand.
29	VIC	G	School inappropriately encouraged parents to withdraw their children from the NAPLAN on the basis that it may be too stressful an event for them. Relevant to: unknown number of students	Investigation confirmed that a breach occurred, but that school acted out of a genuine concern for student welfare rather than a desire to improve their school results. School has confirmed in writing that it will follow all NAPLAN guidelines meticulously and that this practice will not occur again.
30	VIC	G	School inappropriately asked parents to withdraw their children from the NAPLAN on the basis that it may be too stressful an event for them. Relevant to: unknown number of students	Investigation found that a breach occurred, but that the school acted out of a genuine concern for student welfare rather than a desire to improve their school results. School has confirmed in writing that it will follow all NAPLAN guidelines meticulously, and that it will not make similar requests in future.
31	WA	S	One test administered one day earlier than the scheduled date at a school. Relevant to: unknown number of students	Investigation found that there was no sanctioned reason for the test to be administered early. The principal received a letter of reprimand.
32	WA	S	Completed test books were not collected at the completion of each test session (retained by teachers until the end of the testing week). Relevant to: Years 3, 5, 7, 9	Improvement action taken by way of a warning letter.
33	WA	C	Casual teacher altered students answers in NAPLAN tests. Relevant to: one class	A formal investigation was undertaken, including examination of student scripts for signs of erasure and scrutiny of class data. Teacher deemed no longer suitable to teach in sector schools. Student results not reported.
34	WA	G	Support material was on display in the test room in one school. Relevant to: unknown number of students	Investigation found that while spelling lists and other related charts had been removed, other unrelated charts remained, some of which had words that were on the test. No evidence of intentional wrong-doing was found. The school was advised to remove all charts from walls in future.