

# 2022 suspensions and expulsions



# Introduction

The suspension and expulsion of NSW Government students is an area of increased public interest. In 2022, schools in NSW followed 2 different suspensions policies:

- 1) Student Discipline Policy, in Terms 1 to 3
- 2) Student Behaviour Policy, introduced in Term 4.

The new Student Behaviour Policy, implemented in Term 4, introduced significant changes to the previous policy. This included changes to suspension grounds and descriptors, removal of short and long suspensions, reduction in the length of initial suspension days, introduction of suspension extensions, setting limits on the number of suspensions per student and suspension days in a calendar year without approval, and different durations of suspensions for students in Kindergarten to Year 2 compared to students in Years 3 to 12. Therefore, the Term 4 2022 suspensions are not comparable to previous terms and previous years and are not included in this fact sheet. The overall number of suspensions for Terms 1 to 3 in 2022 in this fact sheet is also not comparable to the overall number of suspensions in previous years which included Terms 1 to 4. Similarly, a direct comparison of suspensions by category or ground under different policies must be avoided.

## 2022 enrolments

In 2022, there were 791,435 students enrolled in NSW Government schools.

**Table 1: Enrolments in mid-year census**

Year	Male	Female	All students
K–2	105,104	97,702	202,806
3–6	143,687	132,783	276,470
<b>Primary total</b>	<b>248,791</b>	<b>230,485</b>	<b>479,276</b>
7–10	120,184	109,391	229,575
11–12	40,351	42,233	82,584
<b>Secondary total</b>	<b>160,535</b>	<b>151,624</b>	<b>312,159</b>
<b>All</b>	<b>409,326</b>	<b>382,109</b>	<b>791,435</b>

# 2022 suspensions, Terms 1 to 3

Due to the implementation of a new Student Behaviour Policy in Term 4, all 2022 suspensions and expulsions figures in this fact sheet contain only Terms 1 to 3.

In NSW public schools, 1 in 25 students were suspended at least once in 2022.

**Table 2a: Students receiving suspensions**

All students	Semester 1 (Terms 1 and 2)	Term 3	Terms 1–3
Short suspensions	25,314	12,838	38,152
Long suspensions	8,159	4,463	12,622
<b>Total suspensions</b>	<b>33,473</b>	<b>17,301</b>	<b>50,774</b>
Students short suspended (n)	18,749	11,223	25,742
Students long suspended (n)	6,811	4,135	9,796
<b>All students suspended</b>	<b>22,599</b>	<b>14,337</b>	<b>30,532</b>
Students short suspended (%)	2.4%	1.4%	3.3%
Students long suspended (%)	0.9%	0.5%	1.2%
<b>All students suspended (%)</b>	<b>2.9%</b>	<b>1.8%</b>	<b>3.9%</b>

In 2022, approximately 1 in 75 primary school students were suspended at least once, with 8,359 short suspensions and 1,727 long suspensions issued.

**Table 2b: Primary students receiving suspensions**

Primary students	Semester 1 (Terms 1 and 2)	Term 3	Terms 1–3
Short suspensions	5,222	3,137	8,359
Long suspensions	983	744	1,727
<b>Total suspensions</b>	<b>6,205</b>	<b>3,881</b>	<b>10,086</b>
Students short suspended (n)	3,718	2,639	5,395
Students long suspended (n)	806	674	1,348
<b>All students suspended</b>	<b>4,122</b>	<b>3,121</b>	<b>5,991</b>
Students short suspended (%)	0.8%	0.6%	1.1%
Students long suspended (%)	0.2%	0.1%	0.3%
<b>All students suspended (%)</b>	<b>0.9%</b>	<b>0.7%</b>	<b>1.3%</b>

In 2022, approximately 1 in 13 secondary school students were suspended, with 29,793 short suspensions and 10,895 long suspensions issued.

**Table 2c: Secondary students receiving suspensions**

Secondary students	Semester 1 (Terms 1 and 2)	Term 3	Terms 1–3
Short suspensions	20,092	9,701	29,793
Long suspensions	7,176	3,719	10,895
<b>Total suspensions</b>	<b>27,268</b>	<b>13,420</b>	<b>40,688</b>
Students short suspended (n)	15,031	8,584	20,347
Students long suspended (n)	6,005	3,461	8,448
<b>All students suspended</b>	<b>18,477</b>	<b>11,216</b>	<b>24,541</b>
Students short suspended (%)	4.8%	2.7%	6.5%
Students long suspended (%)	1.9%	1.1%	2.7%
<b>All students suspended (%)</b>	<b>5.9%</b>	<b>3.6%</b>	<b>7.9%</b>

## Short suspensions, 2022 Terms 1 to 3

Short suspensions are up to 4 school days. There were 38,152 short suspensions in 2022. Of these:

- 14,623 were for continued disobedience
- 23,529 were for aggressive behaviour.

**Note:** These figures include students placed on short suspension on more than one occasion.

A total of 25,742 students received short suspensions in 2022. The average length of short suspensions was 3.0 days. The average length of short suspensions for primary students was 2.6 days, and the average length for secondary students was 3.1 days.

**Table 3: Students receiving short suspensions**

Year	Enrolments	Suspended boys	Suspended girls	All students suspended	% student enrolment
K–2	202,806	1,105	166	1,271	0.6%
3–6	276,470	3,498	626	4,124	1.5%
<b>Primary total</b>	<b>479,276</b>	<b>4,603</b>	<b>792</b>	<b>5,395</b>	<b>1.1%</b>
7–10	229,575	12,259	5,950	18,208	7.9%
11–12	82,584	1,497	644	2,141	2.6%
<b>Secondary total</b>	<b>312,159</b>	<b>13,754</b>	<b>6,594</b>	<b>20,347</b>	<b>6.5%</b>
<b>All</b>	<b>791,435</b>	<b>18,357</b>	<b>7,386</b>	<b>25,742</b>	<b>3.3%</b>

## Long suspensions, 2022 Terms 1 to 3

Long suspensions are up to 20 school days. There were 12,622 long suspensions in 2022. Of these:

- 4,665 were for persistent or serious misbehaviour
- 5,525 were for physical violence
- 816 were for criminal behaviour related to the school
- 962 were for possession or use of a suspected illegal substance
- 502 were for use or possession of a prohibited weapon, firearm or knife
- 150 were for use of an implement as a weapon, or threatening to use a weapon.

**Note:** These figures include students placed on long suspension on more than one occasion.

A total of 9,796 students received a long suspension in 2022. The average length of long suspensions was 12.1 days. For primary students the average length of long suspensions was 8.8 days, and the average length for secondary students was 12.6 days.

**Table 4: Students receiving long suspensions**

Year	Enrolments	Suspended boys	Suspended girls	All students suspended	% student enrolment
K–2	202,806	216	30	246	0.1%
3–6	276,470	941	161	1,102	0.4%
<b>Primary total</b>	<b>479,276</b>	<b>1,157</b>	<b>191</b>	<b>1,348</b>	<b>0.3%</b>
7–10	229,575	4,946	2,555	7,501	3.3%
11–12	82,584	661	286	947	1.1%
<b>Secondary total</b>	<b>312,159</b>	<b>5,607</b>	<b>2,841</b>	<b>8,448</b>	<b>2.7%</b>
<b>All</b>	<b>791,435</b>	<b>6,764</b>	<b>3,032</b>	<b>9,796</b>	<b>1.2%</b>

# Aboriginal students by suspension type and education level, 2022 Terms 1 to 3

In 2022, there were a total of 70,939 Aboriginal enrolments in NSW Government schools. Of these students, 11.3% were suspended at least once during 2022. Aboriginal students account for approximately 9.0% of all government school student enrolments but approximately a quarter of all students suspended.

**Table 5: Aboriginal students receiving suspensions**

Aboriginal students	Semester 1 (Terms 1 and 2)	Term 3	Terms 1–3
Short suspensions	7,373	3,522	10,895
Long suspensions	2,666	1,437	4,103
<b>Total suspensions</b>	<b>10,039</b>	<b>4,959</b>	<b>14,998</b>
Students short suspended (n)	5,041	2,997	6,719
Students long suspended (n)	2,164	1,315	3,043
<b>All students suspended</b>	<b>6,144</b>	<b>3,943</b>	<b>8,046</b>
Students short suspended (%)	7.1%	4.2%	9.5%
Students long suspended (%)	3.1%	1.9%	4.3%
<b>All students suspended (%)</b>	<b>8.7%</b>	<b>5.6%</b>	<b>11.3%</b>

The average length of all suspensions for Aboriginal students was 5.6 days.

The average length of a short suspension for Aboriginal primary students was 2.6 days, whereas the average length of a short suspension for Aboriginal secondary students was 3.2 days.

**Table 6: Aboriginal students receiving short suspensions**

Year	Aboriginal enrolments	Aboriginal students short suspended (n)	Aboriginal students short suspended (%)
K–2	18,563	417	2.2%
3–6	24,454	1,436	5.9%
<b>Primary total</b>	<b>43,017</b>	<b>1,853</b>	<b>4.3%</b>
7–10	22,702	4,441	19.6%
11–12	5,220	425	8.1%
<b>Secondary total</b>	<b>27,922</b>	<b>4,866</b>	<b>17.4%</b>
<b>All</b>	<b>70,939</b>	<b>6,719</b>	<b>9.5%</b>

The average length of a long suspension for Aboriginal primary students was 8.7 days, whereas the average long suspension for secondary students was 13.1 days.

**Table 7: Aboriginal students receiving long suspensions**

Year	Aboriginal enrolments	Aboriginal students long suspended (n)	Aboriginal students long suspended (%)
K–2	18,563	84	0.5%
3–6	24,454	402	1.6%
<b>Primary total</b>	<b>43,017</b>	<b>486</b>	<b>1.1%</b>
7–10	22,702	2,330	10.3%
11–12	5,220	227	4.3%
<b>Secondary total</b>	<b>27,922</b>	<b>2,557</b>	<b>9.2%</b>
<b>All</b>	<b>70,939</b>	<b>3,043</b>	<b>4.3%</b>

# Students identified as receiving adjustments due to disability, by suspension type and education level, 2022 Terms 1 to 3

In 2022, 141,230 enrolments (17.8%) were students identified as receiving adjustments due to disability. Of these, 10.0% received a suspension, with 8.6% receiving a short suspension and 3.5% receiving a long suspension.

**Table 8: Students identified as receiving adjustments due to disability who were suspended**

All students with disability	Semester 1 (Terms 1 and 2)	Term 3	Terms 1–3
Short suspensions	13,496	6,443	19,939
Long suspensions	4,487	2,364	6,851
<b>Total suspensions</b>	<b>17,983</b>	<b>8,807</b>	<b>26,790</b>
Students short suspended (n)	9,196	5,443	12,111
Students long suspended (n)	3,579	2,156	4,968
<b>All students suspended</b>	<b>10,931</b>	<b>6,993</b>	<b>14,086</b>
Students short suspended (%)	6.5%	3.9%	8.6%
Students long suspended (%)	2.5%	1.5%	3.5%
<b>All students suspended (%)</b>	<b>7.7%</b>	<b>5.0%</b>	<b>10.0%</b>

The average length of all suspensions for students identified as receiving adjustments due to disability was 5.3 days. The average length of a short suspension for primary students identified as receiving adjustments due to disability was 2.6 days, whereas the average short suspension for secondary students was 3.2 days.

**Table 9: Students identified as receiving adjustments due to disability who were short suspended**

Year	Enrolments of students with disability	Students with disability short suspended (n)	Students with disability short suspended (%)
K–2	35,471	992	2.8%
3–6	49,487	2,782	5.6%
<b>Primary total</b>	<b>84,958</b>	<b>3,774</b>	<b>4.4%</b>
7–10	42,894	7,686	17.9%
11–12	13,378	651	4.9%
<b>Secondary total</b>	<b>56,272</b>	<b>8,337</b>	<b>14.8%</b>
<b>All</b>	<b>141,230</b>	<b>12,111</b>	<b>8.6%</b>



The average length of a long suspension for primary students identified as receiving adjustments due to disability was 9.3 days, whereas the average for secondary students was 12.9 days.

**Table 10: Students identified as receiving adjustments due to disability who were long suspended**

Year	Enrolments of students with disability	Students with disability long suspended (n)	Students with disability long suspended (%)
K–2	35,471	198	0.6%
3–6	49,487	816	1.6%
<b>Primary total</b>	<b>84,958</b>	<b>1,014</b>	<b>1.2%</b>
7–10	42,894	3,640	8.5%
11–12	13,378	314	2.3%
<b>Secondary total</b>	<b>56,272</b>	<b>3,954</b>	<b>7.0%</b>
<b>All</b>	<b>141,230</b>	<b>4,968</b>	<b>3.5%</b>

# Data by SA4 groups, 2022 Terms 1 to 3

The NSW Department of Education uses the Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS), published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, to report data by geographical area. ASGS Statistical Area 4 (SA4) boundaries in NSW are combined into 11 groups for reporting.

**Map 1: SA4 groups map**



Sydney-North had the lowest suspensions, with less than 1% of students suspended in 2022. Students in North West NSW were most likely to receive a suspension, with 7.8% of students receiving a suspension: 6.5% of students received a short suspension and 2.9% received a long suspension.

**Table 11: Short suspensions by SA4 group**

SA4 group	Total short suspensions	Total number of students short suspended	Students short suspended as % of SA4 group enrolment
Sydney-North	687	569	0.6%
Sydney-Inner	1,266	948	1.7%
Sydney-South	2,405	1,782	2.4%
Sydney-South West	4,223	3,045	3.4%
Sydney-West	3,282	2,278	2.4%
Sydney-North West	1,827	1,334	2.0%
North East NSW	5,087	3,346	5.7%
North West NSW	6,633	4,152	6.5%
South West NSW	3,362	2,194	4.3%
South East NSW	4,923	3,186	4.6%
Central Coast, Newcastle	4,457	2,982	3.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>38,152</b>	<b>25,742</b>	<b>3.3%</b>

**Table 12: Long suspensions by SA4 group**

SA4 group	Total long suspensions	Total number of students long suspended	Students long suspended as % of SA4 group enrolment
Sydney-North	234	203	0.2%
Sydney-Inner	390	314	0.6%
Sydney-South	622	498	0.7%
Sydney-South West	1,513	1,175	1.3%
Sydney-West	683	578	0.6%
Sydney-North West	682	566	0.8%
North East NSW	1,746	1,343	2.3%
North West NSW	2,549	1,879	2.9%
South West NSW	1,267	942	1.8%
South East NSW	1,352	1,075	1.5%
Central Coast, Newcastle	1,584	1,235	1.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>12,622</b>	<b>9,796</b>	<b>1.2%</b>

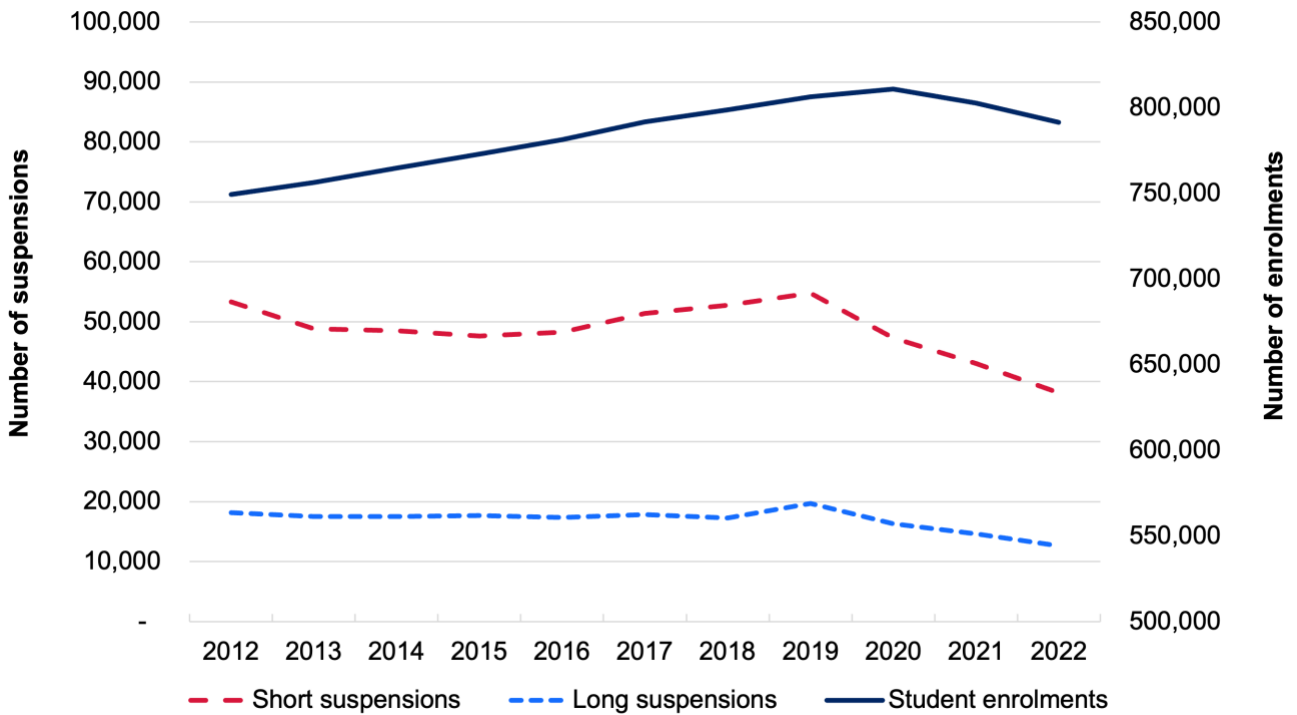
# Suspensions over time

In 2022 Terms 1 to 3, there were 50,774 suspensions in NSW Government schools.

The COVID-19 pandemic has likely contributed to a decline in both short and long suspensions from 2019 as students were learning from home for extended periods during 2020 and 2021.

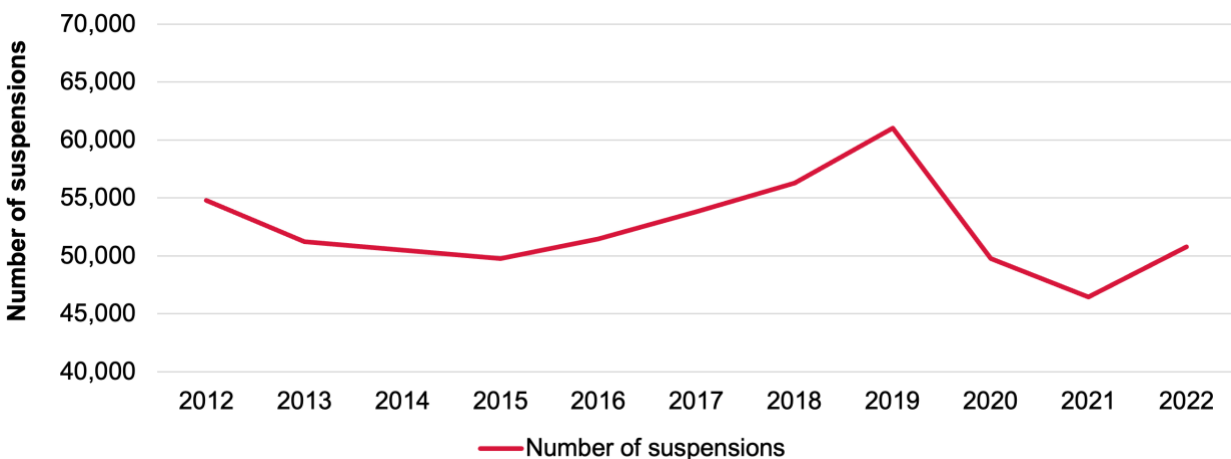
**Figure 1: Suspensions and enrolments at NSW Government schools 2012–2022**

**\*Note:** 2022 includes only suspensions in Terms 1 to 3.



**Note:** The vertical axes have different scales. This should be considered when interpreting the graph.

**Figure 2: Number of suspensions at NSW Government schools 2012–2022, Terms 1 to 3**

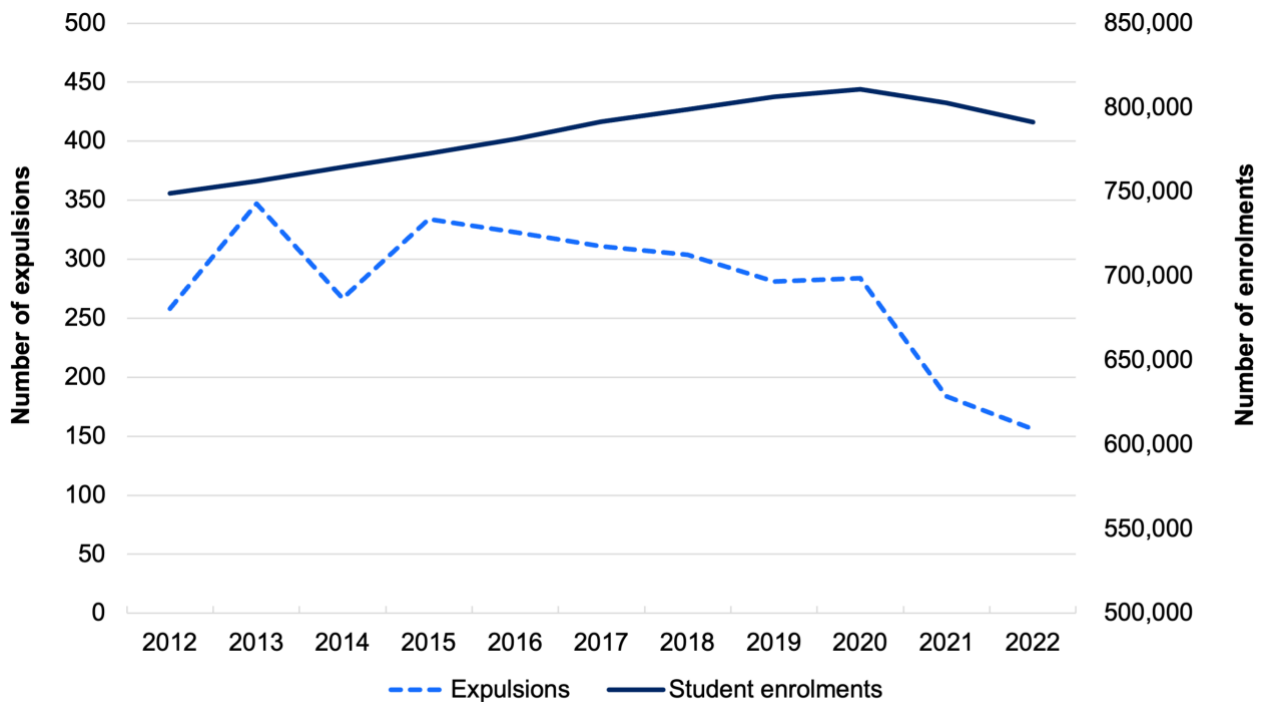


# Expulsions over time

In 2022 Terms 1 to 3, there were a total of 154 students expelled from NSW Government schools. There were 156 expulsions where students were expelled from more than one school, and of these, 50 expulsions were for misbehaviour and 106 were for unsatisfactory participation.

**Figure 3: Expulsions and enrolments at NSW Government schools 2012–2022**

**\*Note:** 2022 includes only expulsions in Terms 1 to 3.



**Note:** The vertical axes have different scales. This should be considered when interpreting the graph.

## Notes:

1. The new suspension policy, Student Behaviour Policy, was implemented at the beginning of Term 4 2022, resulting in a change from suspension types and reasons to suspension grounds and descriptors. Consequently, this fact sheet can only provide data on suspensions in Terms 1 to 3 in 2022.
2. NSW suspension data in 2021 is not comparable to previous years due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. The NSW Government encouraged students to learn from home, where possible, for the majority of Term 3.
3. From 2019, resources were available to conduct quality checks prior to the collection opening, as well as the usual post-collection checks. This resulted in more complete data, giving the appearance of an increase in suspensions for some grades. These additional checks were not carried out in earlier years.
4. Where a student receives both a short suspension and a long suspension in 2022, the student is only counted once in the 'all students suspended' data, but will appear in both the 'students short suspended' and 'students long suspended' data. Therefore 'all students suspended' is not the sum of 'students short suspended' and 'students long suspended'.
5. Support students at mainstream schools are now reported by their underlying grade of enrolment, whereas in previous fact sheets, all support students were classified as ungraded and included with Year 3 to 6 and Year 7 to 10 enrolments. This results in small changes to the suspension rate, particularly for secondary students.
6. Data for students identified as receiving adjustments due to disability is taken from the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability (NCCD) data collection, which takes place in the first week of August each year.

Data is included for students identified as requiring supplementary, substantial or extensive levels of adjustment. Students who require quality differentiated teaching practices (QDTP) are not included in the data.

The NCCD is a count of the number of students with disability receiving adjustments to access and participate in education. The NCCD draws on teachers' professional judgement to determine the level of adjustments students with disability receive, in both the classroom and whole-school context, as well as the broad category of disability that relates to the adjustments. The model for the NCCD is based on mandatory obligations to students under the national *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (DDA) and Disability Standards for Education 2005.

Table headings have been shortened due to formatting constraints. References to 'students with disability' should always be read as 'students identified as receiving adjustments due to disability'.

For more information on the NCCD, including level of adjustment descriptors and disability categories, please refer to the [NCCD Portal](#).

7. Suspensions issued to students identified as receiving adjustments due to disability are included in this publication if the student record was reported to the Australian Government in the NCCD (refer to note 6). The publication will include suspensions across different schools, regardless of which school reported them under NCCD.
8. Totals involving the number of students suspended may not match the total when adding up individual rows. This occurs when students are suspended across different categories (such as educational levels and SA4 groups) over the course of the year.

9. Between 2009 and 2014 there were changes in the way that suspension and expulsion data was collected. In 2012 suspension data was harvested from a combination of the department's electronic enrolment registration system (ERN) and manual returns. The data prior to 2012 was collected manually.
10. In this fact sheet, Aboriginal refers to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples.