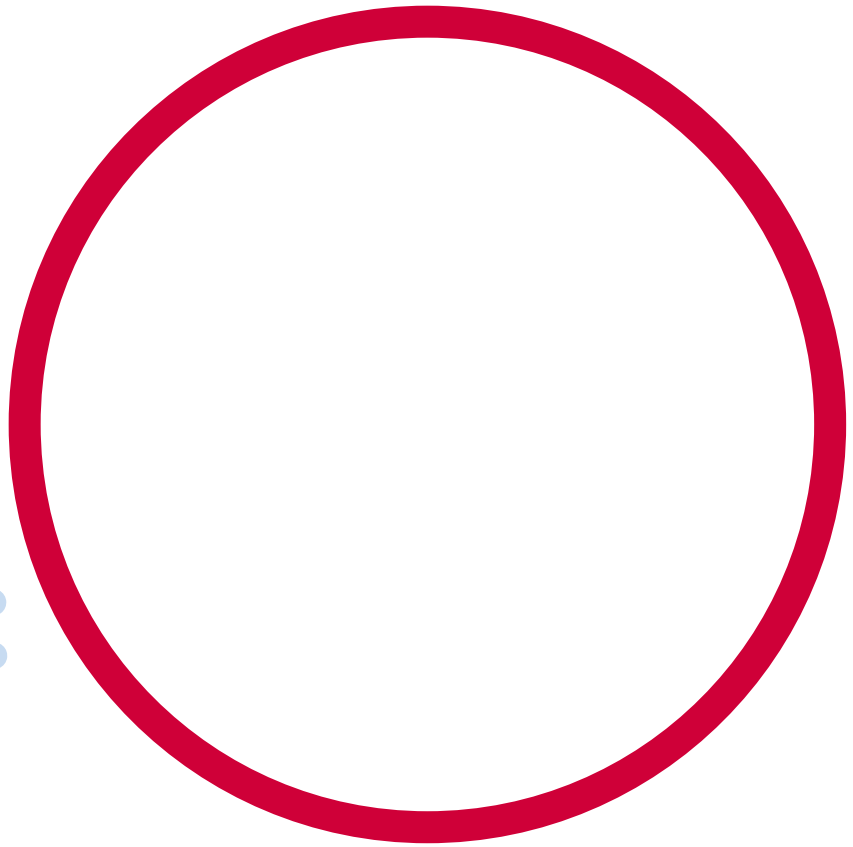
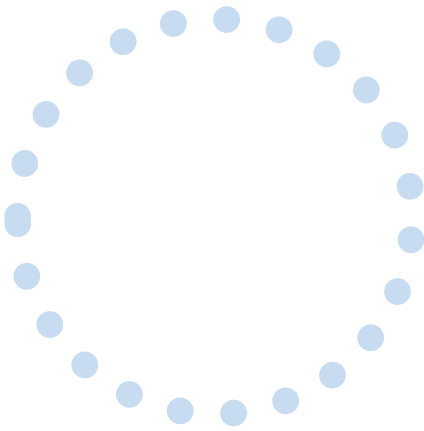
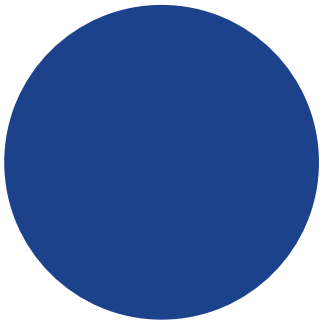


# 2021 Suspensions and Expulsions



# Introduction

The suspension and expulsion of NSW government students is an area of increased public interest. Previous years factsheets have provided full year data only, however, changes to the data collection and validation process in 2021 has allowed for inclusion of Semester 1 and Semester 2 data.

Please note that only full year data should be compared with previous factsheets, as students suspended in both semesters are only counted once in the full year publication.

## 2021 Enrolments

In 2021 there were 802,776 students enrolled in NSW government schools.

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

Year	Boys	Girls	All students
K-2	108,108	100,138	208,246
3-6	144,992	134,947	279,939
<b>Primary total</b>	<b>253,100</b>	<b>235,085</b>	<b>488,185</b>
7-10	120,628	110,112	230,740
11-12	40,845	43,006	83,851
<b>Secondary total</b>	<b>161,473</b>	<b>153,118</b>	<b>314,591</b>
<b>All</b>	<b>414,573</b>	<b>388,203</b>	<b>802,776</b>

## 2021 Suspensions

One in twenty-five students in NSW public schools were suspended at least once in 2021.

Why were fewer students suspended in Semester 2, 2021?

The lower number of suspensions in Semester 2 than in Semester 1 is expected, as most students were learning from home for the duration of Term 3 due to the COVID-19 pandemic (refer also to Note 1).

**Table 2a: Students receiving suspensions, 2021**

All students	Semester 1	Semester 2	Full year
Short suspensions	30,618	12,444	43,062
Long suspensions	10,030	4,590	14,620
<b>Total suspensions</b>	<b>40,648</b>	<b>17,034</b>	<b>57,682</b>
Students short suspended (#)	22,267	10,452	28,543
Students long suspended (#)	8,152	4,082	10,966
<b>All students suspended</b>	<b>26,686</b>	<b>13,445</b>	<b>33,870</b>
Students short suspended (%)	2.8%	1.3%	3.6%
Students long suspended (%)	1.0%	0.5%	1.4%
<b>All students suspended (%)</b>	<b>3.3%</b>	<b>1.7%</b>	<b>4.2%</b>

(Notes 1-3)

In 2021, approximately one in seventy primary school students were suspended, with 10,515 short suspensions and 2,115 long suspensions issued.

**Table 2b: Primary students receiving suspensions, 2021**

Primary students	Semester 1	Semester 2	Full year
Short suspensions	7,123	3,392	10,515
Long suspensions	1,334	781	2,115
<b>Total suspensions</b>	<b>8,457</b>	<b>4,173</b>	<b>12,630</b>
Students short suspended (#)	4,830	2,760	6,565
Students long suspended (#)	1,054	683	1,544
<b>All students suspended</b>	<b>5,327</b>	<b>3,232</b>	<b>7,210</b>
Students short suspended (%)	1.0%	0.6%	1.3%
Students long suspended (%)	0.2%	0.1%	0.3%
<b>All students suspended (%)</b>	<b>1.1%</b>	<b>0.7%</b>	<b>1.5%</b>

(Notes 1-3)

In 2021, approximately one in twelve secondary school students were suspended, with 32,547 short suspensions and 12,505 long suspensions issued.

**Table 2c: Secondary students receiving suspensions, 2021**

Secondary students	Semester 1	Semester 2	Full year
Short suspensions	23,495	9,052	32,547
Long suspensions	8,696	3,809	12,505
<b>Total suspensions</b>	<b>32,191</b>	<b>12,861</b>	<b>45,052</b>
Students short suspended (#)	17,437	7,692	21,978
Students long suspended (#)	7,098	3,399	9,422
<b>All students suspended</b>	<b>21,359</b>	<b>10,213</b>	<b>26,660</b>
Students short suspended (%)	5.5%	2.4%	7.0%
Students long suspended (%)	2.3%	1.1%	3.0%
<b>All students suspended (%)</b>	<b>6.8%</b>	<b>3.2%</b>	<b>8.5%</b>

(Notes 1-3)

## Short suspensions, 2021

Short suspensions are up to 4 school days. There were 43,062 short suspensions in 2021. Of these:

- 17,063 were for continued disobedience
- 25,999 were for aggressive behaviour.

**Note:** These figures are based on the total number of short suspensions in 2021 and include students placed on short suspension on more than one occasion.

A total of 28,543 students received short suspensions in 2021. 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, 2021**

Year	Enrolments	Suspended boys	Suspended girls	All students suspended	% student enrolment
K-2	208,246	1,282	183	1,465	0.7%
3-6	279,939	4,274	826	5,100	1.8%
<b>Primary total</b>	<b>488,185</b>	<b>5,556</b>	<b>1,009</b>	<b>6,565</b>	<b>1.3%</b>
7-10	230,740	13,246	6,233	19,479	8.4%
11-12	83,851	1,781	719	2,500	3.0%
<b>Secondary total</b>	<b>314,591</b>	<b>15,026</b>	<b>6,952</b>	<b>21,978</b>	<b>7.0%</b>
<b>All</b>	<b>802,776</b>	<b>20,582</b>	<b>7,961</b>	<b>28,543</b>	<b>3.6%</b>

(Note 4)

# Long suspensions, 2021

Long suspensions are up to 20 school days.

There were 14,620 long suspensions in 2021. Of these:

- 5,691 were for persistent or serious misbehaviour;
- 6,070 were for physical violence;
- 953 were for criminal behaviour related to the school;
- 1,107 were for possession or use of a suspected illegal substance;
- 621 were for use or possession of a prohibited weapon, firearm or knife; and,
- 178 were for use of an implement as a weapon, or threatening to use a weapon.

**Note:** These figures are based on the total number of long suspensions in 2021 and include students placed on long suspension on more than one occasion.

A total of 10,966 students received a long suspension in 2021. The average length of long suspensions was 12.3 days. For primary students the average length of long suspensions was 9.2 days, and the average length for secondary students was 12.8 days.

**Table 4: Students receiving long suspensions, 2021**

Year	Enrolments	Suspended boys	Suspended girls	All students suspended	% student enrolment
K-2	208,246	230	31	261	0.1%
3-6	279,939	1,074	209	1,283	0.5%
<b>Primary total</b>	<b>488,185</b>	<b>1,304</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>1,544</b>	<b>0.3%</b>
7-10	230,740	5,629	2,780	8,409	3.6%
11-12	83,851	749	264	1,013	1.2%
<b>Secondary total</b>	<b>314,591</b>	<b>6,378</b>	<b>3,044</b>	<b>9,422</b>	<b>3.0%</b>
<b>All</b>	<b>802,776</b>	<b>7,682</b>	<b>3,284</b>	<b>10,966</b>	<b>1.4%</b>

(Note 4)

# Aboriginal students by suspension type and education level, 2021

Aboriginal students account for approximately 8.6% of all government school student enrolments but approximately a quarter of all students suspended.

In 2021 there were a total of 69,022 Aboriginal enrolments in NSW government schools. 12.6 per cent of Aboriginal students were suspended at least once during 2021.

**Table 5: Aboriginal students receiving suspensions, 2021**

Aboriginal students	Semester 1	Semester 2	Full year
Short suspensions	8,518	3,830	12,348
Long suspensions	3,189	1,636	4,825
<b>Total suspensions</b>	<b>11,707</b>	<b>5,466</b>	<b>17,173</b>
Students short suspended (#)	5,699	3,089	7,352
Students long suspended (#)	2,454	1,405	3,320
<b>All students suspended</b>	<b>6,868</b>	<b>4,052</b>	<b>8,713</b>
Students short suspended (%)	8.3%	4.5%	10.7%
Students long suspended (%)	3.6%	2.0%	4.8%
<b>All students suspended (%)</b>	<b>10.0%</b>	<b>5.9%</b>	<b>12.6%</b>

The average length of all suspensions for Aboriginal students was 5.7 days.

The average length of a short suspension for Aboriginal primary students was 2.5 days, whereas the average short suspension for Aboriginal secondary students was 3.2 days.

**Table 6: Aboriginal students receiving short suspensions, 2021**

Year	Aboriginal enrolments	# Aboriginal students short suspended	% Aboriginal students short suspended
K-2	18,058	476	2.6%
3-6	23,595	1,724	7.3%
<b>Primary total</b>	<b>41,653</b>	<b>2,200</b>	<b>5.3%</b>
7-10	22,097	4,719	21.4%
11-12	5,272	434	8.2%
<b>Secondary total</b>	<b>27,369</b>	<b>5,152</b>	<b>18.8%</b>
<b>All</b>	<b>69,022</b>	<b>7,352</b>	<b>10.7%</b>

The average length of a long suspension for Aboriginal primary students was 9.6 days, whereas the average long suspension for secondary students was 13.3 days.

**Table 7: Aboriginal students receiving long suspensions, 2021**

Year	Aboriginal enrolments	# Aboriginal students long suspended	% Aboriginal students long suspended
K-2	18,058	87	0.5%
3-6	23,595	450	1.9%
<b>Primary total</b>	<b>41,653</b>	<b>537</b>	<b>1.3%</b>
7-10	22,097	2,554	11.6%
11-12	5,272	229	4.3%
<b>Secondary total</b>	<b>27,369</b>	<b>2,783</b>	<b>10.2%</b>
<b>All</b>	<b>69,022</b>	<b>3,320</b>	<b>4.8%</b>

## Students identified as receiving adjustments due to a disability, by suspension type and education level, 2021

In 2021 there were 802,776 enrolments in NSW government schools, 144,697 (18.0%) enrolments were students identified as receiving adjustments due to a disability. 10.6% of students identified as receiving adjustments due to a disability received a suspension in 2021, 9.2% received a short suspension, while 3.7% received a long suspension.

**Table 8: Students identified as receiving adjustments due to a disability who were suspended, 2021**

All students with disability	Semester 1	Semester 2	Full Year
Short suspensions	16,120	6,306	22,426
Long suspensions	5,372	2,443	7,815
<b>Total suspensions</b>	<b>21,492</b>	<b>8,749</b>	<b>30,241</b>
Students short suspended (#)	10,681	5,071	13,259
Students long suspended (#)	4,141	2,101	5,421
<b>All students suspended</b>	<b>12,573</b>	<b>6,517</b>	<b>15,351</b>
Students short suspended (%)	7.4%	3.5%	9.2%
Students long suspended (%)	2.9%	1.5%	3.7%
<b>All students suspended (%)</b>	<b>8.7%</b>	<b>4.5%</b>	<b>10.6%</b>

(Notes 1-3, 5, 6)

The average length of all suspensions for students identified as receiving adjustments due to a disability was 5.4 days. The average length of a short suspension for primary students identified as receiving adjustments due to a 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 a disability who were short suspended, 2021**

Year	Enrolments of students with disability	# Students with disability short suspended	% Students with disability short suspended
K-2	36,578	1,147	3.1%
3-6	51,019	3,333	6.5%
<b>Primary total</b>	<b>87,597</b>	<b>4,480</b>	<b>5.1%</b>
7-10	43,413	8,064	18.6%
11-12	13,687	715	5.2%
<b>Secondary total</b>	<b>57,100</b>	<b>8,779</b>	<b>15.4%</b>
<b>All</b>	<b>144,697</b>	<b>13,259</b>	<b>9.2%</b>

(Notes 1-3, 5, 6)

The average length of a long suspension for primary students identified as receiving adjustments due to a disability was 9.5 days, whereas the average for secondary students was 13.1 days.

**Table 10: Students identified as receiving adjustments due to a disability who were long suspended, 2021**

Year	Enrolments of students with disability	# Students with disability long suspended	% Students with disability long suspended
K-2	36,578	212	0.6%
3-6	51,019	939	1.8%
<b>Primary total</b>	<b>87,597</b>	<b>1,151</b>	<b>1.3%</b>
7-10	43,413	3,960	9.1%
11-12	13,687	310	2.3%
<b>Secondary total</b>	<b>57,100</b>	<b>4,270</b>	<b>7.5%</b>
<b>All</b>	<b>144,697</b>	<b>5,421</b>	<b>3.7%</b>

(Notes 1-3, 5, 6)



# Data by SA4 groups, 2021

The NSW Department of Education uses the ABS Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS) 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 one percent of students suspended in 2021. Students in North West NSW were most likely to receive a suspension, with 8.3% of students receiving a suspension. 7.1% of students received a short suspension and 3.0% received a long suspension, in North West NSW.

As with short suspensions, students in Sydney were less frequently long suspended than those in other parts of the state.

**Table 11: Short suspensions by SA4 group, 2021**

SA4 Group	Total short suspensions	Total number of students short suspended	Students short suspended as % of SA4 group enrolment
Sydney-North	747	640	0.7%
Sydney-Inner	1,331	1,007	1.8%
Sydney-South	2,512	1,893	2.5%
Sydney-South West	4,173	3,102	3.4%
Sydney-West	3,428	2,412	2.6%
Sydney-North West	1,925	1,419	2.1%
North East NSW	6,462	3,944	6.5%
North West NSW	7,537	4,622	7.1%
South West NSW	4,417	2,748	5.3%
South East NSW	5,613	3,524	4.9%
Central Coast, Newcastle	4,891	3,314	4.2%
<b>Grand total</b>	<b>43,062</b>	<b>28,543</b>	<b>3.6%</b>

(Notes 7-8)

**Table 12: Long suspensions by SA4 group, 2021**

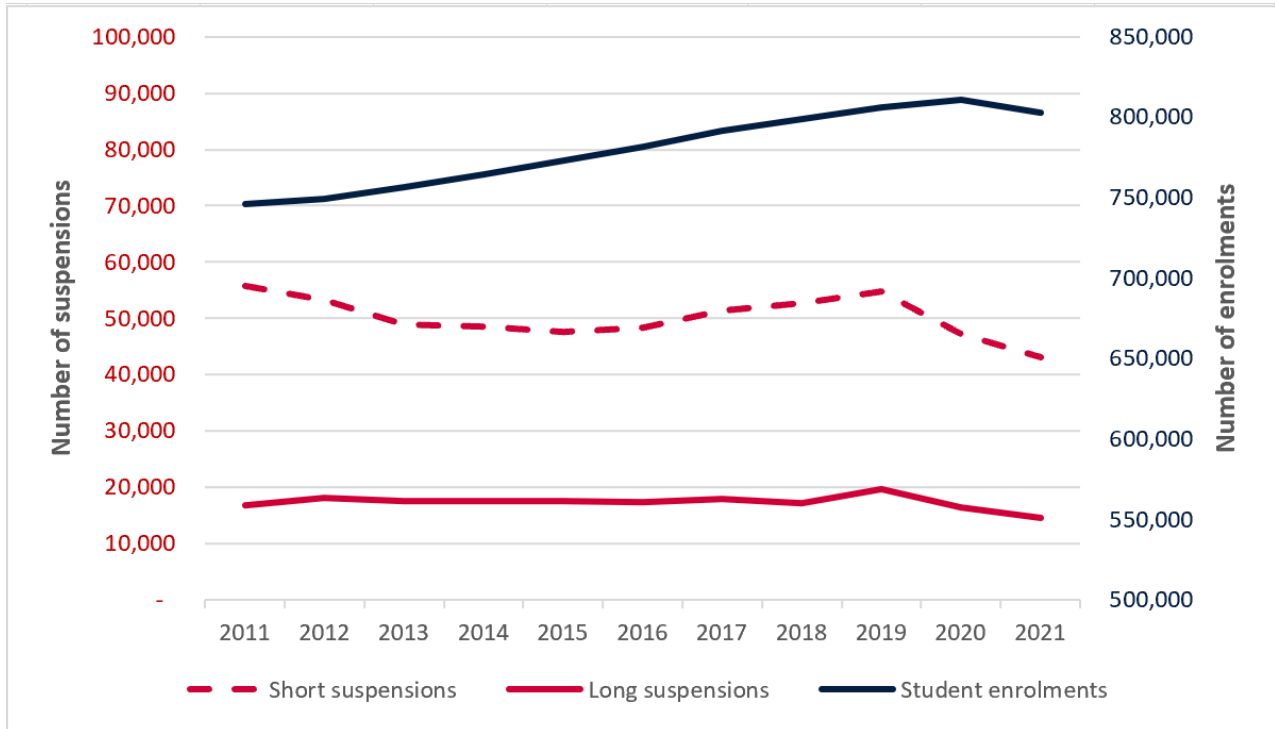
SA4 Group	Total long suspensions	Total number of students long suspended	Students long suspended as % of SA4 group enrolment
Sydney-North	288	248	0.3%
Sydney-Inner	425	325	0.6%
Sydney-South	820	657	0.9%
Sydney-South West	1,371	1,090	1.2%
Sydney-West	860	691	0.7%
Sydney-North West	708	564	0.8%
North East NSW	2,313	1,656	2.7%
North West NSW	2,716	1,940	3.0%
South West NSW	1,729	1,180	2.3%
South East NSW	1,593	1,226	1.7%
Central Coast, Newcastle	1,795	1,417	1.8%
<b>Grand total</b>	<b>14,620</b>	<b>10,966</b>	<b>1.4%</b>

(Notes 7-8)

# Suspensions over time

In 2021 there was a total of 57,682 suspensions in NSW government schools. The COVID-19 pandemic has likely contributed to a decline in 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 2011-2021**



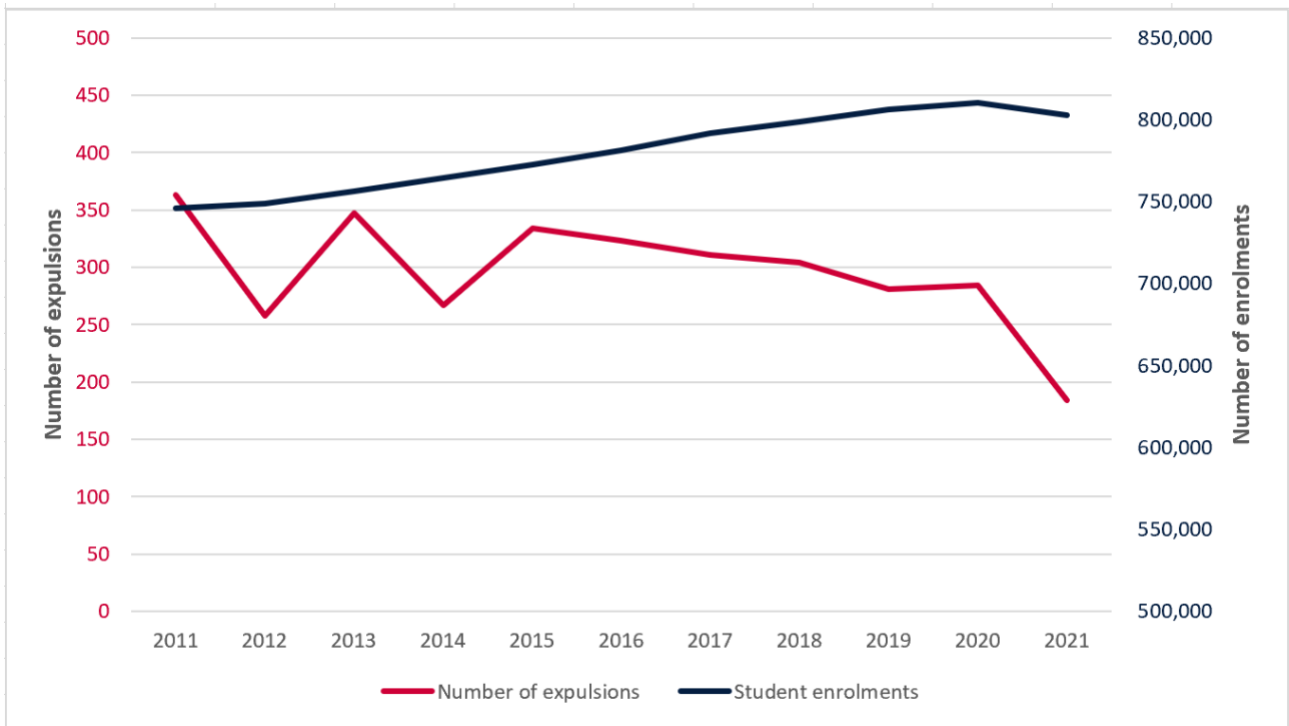
(Notes 1-2, 4, 8-10)

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

# Expulsions over time

In 2021 there were a total of 182 students expelled from NSW government schools and 184 expulsions, including students expelled from more than one school. Of these, 93 expulsions were for misbehaviour, and 91 were for unsatisfactory participation. A lower number of expulsions in 2021 is expected as most students were learning from home for the duration of Term 3 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Figure 2: Expulsions and enrolments at NSW government schools 2011-2021**



(Notes 1-2, 9-10)

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

## Notes:

1. 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.
2. In 2019 to 2021 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.
3. Where a student receives both a short suspension and a long suspension in 2021, 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'.
4. Support students at mainstream schools are now reported by their underlying grade of enrolment, whereas in previous factsheets all support students were classified as ungraded and included with Years 3-6 and Years 7-10 enrolments. This results in small changes to the suspension rate, particularly for secondary students.
5. Data for students identified as receiving adjustments due to disability is taken from the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with a 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](#).

6. The definition has been broadened for students who were suspended and identified as receiving adjustments due to disability. Suspensions issued to students identified as receiving an adjustment due to disability are included in this publication if they are eligible for inclusion in the NCCD (see note 5) including: a) students who are not reported to the Australian Government, and b) students who were identified as receiving adjustments due to disability at one school but were suspended at a different school.  
  
Factsheets published prior to 2021 used the tightened definition of students who were suspended and identified as receiving adjustments due to disability. This only included: a) students reported to the Australian Government in the NCCD, and b) students suspended in the school that identified them as receiving adjustments due to the disability in the same calendar year as the suspension. Therefore, figures in the 2021 factsheet are not comparable with factsheets published prior to 2021.
7. Students who were suspended in more than one school from different SA4 groups are only counted once in the grand total. Therefore, the grand total may not match the total of the columns above it.
8. Total number of students short suspended includes students on suspension on more than one occasion.
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. Since 2013, data has been harvested from ERN or the Department's student administration system SALM/ebs: central, making it more reliable.