

## 2011 NAPLAN TEST INCIDENTS REPORT

### STATEMENT ON 2011 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 2011 the tests were held on 10, 11 and 12 May. In total approximately 5 million tests were sat by over 1 million students nationally.

ACARA works with state, territory and non-government representatives to ensure the NAPLAN tests are delivered appropriately in accordance with nationally agreed protocols. The *National Protocols for Test Administration* provides detailed information on all aspects of the administration of the tests. The national protocols specify security requirements, uniform processes and procedures to ensure students complete the tests under similar conditions and where individual students require special arrangements to complete the tests these are provided at the school in consultation with the relevant TAA.

A Code of Conduct, which sets out the common sense requirements for running the national testing program, was introduced to the national protocols in 2011 to establish clear expectations around appropriate behaviour in the administration of the tests.

Reports of improper conduct are very few in the context of all the students and schools participating in NAPLAN across the country. Where an allegation is made that the national protocols have been breached, the relevant entity with authority will undertake an investigation, and this information is then provided to ACARA.

ACARA, in cooperation with states and territories, continues 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.

### 2011 NAPLAN test incidents

A statement on test incidents, including a register of substantiated incidents, is published for each year of testing. The register has two tables. Table 1 summarises information about the number of allegations of (a) cheating or (b) security breaches or (c) general 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 provides relevant details of each case.

Most of the incidents reported to ACARA in 2011 relate to administration practices that were not in line with the national protocols, but which were generally of limited impact and for which no evidence was found of intent to gain advantage from the breach. Further, only 54 test incidents were substantiated across approximately five million tests undertaken nationally.

The introduction of guidelines for the investigation and management of test incidents in 2011 has seen increased attention paid to test integrity and significant efforts made by schools to ensure transparency in their processes and, in many instances, to self-report irregularities.

## 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** (as at 15 December 2011)

| Incident Category      | Substantiated | Unsubstantiated | Under Investigation | Total     |
|------------------------|---------------|-----------------|---------------------|-----------|
| Cheating Breach (C)    | 9             | 13              | 0                   | 22        |
| Security Breach (S)    | 12            | 2               | 0                   | 14        |
| General Breach (G)     | 33            | 6               | 0                   | 39        |
| <b>Total</b>           | <b>54</b>     | <b>21</b>       | <b>0</b>            | <b>75</b> |
| Total schools affected | 54            | 20              | 0                   | 74        |

**TABLE 2: INCIDENTS INVESTIGATED AND SUBSTANTIATED** (as at 15 December 2011)

| # | State/Territory | Incident Category | Description of incident   | Action taken and outcome  |
|---|-----------------|-------------------|---|---|
| 1 | ACT             | G                 | Spelling error introduced by contractor into Year 5 Reading Test booklet heading.<br>Relevant to: 2 schools | Data analysis team monitored for anomalous test results - none found.   |
| 2 | ACT             | S                 | Photograph in Canberra Times showed test material during security period.                                   | Principal was informed of security protocol and has assured it will not occur again.  |
| 3 | ACT             | C                 | Invigilator encouraged student to change answer.<br>Relevant to: 1 student                                  | Invigilator was reprimanded, and script was marked as originally annotated by student prior to intervention by invigilator.   |
| 4 | NSW             | G                 | Students had unapproved scribes for the Writing test.<br>Relevant to: 2 students                            | Writing results for affected students will not be included in school results.   |
| 5 | NSW             | G                 | Student given 2010 Language Conventions test booklet.<br>Relevant to: 1 student                             | Affected student was formally marked as absent for reporting purposes. An informal report was provided to the affected student for the completed test.<br>Letter sent to principal. |
| 6 | NSW             | S                 | Reading stimulus materials were left unattended in an office tray, and then placed in a teacher's tray.     | School requested to ensure office staff are aware of security protocols.  |

| #  | State/<br>Territory | Incident<br>Category | Description of incident  | Action taken and outcome   |
|----|---------------------|----------------------|--|--|
| 7  | NSW                 | S                    | Reading stimulus materials were left unattended in an office tray, and then used by one teacher with a Year 7 class.<br>Relevant to: 1 class   | Reading tests were reviewed for a random sample of students listed. No consistencies in responses from different students were discovered and no texts were identified where students appear to have been advantaged. No intent to gain advantage found. |
| 8  | NSW                 | S                    | Principal provided Language Conventions books to test administrators one day prior to scheduled test day. No evidence that test results were compromised.<br>Relevant to: 1 year level | Principal requested to ensure that security protocols are adhered to and adequate communication with test administrators.  |
| 9  | NSW                 | S                    | Article in local newspaper during security period included image of Writing stimulus.  | Principal requested to ensure all staff are aware of security protocols regarding media access.  |
| 10 | NSW                 | S                    | All completed Year 3 and Year 5 Language Conventions/ Writing test books disappeared from secure school storage prior to collection.<br>Relevant to: 2 year levels at one school.      | Police investigation launched to investigate incident.<br>Students completed replacement tests.  |
| 11 | NSW                 | S                    | Article in local newspaper included image of test material during test security period.  | Meeting with principal and teacher and formal investigation conducted. Appropriate action taken.   |
| 12 | NSW                 | S                    | Article on Channel 10 website during test security period included image of test material.   | Investigation undertaken.  |
| 13 | NSW                 | S                    | School completed Language Conventions and Reading tests on Tuesday, and Writing test on Wednesday.<br>Relevant to: Years 7 & 9 students in one school                                  | Writing scripts were analysed for evidence of preparation. No evidence that results were compromised.  |
| 14 | NSW                 | S                    | School completed Language Conventions and Reading tests on Tuesday, and Writing test on Wednesday.<br>Relevant to: Years 7 & 9 students in one school                                  | Writing scripts were analysed for evidence of preparation. No evidence that results were compromised.  |
| 15 | NSW                 | C                    | Student with a temporary injury was allocated a scribe who was another student.<br>Relevant to: 1 student  | Language Conventions test compromised. No further information on outcomes or actions taken is available.   |
| 16 | NSW                 | C                    | Students who had not completed the Language Conventions test were given extra time during the Writing test to compete it.<br>Relevant to: 5 students                                   | Language Conventions and Writing Tests were reviewed for the 5 students listed. No further information on outcomes or actions taken is available.  |
| 17 | NSW                 | C                    | Principal assisted students to complete their Language Conventions test.   | Formal investigation conducted and the allegation found to be substantiated and appropriate action was taken.  |
| 18 | QLD                 | G                    | A school employee directed teachers and teacher aides to mark the tests.   | Matter referred for disciplinary action.   |
| 19 | QLD                 | G                    | Students' Writing responses were internally marked for inclusion as part of  | An investigation was conducted and the allegation found to be substantiated. The   |

| #  | State/<br>Territory | Incident<br>Category | Description of incident  | Action taken and outcome  |
|----|---------------------|----------------------|--|---|
|    |                     |                      | the student assessment for the first semester.<br>Relevant to: 1 school  | school will make sure this does not occur in the future.  |
| 20 | QLD                 | G                    | Principal reported in media interviews that he would not allow students to sit the tests and subsequently that parents would be encouraged to withdraw students.<br>Relevant to: Years 3,5,7,9                                 | Matter was substantiated. No further action taken.  |
| 21 | QLD                 | S                    | Principal allowed secure material to be communicated during the security period.   | Matter was substantiated but as the principal has since left the school concerned, no further action could be taken.  |
| 22 | QLD                 | C                    | Teacher assisted students with the planning of their Writing task and provided advice to students during their writing time.<br>Relevant to: 1.5 classes   | Matter referred for disciplinary action.  |
| 23 | QLD                 | C                    | A teacher aide provided assistance to a student during the Language Conventions test.<br>Relevant to: 1 student  | Matter referred for disciplinary action.  |
| 24 | QLD                 | C                    | Two staff in the Special Education unit inappropriately assisted some students with the NAPLAN Writing test.   | Matter referred for disciplinary action.  |
| 25 | SA                  | G                    | Teacher read stimulus and questions to students during the Language Conventions and Reading tests.<br>Relevant to: 3 students  | Affected students were formally marked as absent for reporting purposes.  |
| 26 | SA                  | G                    | One class of Year 9 students was allowed an extra 5-7 minutes to do the calculator Numeracy test.<br>Relevant to: 18 students  | Investigation was conducted and allegation substantiated. The relevant teacher and other staff have been advised of correct procedures in preparation for NAPLAN testing in 2012.   |
| 27 | SA                  | G                    | Student allowed to use computer for Writing test without pre-approval of this special provision.<br>Relevant to: 7 students in 5 different schools<br>NB: this is an aggregation of 5 separate incidents in 5 separate schools | Investigation determined that use of assistive technology was appropriate but prior notification was not sought. Principal now aware that prior notification is required. This will be emphasised more in circulars to schools in 2012. |
| 28 | SA                  | G                    | A teacher let students go to a break at the end of the writing time but before the students had completed the remaining 5 minutes of editing time.<br>Relevant to: 11 students   | Students were able to complete the test under close supervision following the break. An investigation was conducted and the teacher was reprimanded.  |
| 29 | SA                  | G                    | Student allowed to use a computer for Writing test without pre-approval.<br>Relevant to: 1 student   | An investigation was conducted and the allegation found to be substantiated, however no advantage gained. School advised of correct procedures.   |
| 30 | SA                  | G                    | Students allowed to use a scribe without pre-approval of this special provision.<br>Relevant to: 2 students  | An investigation was conducted and the allegation found to be substantiated. However, scribe had correctly followed rules for scribing. Principal advised of correct procedures.  |
| 31 | SA                  | G                    | A student who broke their arm the day  | An investigation was conducted and the  |

| #  | State/<br>Territory | Incident<br>Category | Description of incident   | Action taken and outcome  |
|----|---------------------|----------------------|---|---|
|    |                     |                      | before the Writing test was allowed to use a computer without pre-approval.<br>Relevant to: 6 students in 6 different schools<br>NB: this is an aggregation of 6 separate incidents in 6 separate schools | allegation was substantiated. The principal was advised of the need to seek pre-approval in the future.   |
| 32 | TAS                 | S                    | 12 overprinted Language Conventions test booklets went missing from a school storeroom before the test.<br>Relevant to: 12 students   | All students sat the tests as planned. Students' results were reviewed to ensure no advantage had been gained. A revision of procedures around checking of materials, secure storage and transport to test rooms etc has been undertaken by the school since the event. |
| 33 | TAS                 | G                    | School did not seek permission to vary the scheduled day of testing for the Numeracy (non-calculator) test, which was held a day late.<br>Relevant to: 1 year level                                       | An investigation concluded that the variation to the testing schedule was not implemented to gain an unfair advantage for students at the school.   |
| 34 | VIC                 | G                    | School attempted to exert influence on a parent with regard to test participation.<br>Relevant to: 1 student  | Issue was addressed before the commencement of the tests and all students whose parents wanted them to sit the tests did so. The principal ensured that all staff involved were immediately briefed on correct NAPLAN practices.  |
| 35 | VIC                 | G                    | School attempted to exert influence on some parents with regard to test participation.<br>Relevant to: 10 students  | Issue was addressed before the commencement of the tests and all students whose parents wanted them to sit the tests did so. The principal ensured that all staff involved were immediately briefed on correct NAPLAN practices.  |
| 36 | VIC                 | G                    | School attempted to exert influence on some parents with regard to test participation.<br>Relevant to: 4 students   | Issue was addressed before the commencement of the tests and all students participated in the test program. All parents received an apology.  |
| 37 | VIC                 | G                    | School attempted to exert influence on a parent with regard to test participation.<br>Relevant to: 1 student  | School was advised that this was not appropriate conduct and staff were counselled to ensure that this issue never occurs again. The student in question participated in the test program.  |
| 38 | VIC                 | G                    | School attempted to exert influence on a parent with regard to test participation.<br>Relevant to: 1 student  | Principal advised prior to tests that this was not appropriate, following which a further letter was sent to all parents advising that all students are encouraged to participate in the tests. The student in question participated in the test program.               |
| 39 | WA                  | G                    | Tests marked and feedback provided to teachers/ students/ parents and awards were given to high achieving students.<br>Relevant to: 1 school  | Improvement action taken by way of a warning letter.  |
| 40 | WA                  | G                    | Language Conventions test carried out a day prior to the official date.<br>Relevant to: 1 school  | Improvement action taken by way of a warning letter.  |
| 41 | WA                  | G                    | The numeracy test was split into two sessions - one before and one after recess.<br>Relevant to: 1 class  | Improvement action taken by way of a warning letter. Results will not be included in data set.  |
| 42 | WA                  | G                    | After completion of tests, students had   | An investigation was conducted and the  |

| #  | State/<br>Territory | Incident<br>Category | Description of incident   | Action taken and outcome   |
|----|---------------------|----------------------|---|--|
|    |                     |                      | to copy answers onto a blank piece of paper. This data was used to mark tests and provide feedback to teachers/ students.<br>Relevant to: 1 school          | allegation found to be substantiated. Improvement action taken by way of a warning letter.   |
| 43 | WA                  | G                    | Completed test books not collected at the completion of each test session.<br>Relevant to: 2 classes  | An investigation was conducted and the allegation found to be substantiated. Improvement action taken by way of a warning letter. Results will not be included in data set.        |
| 44 | WA                  | C                    | Teacher allowed students to change their answers where more than one answer had been indicated after the completion of the test.                            | An investigation was conducted and the allegation found to be substantiated. The matter was referred for formal disciplinary action. Results will not be included in the data set. |
| 45 | WA                  | C                    | A teacher who was absent on test day allowed two students who had written little in the Writing test to do the test again in the test booklet on Wednesday. | An investigation was conducted and the allegation found to be substantiated. The matter was referred for formal disciplinary action.   |