




NAPLAN companion guide 2026

January 2026



QCAA
Queensland Curriculum
& Assessment Authority

For all Queensland schools

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Using this companion guide

This companion guide provides guidance to principals and principal's delegates NAPLAN about the administration of NAPLAN and the necessary actions before and during testing.

Depending on your context, existing knowledge and prior experience, you may only need to use parts of this guide to refresh your understanding. For others less experienced in administering NAPLAN, it can be read in its entirety to provide a comprehensive overview.

If you require further guidance or assistance, the QCAA NAPLAN Helpdesk can be contacted via naplan@qcaa.qld.edu.au or calling 1300 214 452.



About NAPLAN

NAPLAN tests provide information on how students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 perform in writing, reading, spelling, punctuation, grammar, and numeracy.

The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) is responsible for managing NAPLAN tests. The Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority (QCAA) coordinates the administration, marking and reporting of the tests in Queensland.

Format of the tests

The NAPLAN tests include four test domains — writing, reading, conventions of language and numeracy.

All tests are conducted online, except for the Year 3 writing test, which is completed on paper.

Participation

All students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 are expected to sit the tests, unless they meet the criteria for exemption or are withdrawn by their parents/carers.

When are the tests held in 2026?

The NAPLAN test window is Wednesday 11 March to Monday 23 March 2026.

Schools should note:

- All year levels must commence the writing test as the first test on Wednesday 11 March 2026.
- Tests must be scheduled in the following order for all year levels: Writing › Reading › Conventions of language › Numeracy.
- Schools are not to schedule excursions, camps and sports days during the official test window.
- Catch-ups for Year 3 writing must be completed by Monday 16 March 2026.
- Catch-ups for all other test domains and year levels may be conducted until the closure of the test window.
- Practice tests can be scheduled in the [Training and Practice environment](#).

Preparing for NAPLAN

There are two NAPLAN handbooks. The:

- [National protocols for test administration](#)
- [NAPLAN Operations handbook](#).

This guide should be used with these handbooks. The relevant handbook sections have been flagged for easy access.

School checklist

Schools should refer to the [School checklist](#) for key dates and information about important NAPLAN tasks and deadlines for schools. Schools must administer the tests in accordance with the nationally agreed test timetable.

The QCAA Portal

The [QCAA Portal](#) is a secure access point to the QCAA applications (apps) and data for staff at Queensland schools. School staff responsible for administering NAPLAN will need to have a QCAA Portal account and be assigned the relevant role to access any required apps.

The two key roles for NAPLAN in the QCAA Portal are:

- Principal
- Principal's delegate NAPLAN.

All administrative tasks related to NAPLAN are now found in the [QCAA Portal](#). There are three NAPLAN apps:

- NAPLAN Administration — verification of student data, downloading and submitting forms, acknowledging delivery of test materials and accessing resources
- NAPLAN AARA (Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments) — applications for QCAA-approved disability adjustments
- fileShare — 2026 Training and Practice environment logins, 2026 NAPLAN environment school PIN.

Checking student data before testing

Verifying your student data before NAPLAN assists with creating accurate data for your school and Queensland. All schools should check the NAPLAN Administration app after student data has been uploaded to ensure that the:

- correct number of students have been uploaded in each year level
- student names are correct
- dates of birth are correct
- class groups are correct.

Schools have two opportunities to edit and update their student data. All schools can add or delete student enrolments and correct student details (e.g. spelling of names), and assign class groupings in the [QCAA Portal](#) NAPLAN Administration app. Once the app is closed, schools can update this information in the [Online National Assessment Platform](#) (the platform).

Including a class group in this data file is not required but is highly recommended. A class group may already be included if your diocese or the Department of Education uploads your census data on your behalf.

It's a good idea to assign additional class groups in the NAPLAN Administration app or [the platform](#) because:

- printed ISRs can be delivered to your school in class groups instead of alphabetically, saving time when they need to be distributed
- filtering student session slips in the platform by class groups can assist with more efficient and accurate preparation of test administration packs
- Student and School Summary Report (SSSR) provides a report for each class group in the platform. Assigning multiple class groups can support you to quickly see the performance of different class groupings, e.g. an extension Year 9 mathematics class.

Avoid duplicate enrolments for students by checking in [the platform](#) for an existing enrolment for a student with different spelling (e.g. Mc or Mac, Thomson or Thompson) or with a variation of their name such as anglicising (e.g. Georgiou or George).





NAPLAN AARA — for students with disability

NAPLAN access arrangements and reasonable adjustments (NAPLAN AARA) are available for students with a disability (or chronic medical condition) to allow them to access NAPLAN tests on the same basis as other students without disability. Principals or their delegates should identify all students in their school who will require an adjustment to participate in the tests due to disability.

Adjustments should be considered on a case-by-case basis in consultation with school staff, the student, specialist personnel and parents/carers to determine if an adjustment is required and, if so, whether it requires QCAA approval or is a school-based decision. The following principles apply:

- Disability adjustments are intended only for students with disability.
- Disability adjustments should reflect the kind of support and assistance provided in the classroom.
- Disability adjustments that are appropriate in a learning environment may not be appropriate in an assessment environment.
- Disability adjustments are not appropriate if they compromise the tests' ability to assess underlying core skills, which is the object of the assessments.

Some adjustments are school-approved and some require QCAA approval. All NAPLAN AARA require schools to complete the *Record of adjustment for students with disability (school use only)* form from the NAPLAN AARA app in the [QCAA Portal](#), and retain a copy signed by the parent/carers. If a QCAA-approved adjustment is required, an application needs to be submitted in the NAPLAN AARA app. Users with the roles of Principal or Principal's delegate NAPLAN can access the NAPLAN AARA app.

Applications for QCAA-approved adjustments

Alternative format tests

In Term 4 2025, schools should submit applications for students requiring alternative format tests such as braille, large print, black and white and electronic tests (interactive PDFs). Refer to [Memo: NAPLAN 2026 — access arrangements and reasonable adjustments \(AARA\) for students with disability](#).

Schools should submit applications for Year 7 students and other new enrolments as soon as possible after enrolment at the beginning of Term 1, 2026.

Other QCAA-approved adjustments

- Assistive technology that requires an unsecured browser
- Extra time (double the test time)
- Scribe (writing test only)
- Computer template for writing (Year 3 writing only)
- Colour contrast modification

Schools must submit applications for QCAA-approved adjustments via the QCAA NAPLAN AARA app in the [QCAA Portal](#).

School-approved adjustments

Schools should refer to section 6 of the [National protocols for test administration](#) for further information about adjustments that do not require QCAA approval. Schools can use the [NAPLAN public demonstration site](#) to check whether adjustments built into [the platform](#) (e.g. the zoom tool) and/or school-approved adjustments can enable students with disability to access the tests on the same basis as other students.

More information

More information about adjustments is available on the [National Assessment Program \(NAP\) website](#), the [QCAA website](#) or in sections 7.3–7.6 and Appendix 1 of the [NAPLAN Operations handbook](#).

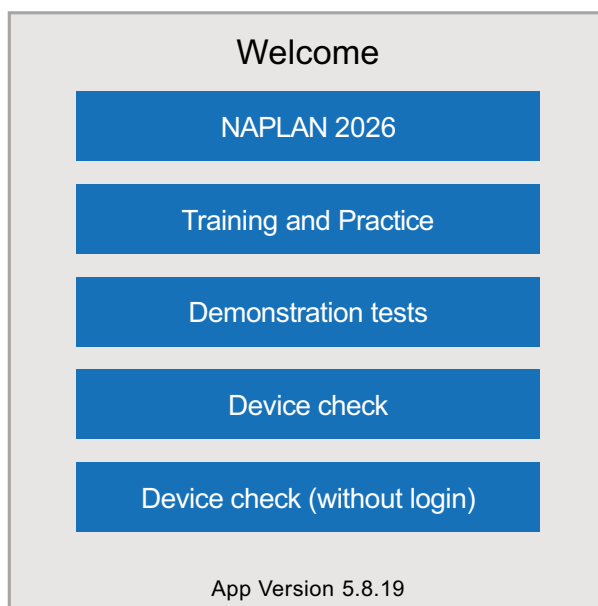
Technical readiness

Locked-down browser

It is essential that each student device, including backup devices, has the current NAP locked-down browser installed prior to testing.

Older versions of the NAP locked-down browser are not supported and the student experience may be impacted. The version number of the locked-down browser can be located at the bottom of the landing page.

Note: Each operating system will have a different version number.



Principals or their delegate should go to www.assessform.edu.au to access the latest version of the locked-down browser for each of the operating systems for the device types in their schools.

In some schools, the installation of the locked-down browser may be automatically managed by your sector authority.

School networks and devices

Principals are encouraged to work with their school technical officer or sector authority (if applicable) to confirm that the minimum technical requirements for NAPLAN are supported by the school's network and devices. It is advisable to commence this in late January to allow time to resolve issues.

Firewalls, disabling features and known issues

Prior to testing, principals or their delegates should ensure that for each device to be used during testing, the necessary actions are taken to disable prohibited features such as predictive text and to manage firewalls, whitelisting and other known issues. Information and resources to assist schools are available on the [Online National Assessment Platform website](#).

Read more...

For more information about technical readiness, refer to section 3.1 and Appendix 2 of the [NAPLAN Operations handbook](#).





Student readiness

Prior to the test window, each participating student should be familiar with:

- the device they will use in the test
- navigating the sections of each test
- the branching messages
- the types of test items — how to select and deselect responses; how items typically appear
- the effect of using keyboard shortcuts such as Ctrl + Z when editing their writing
- the need to notify the test administrator if they encounter an issue.

Principals should know when and how their students have been familiarised with the tests.

Schools have two ways of providing student familiarisation:

- the NAPLAN [public demonstration site](#)
- the [NAPLAN Training and Practice environment](#).

Principals are encouraged to run a practice test with the maximum concurrent student cohort to replicate the expected maximum concurrent load during the test window.

Read more...

For more information about student readiness, refer to sections 3.3.3 and 7.4 of the [National protocols for test administration](#).

Read more...

For more information about branching messages, refer to [ACARA's website](#).

Staff readiness

Test administrators must follow the [National protocols for test administration](#) while supervising and managing the test session for students, including managing technical issues.

On behalf of their principal, NAPLAN coordinators are encouraged to provide training to test administrators prior to the test window to rehearse the processes to follow when:

- students encounter technical difficulties, particularly those that cannot be resolved within 15 minutes
- managing non-technical disruptions such as pausing for students to take toilet/rest breaks
- they need to communicate with the NAPLAN coordinator
- extra time should be added to a student's test attempt
- a student attempt needs to be postponed for unresolved test disruptions and the test session must **not be** finalised.

QCAA provides NAPLAN resources on the [QCAA website](#) to support principals with training their test administrators.

Read more...

For more information about preparing test administrators, refer to sections 8.4–8.8 of the [National protocols for test administration](#) and section 6.2 of the [NAPLAN Operations handbook](#).

Welcome pack and test materials

Schools should plan to receive the QCAA welcome pack, grid cards and Year 3 test materials (if applicable). Schools must immediately store these materials securely until required for use. Principals or their delegates will also need to download the secure school PIN for NAPLAN 2026 from the fileShare app in the [QCAA Portal](#).

Assessment platform registration

Principals should register with the [National Online Assessment Platform](#) as soon as possible after receiving their email invitation from notifications@assessform.edu.au in early February 2026. A secure grid card and the school PIN will be required to complete registration. Once registered, the principal should invite NAPLAN coordinator/s to the [platform](#).

Student participation

Withdrawals

School staff must not influence parents/carers to withdraw their child (see section 2.2.5 of the [National protocols for test administration](#)). However, if parents request this, schools can provide a withdrawal form prior to the commencement of the test window. The withdrawal form can be downloaded from the NAPLAN Administration app in the [QCAA Portal](#) from Monday 16 February 2026. Schools should provide a signed copy to the parent/carer and retain the original signed copy in the student's file.

Exemptions

Forms for exemption of eligible students from testing are available to download from the NAPLAN Administration app in the [QCAA Portal](#) from Monday 16 February 2026. Schools should provide a signed copy to the parent/carer and retain the original signed copy in the student's file.

Any changes made to student participation status must be applied in the [platform](#).

Read more...

For more information about student participation, refer to section 5 of the [National protocols for test administration](#) and section 7 and Appendix 3 of the [NAPLAN Operations handbook](#).



Test scheduling

Principals are advised to commence planning their test schedule early in Term 1. This is to give parents and carers sufficient notification of the schedule, including the scheduling of catch-ups sessions. Test schedules must follow the prescribed test order.

Technical capacity

Test schedules are dependent on:

- the number of students in the school in Years 3, 5, 7 or 9
- the number of devices available in the school
- the capacity of the school network to support concurrent users
- testing rooms available (if not a usual classroom).

Catch-ups and reschedules

Principals must provide sufficient opportunities for absent students to complete catch-up tests. It is strongly recommended that principals create a schedule that also anticipates the possibility of some tests requiring a reschedule due to technical difficulties that could not be resolved during a test session within 15 minutes.

Read more...

For more information about catch-up tests and test rescheduling, refer to sections 1.5 and 1.6 of the [National protocols for test administration](#) and sections 9.3 and 9.4 of the [NAPLAN Operations handbook](#).

Delivering NAPLAN

Creating test administrator packs

Schools should create a test administrator (TA) pack for each planned test session in their test schedule. This task can be commenced after student data is available in [the platform](#) on 2 March 2026.

The essential components of each TA pack are:

- the [NAPLAN Years 3, 5, 7 & 9 — Test administration handbook for teachers](#)
- a TA session slip (generated in [the platform](#))
- student session slips (generated in [the platform](#))

You may also wish to include a student list for the session and these QCAA support documents:

- [Test administrator quick reference: Technical disruptions](#)
- [Notification of technical disruption](#) form.

Student materials

The table below summarises the materials permitted and not permitted in the test area.

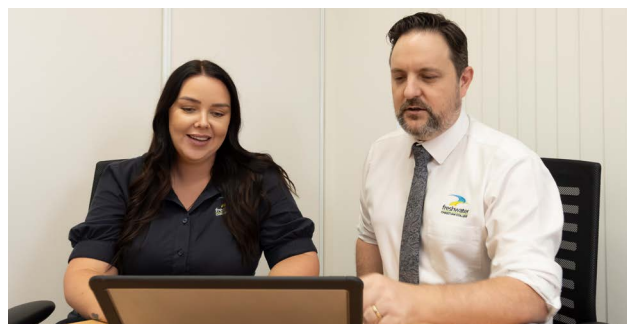
| Materials permitted in the test area | Materials NOT permitted in the test area |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ student session slip, to be collected at the end of each session✓ 2B or HB pencils✓ pencil sharpener✓ eraser✓ one blank piece of working-out paper for each of the tests, to be collected at the end of each session✓ where necessary, assistive technology as a disability adjustment✓ headphones that are compatible with the device being used for testing✓ device, if school is using BYOD | <ul style="list-style-type: none">✗ mobile phones✗ electronic devices (other than the devices being used for testing) that are capable of storing, receiving or transmitting information or electronic signals, such as recorded music and video players, organisers, dictionaries, scanning pens and computerised watches✗ dictionaries✗ rulers✗ calculators (other than those approved for students with disability)✗ smart pens (e.g. pens/pencils/stylus) capable of transcribing a student's handwritten response into digital text |

Working paper is permitted for all tests. Some schools use the student session slip printed for each student for this purpose also.

Calculators, protractors and compasses do not need to be supplied unless as a disability adjustment for a student.

Read more...

For more information about student materials, refer to section 8.5.12 of the [National protocols for test administration](#).





Managing technical disruptions

Level 1

Test administrators should be able to troubleshoot simple test disruptions when they occur. The test attempt should be paused so that the student does not lose any test time.

Level 2

If a test disruption is still unresolved, test administrators should call their NAPLAN coordinator.

- The test attempt should remain paused.
- The test session should not be finalised.

Adding extra time

If a student experiences a disruption that causes loss of test time, but can resume the test within 15 minutes of notifying the test administrator, extra time may be added. The extra time should be commensurate with the amount of disrupted time, noting that a disruption greater than 15 minutes should be managed with a rescheduled test.

For more information about test disruptions, refer to section 8.7 of the [National protocols for test administration](#).

Student test attempt advice form

Schools should complete a *Student test attempt advice* form in the NAPLAN Administration app on the [QCAA Portal](#) to inform QCAA of any issues such as:

- a change in student name
- where a student used a duplicate student record
- the destruction of a testbook
- where a student used an unnamed testbook
- where a student used another student's testbook or test slip
- where a student refused to complete a test
- notifying the QCAA that your school has hosted a visiting student.

Moving to Results

Schools need to move to **Results** in [the platform](#) once all student test attempts for their school are no longer open.

NAPLAN coordinators should contact the QCAA if there is any doubt about moving to Results.



QCAA NAPLAN contacts

Queries about NAPLAN from Queensland schools should be directed to the QCAA NAPLAN helpdesk:

- Phone: 1300 214 452
- Email: naplan@qcaa.qld.edu.au
- Web: www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/p-10/naplan

More information

qcaa.qld.edu.au

The QCAA website provides information about NAPLAN, including test administration information and resources.