

NAPLAN & Students with Dyslexia

**NAPLAN testing will be held at all Australian schools between
Wednesday 15th March and Monday 27th March 2023.**

WHAT IS NAPLAN?

The National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) is an annual assessment for students in years 3, 5, 7 and 9. It tests skills in writing, reading, spelling, grammar, punctuation and numeracy.

Students in Years 5, 7 and 9 will complete all NAPLAN tests online. Students in Year 3 will do the reading, language conventions and numeracy tests online and the writing test on paper.

Online tests are tailored, which means that students are given questions which are more or less difficult depending on how they are performing during the test. This allows students to be tested on what they can do rather than what they can't. The students final result will be based on both the number and difficulty of questions answered correctly.

More information on NAPLAN and how results are reported can be seen at this link:

<https://nap.edu.au/docs/default-source/default-document-library/naplan-information-brochure-for-parents-and-carers.pdf>

Parents, carers and students can also access the public demonstration site to familiarise themselves with the online NAPLAN format. This is well worth doing as students can see for themselves the inbuilt accessibility features such as read aloud functions.

<https://www.nap.edu.au/naplan/public-demonstration-site>

On Tuesday 28th February a national coordinated practice test will be run to familiarise students with the online testing.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT FOR CHILDREN WITH DYSLEXIA TO BE PART OF NAPLAN TESTING?

NAPLAN testing provides national and jurisdictional data on levels of literacy and numeracy. This data helps to inform educational policy at school, state and national level. It is important that students with dyslexia take part in this testing so that the number of students who are below the national minimum standard for literacy are accurately reflected in the data. If students with dyslexia are withdrawn from testing then their literacy struggles will remain hidden.

When effective adjustments are in place sitting NAPLAN tests can be beneficial for students with dyslexia. It gives students an opportunity to get familiarised with formal testing and using their test adjustments in a test scenario. It also allows a paper trail of exam adjustments to be built up ready to use as evidence when applying for SACE adjustments. It can also give parents and students an idea of literacy and numeracy progress made over time.

IS NAPLAN ACCESSIBLE FOR STUDENTS WITH DYSLEXIA?

Under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 and the Disability Standards for Education 2005 all students with disabilities must be provided with adjustments to enable them to access education on an equal basis to their peers. With regard to NAPLAN, where disability impacts on access to and participation in the tests, reasonable adjustments may be granted to facilitate access to all or some of the tests.

It should be noted that under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 the definition of “disability” includes “imputed disability” where a disability is suspected but not yet diagnosed. A diagnosis of dyslexia is not necessarily required to access NAPLAN adjustments, as long as any adjustment reflects the kind of adjustments given to the student in the classroom and detailed in NCCD reporting and learning plans.

Not all adjustments used in the classroom will be appropriate for NAPLAN tests. Adjustments are not permitted if they compromise a student’s ability to demonstrate the following constructs and skills:

- **Writing:** The NAPLAN writing tests assess a student’s ability to convey thoughts, ideas and information through the independent construction of a text in Standard Australian English.

- **Reading:** The NAPLAN reading tests assess the ability of students to independently make meaning from written Standard Australian English texts, including those with some visual elements. Reading the stimulus material and/or questions aloud to a student during the reading test is therefore not appropriate or permitted.
- **Conventions of language:** The NAPLAN conventions of language tests assess a student's ability to independently recognise and use correct Standard Australian English grammar, punctuation and spelling in written contexts. Reading questions aloud to a student during the conventions of language test is therefore not appropriate or permitted.
- **Numeracy:** The NAPLAN numeracy tests assess students' knowledge of mathematics, their ability to independently apply that knowledge in context, and their ability to independently reason mathematically. Explaining questions or interpreting diagrams in the numeracy test is therefore not appropriate or permitted. Reading any words, numbers or symbols embedded within text is permitted, but not any numbers or symbols that are not embedded within text.

WHAT DISABILITY ADJUSTMENTS ARE AVAILABLE TO STUDENTS WITH DYSLEXIA FOR NAPLAN TESTING?

It is important for families of students with dyslexia to have a discussion with their schools as soon as possible to get test adjustments put in place for NAPLAN testing.

Adjustments are available for students with disability to enable an equivalent learner experience during NAPLAN testing and to encourage maximum participation:

- Adjustments should allow students with disability to access the tests. A student may have access to one or more adjustments in any one test, and these may differ across each of the tests.
- Adjustments given should be consistent with the support and assistance typically accessed by the student for day to day classroom activities and assessments, as outlined in their Personalised Learning Plan (OnePlan) and/or NCCD evidence.
- Adjustments should not affect the integrity of the NAPLAN tests. For example, reading the questions to a student during the reading test is not appropriate or permitted, even if this is what happens during a student's regular lessons.

Most available disability adjustments are approved at school level based on classroom adjustments provided, and do not require TAA approval. Schools can enter these non-TAA approval adjustments into the NAPLAN system right up to the date that testing begins. For adjustments requiring TAA approval it is recommended that the school applies as early as possible.

Adjustments requiring TAA approval	Adjustments not requiring TAA approval (school approval)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Braille, large print, black and white, electronic PDF test (deadline for application 8/2/2023) • Assistive technology that requires an unsecured browser (e.g. colour contrast modification) • Computer for writing (Year 3) • Extra time – double the total test time • Scribe (writing test only) <p>The SA Department of Education advised that they have no early deadline to apply for most TAA approved adjustments, however it is recommended that schools apply ASAP, if possible by 1/3/2023</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alternative items – visual • Alternative items – audio • Black text with blue background theme • Black text with green background theme • Black text with lilac background theme • Black text with white background theme • Black text with yellow background theme • Extra time – one minute for every two minutes of test time • Extra time – one minute for every three minutes of test time • Extra time – one minute for every six minutes of test time • NAPLAN support person • Oral/sign support • Rest breaks • Assistive technology that does not require the unsecured browser and is compatible with the test construct (e.g. ergonomic mouse, Bluetooth headphones, classroom communication devices)

Detailed information on all the available NAPLAN disability adjustments can be found at:

<https://www.nap.edu.au/docs/default-source/default-document-library/naplan-national-protocols-for-test-administration-2023.pdf>

or:

<https://www.nap.edu.au/naplan/accessibility/adjustments-for-students-with-disability>

The most common adjustments given for students with dyslexia are explained in more detail below:

Extra Time and Rest Breaks (TAA Approval not required)

- Extra time may be provided for students with disability who usually require additional time to complete assessment tasks. It is added to a student's test in the platform prior to the test by the school. The platform automatically allocates the extra time to the student's test. It is recommended that no more than one minute of extra time for every 6 minutes of test time be granted. However, depending on the level of disability or logistics involved with the use of assistive technology, the school is able to agree a longer time (such as one minute for every 3 minutes of test time). TAA approval is required if double time is required.
- Rest breaks may be provided for students with disabilities who need regular breaks when completing assessment tasks. They can be used instead of extra time or in addition to extra time. Rest breaks are managed manually by the test administrator, who must pause and resume the student's test on the test administrator's dashboard. The student must not access the test during this time. It is recommended that no more than 10 minutes of rest time per hour of test time be granted. However, if it is normal practice for the student to have more rest time in normal classroom assessments, additional time may be agreed by the school.
- Extra time and rest breaks may also be provided for students with disability who are accessing assistive technology, where the logistics of use increase time taken and/or physical effort to access test materials or interact with the platform.

NAPLAN support person (non-writing domains) (TAA approval not required)

A NAPLAN support person may be either a teacher or a person officially engaged by the school to carry out this function. A NAPLAN support person may:

- be permitted for students with disability to assist with access to the reading, conventions of language and numeracy tests; for example, by clicking on or dragging answers indicated by the student, or typing short responses or answers dictated by the student
- provide access to the test by logging in for the student
- read aloud only those elements of the test that can be read to all students

A NAPLAN support person is permitted only for those students with disability (including a temporary disability such as a broken arm) who experience difficulty in using a computer (e.g. due to fine motor difficulty), or any other adjustments available, including students whose usual assistive technology is not compatible with the platform, or who usually use such a support person to participate in classroom assessments.

It should be noted that most of the NAPLAN online tests now include inbuilt read aloud functionality available for all students to use where appropriate e.g. reading the questions in the numeracy test or the writing prompt in the writing test.

Assistive technology

Assistive technology that requires the use of an unsecured browser requires TAA approval. Schools can approve assistive technology not requiring an unsecured browser.

Acceptable assistive technology includes access to:

- switch devices
- customised pointing devices or keyboards
- screen magnification tools
- assistive listening devices
- text-to-speech software to access student responses in the numeracy test only (students using a text-to-speech software need to be supported by a support person to ensure that the screen reader only reads allowable parts of the test)
- a physical calculator for the calculator section of the numeracy test where students with disability cannot access the on-screen calculator
- a device (computer or iPad) for the Year 3 writing test. Responses must be printed and returned for processing in the manner prescribed by the TAA.

Unacceptable aspects of assistive technology use include:

- spelling and grammar checking
- word prediction
- text-to-speech software for writing, reading and conventions of language tests
- calculator use during the non-calculator numeracy section

Students accessing assistive technology are likely to need extra time. The allocation of extra time should be decided on a case-by-case basis.

Colour contrast modification

Students are able to control brightness and background colours, including inverting the colour theme BNW (black text with white background) to white text with black background, through the settings on their device. However, depending on the device, it may be necessary to use an unsecured browser which would require TAA approval.

Scribe - permitted for the writing test only (TAA approval required)

A scribe may be provided for a student with disability in the writing test who meets all of the following criteria:

- has significant difficulty with the act of typing due to a physical disability (this does not refer to a student's difficulty processing what they want to type) or lacks fine motor control due to a disability, or experiences excessive fatigue of hands or upper limbs due to a disability; and
- regularly works with a scribe in the classroom; and
- would be unable to access the writing tests by any of the other adjustments available.

A NAPLAN scribe must be officially and regularly engaged as a scribe by the school.

NAPLAN scribes are not available for students with temporary injury e.g. a broken arm.

Where a scribe is approved, the scribe must type exactly as the student dictates adding no punctuation, paragraphs etc. unless indicated by the student.

For the Year 3 paper writing test an adjustment to an online paper would be given preference over the use of a scribe.

Separate room

Use of a separate room is not a specific NAPLAN adjustment however it is often used by schools for groups of students requiring NAPLAN adjustments, and it is definitely worth discussing this option with your school. A quiet more supportive environment can feel less intimidating, and children with adjustments such as extra time won't be interrupted by other students leaving when their tests finish.

South Australian sector contacts for disability adjustments

If you can't find the answer to any NAPLAN disability adjustments questions in this factsheet, or at the additional links provided, then your first point of contact is your school.

If you are still unable to get the information you need then you can contact any of the NAPLAN contacts for SA below:

Organisation	Contact	Email	Telephone
Department for Education (public schools)	Education Assessments and Collections (NAPLAN)	education.naplan@sa.gov.au	1800 316 777
AISSA (independent)	Alice Duffield	naplan@ais.sa.edu.au	(08) 8179 1400
CESA (Catholic Ed)	Amanda Cescato	amanda.cescato@cesa.catholic.edu.au	(08) 8301 6600

MAKING THE CHOICE NOT TO DO NAPLAN TESTING

Under NAPLAN regulations schools are not allowed to suggest, influence or encourage parents to withdraw their child from NAPLAN testing.

However, if, after looking at the NAPLAN demonstration site and speaking with your school about disability adjustments, you feel strongly that your child should not do one or more of the NAPLAN tests then you have two options available to you:

1. Exemption on the grounds of disability or English language proficiency

Students may be exempt from one or more of the four tests only on the grounds of disability or English language proficiency or disability:

- Students with significant intellectual disability and/or students with significant comorbidity that severely limit their capacity to participate in the tests may be exempted from taking NAPLAN. This is decided after the principal, student and the relevant parent/carer have consulted with each other and agreed that the student is not able to effectively access the tests even with adjustments.
- Students with a language background other than English, who arrived from overseas and have been attending school in Australia for less than a year before the test, should be given the opportunity to participate in testing, but may be exempted.

Principals must obtain signed parent/carer consent for all exempt students prior to testing (an example exemption form can be found at the end of this factsheet).

Students who qualify for exemption and do not submit a test attempted under test conditions are considered as participating students and are counted in the 'below minimum standard' calculations for reporting purposes in national and jurisdictional summary data. Results for exempt students are not included in school-level calculations of means.

2. Withdrawal from one or more of the tests on the grounds of philosophical objections to testing or religious beliefs – signed parental/carer consent required

Withdrawn students are not counted as part of the cohort of participating students and will not be reflected in national and jurisdictional data.

It is essential that children with disabilities such as dyslexia who do not sit NAPLAN are formally exempted rather than withdrawn. This ensures that their struggles remain visible as “below national minimum standard” in national and jurisdictional data.

REFERENCES

- NAPLAN Information for parents and carers: <https://nap.edu.au/docs/default-source/default-document-library/naplan-information-brochure-for-parents-and-carers.pdf>
- NAPLAN National protocols for test administration – online 2023: <https://www.nap.edu.au/docs/default-source/default-document-library/naplan-national-protocols-for-test-administration-2023.pdf>
- NAPLAN Information for schools and principals 2023: NAPLAN information for schools and principals (education.sa.gov.au)
- Guide for Schools to assist students with a disability – online 2023: <https://nap.edu.au/docs/default-source/default-document-library/guide-for-schools-to-assist-students-with-disability-to-access-naplan.pdf>
- National Assessment Program: NAP - Adjustments for students with disability: <https://www.nap.edu.au/naplan/accessibility/adjustments-for-students-with-disability>
- SA Department for Education: NAPLAN (education.sa.gov.au): <https://www.education.sa.gov.au/parents-and-families/curriculum-and-learning/reports-and-assessments/naplan-information-parents-carers-and-community>
- NAPLAN public demonstration site: <https://www.nap.edu.au/naplan/public-demonstration-site>

Record of student exemption

National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy - General information

A signed copy of this form must be completed by the principal and the parent/caregiver before the NAPLAN test period. The form should be stored securely at the school.

The principal may approve a student exemption for a student who has a:

- non-English speaking background and has arrived in Australia from overseas and has been in school for less than a year before the NAPLAN test period, or
- significant intellectual disability and/or significant co-existing conditions which severely limit capacity to participate in the tests.

The Disability Standards for Education (2005) set out the rights of a student with a disability in relation to education and the obligations of school education providers under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992. Within this legislation, the definition of disability is broad and includes physical, intellectual, psychiatric, sensory, neurological and learning disabilities.

A student who has a significant intellectual disability must not be exempted automatically. Principals should make families aware of adjustments implemented by ACARA to support the involvement of as many students as possible.

For further advice and support regarding student exemptions please contact your sector representative. The principal is responsible for updating the student's test participation status to reflect this exemption. Details of student being exempted:

School name: _____

Surname of student _____

First name of student: _____

Unique Student ID (if applicable): _____

Year level: 3 5 7 9

Exemption applies to (tick appropriate boxes)

Writing Reading Conventions of Language Numeracy

Reason for exemption

English language proficiency or Disability

Provide description on level of adjustment (used for the National Consistent Collection of Data)

Parent/caregiver's signature: _____ Date: _____

Principal's signature: _____ Date: _____