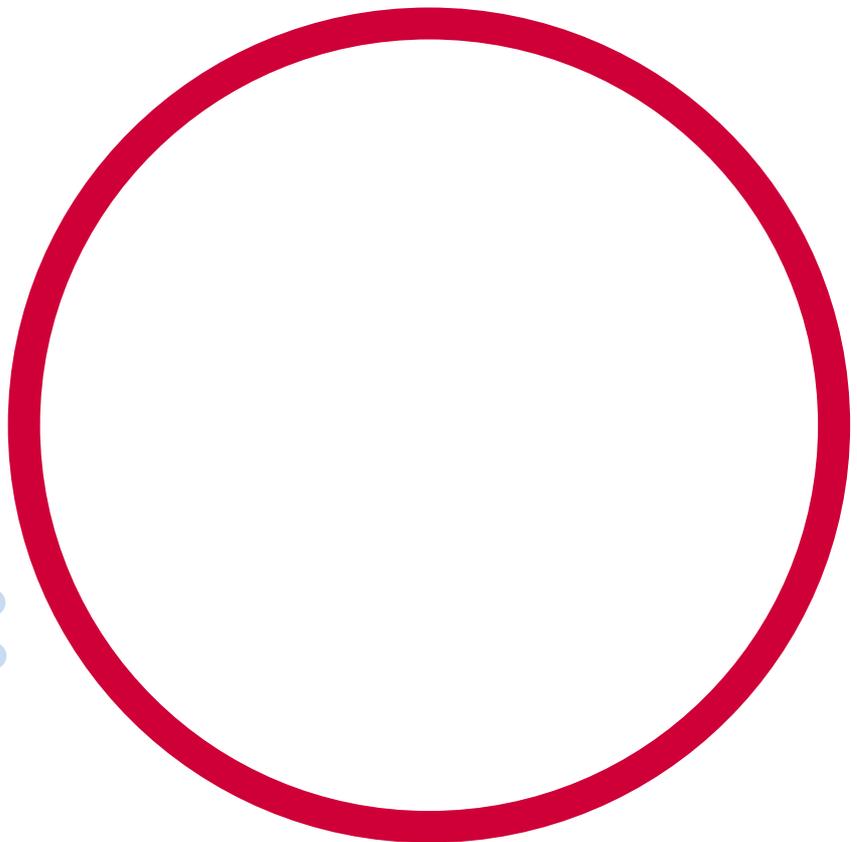
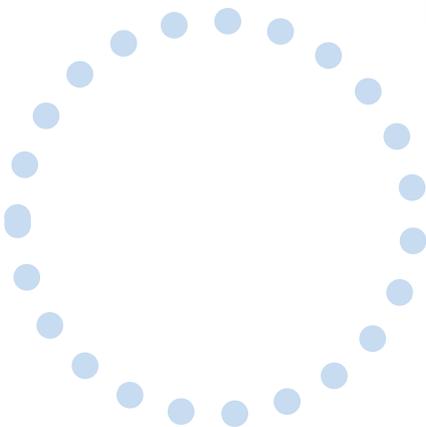
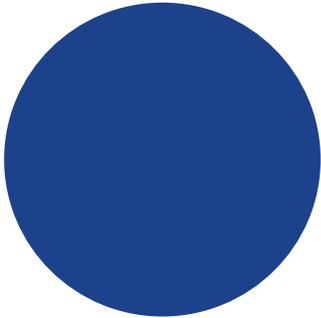


Suspensions and Expulsions Semester 1 2017–2021



Introduction

The suspension and expulsion of NSW government students is an area of increased public interest. This is the first Semester 1 fact sheet. Previous fact sheets have provided full year data, however, changes to the data collection and validation process in 2021 has allowed for publication of Semester 1 data. In order to contextualise the 2021 data, suspension data for the last five years has been provided.

Please note that no comparisons or calculations can be made using Semester 1 and full year data reported in previous factsheets, as students suspended in both semesters are only counted once in the full year publication.

Semester 1 Suspensions, 2017–2021

One in thirty students in NSW public schools was suspended at least once in Semester 1 2021. This is consistent with rates in 2019, which is the most recent year not affected by COVID-19 (Note 1).

Table 1a: Students receiving suspensions – Semester 1 2017–2021

All students	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Short suspensions	27,246	28,839	31,013	21,209	30,618
Long suspensions	9,108	8,811	10,454	7,313	10,030
Total suspensions	36,354	37,650	41,467	28,522	40,648
Students short suspended (#)	19,620	20,627	22,287	16,444	22,267
Students long suspended (#)	7,323	7,183	8,423	6,248	8,152
All students suspended	23,625	24,343	26,685	20,315	26,686
Students short suspended (%)	2.5%	2.6%	2.8%	2.0%	2.8%
Students long suspended (%)	0.9%	0.9%	1.0%	0.8%	1.0%
All students suspended (%)	3.0%	3.0%	3.3%	2.5%	3.3%

(Notes 1–3)

In Semester 1 2021, around one in a hundred primary school students were suspended, with 7,123 short suspensions and 1,334 long suspensions issued. This is the lowest suspension rate in Semester 1 in recent years (excluding 2020 due to COVID-19 impacts).

Table 1b: Primary students receiving suspensions – Semester 1 2017–2021

Primary students	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Short suspensions	7,590	8,519	9,064	5,767	7,123
Long suspensions	2,014	1,773	1,977	1,190	1,334
Total suspensions	9,604	10,292	11,041	6,957	8,457
Students short suspended (#)	5,075	5,639	5,970	4,247	4,830
Students long suspended (#)	1,551	1,405	1,525	966	1,054
All students suspended	5,812	6,253	6,591	4,757	5,327
Students short suspended (%)	1.0%	1.1%	1.2%	0.9%	1.0%
Students long suspended (%)	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.2%	0.2%
All students suspended (%)	1.2%	1.3%	1.3%	1.0%	1.1%

(Notes 1–3)

There was a gradual increase in Semester 1 suspensions for secondary students from 2017 to 2019, followed by a noticeable fall in 2020 when many students learned from home for a seven-week period.

In Semester 1 2021, both short and long suspensions for secondary students increased to the highest figure in the five-year period. The percentage of students suspended also increased, with 6.8% of all secondary students receiving a suspension in Semester 1 2021.

Table 1c: Secondary students receiving suspensions – Semester 1 2017–2021

Secondary students	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Short suspensions	19,656	20,320	21,949	15,442	23,495
Long suspensions	7,094	7,038	8,477	6,123	8,696
Total suspensions	26,750	27,358	30,426	21,565	32,191
Students short suspended (#)	14,545	14,988	16,318	12,197	17,437
Students long suspended (#)	5,772	5,778	6,898	5,282	7,098
All students suspended	17,813	18,090	20,095	15,558	21,359
Students short suspended (%)	4.8%	4.9%	5.3%	3.9%	5.5%
Students long suspended (%)	1.9%	1.9%	2.2%	1.7%	2.3%
All students suspended (%)	5.8%	5.9%	6.5%	4.9%	6.8%

(Notes 1–3)

Short suspensions, Semester 1 2021

Short suspensions are up to 4 school days. There were 30,618 short suspensions in Semester 1 2021. Of these:

- 12,202 were for continued disobedience
- 18,416 were for aggressive behaviour.

Note: These figures are based on the total number of short suspensions in Semester 1 in 2021 and include students placed on short suspension on more than one occasion.

A total of 22,267 students received short suspensions in Semester 1 2021. The average length of short suspensions was 3.0 days. The average length of short suspensions for primary students was 2.5 days, and the average length for secondary students was 3.1 days.

Table 2: Students receiving short suspensions – Semester 1 2021

Year	Enrolments	Suspended boys	Suspended girls	All students suspended	% student enrolment
K-2	208,246	976	135	1,111	0.5%
3-6	279,939	3,152	567	3,719	1.3%
Primary total	488,185	4,128	702	4,830	1.0%
7-10	230,740	10,476	4,812	15,288	6.6%
11-12	83,851	1,529	620	2,149	2.6%
Secondary total	314,591	12,005	5,432	17,437	5.5%
All	802,776	16,133	6,134	22,267	2.8%

(Note 4)

Long suspensions, Semester 1 2021

Long suspensions are up to 20 school days.

There were 10,030 long suspensions in Semester 1 2021. Of these:

- 3,925 were for persistent misbehaviour;
- 4,193 were for physical violence;
- 640 were for serious criminal behaviour related to the school;
- 745 were for possession or use of a suspected illegal substance;
- 419 were for use or possession of a prohibited weapon, firearm or knife; and,
- 108 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 Semester 1 2021 and include students placed on long suspension on more than one occasion.

A total of 8,152 students received a long suspension in Semester 1 2021. The average length of long suspensions was 12.2 days. For primary students the average length of long suspensions was 9.0 days, and the average length for secondary students was 12.7 days.

Table 3: Students receiving long suspensions – Semester 1 2021

Year	Enrolments	Suspended boys	Suspended girls	All students suspended	% student enrolment
K-2	208,246	163	21	184	0.1%
3-6	279,939	746	124	870	0.3%
Primary total	488,185	909	145	1,054	0.2%
7-10	230,740	4,205	2,047	6,252	2.7%
11-12	83,851	631	215	846	1.0%
Secondary total	314,591	4,836	2,262	7,098	2.3%
All	802,776	5,745	2,407	8,152	1.0%

(Note 4)

Aboriginal students by suspension type and education level, Semester 1 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. Ten per cent of all Aboriginal students were suspended at least once during Semester 1 2021. While this is a high figure, it is a lower rate than in previous years (excluding 2020 due to COVID-19 impacts).

Table 4: Aboriginal students receiving suspensions – Semester 1 2017–2021

Aboriginal students	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Short suspensions	7,845	8,150	9,180	6,321	8,518
Long suspensions	2,917	2,844	3,319	2,373	3,189
Total suspensions	10,762	10,994	12,499	8,694	11,707
Students short suspended (#)	5,157	5,337	6,050	4,612	5,699
Students long suspended (#)	2,242	2,197	2,520	1,954	2,454
All students suspended	6,219	6,333	7,178	5,699	6,868
Students short suspended (%)	8.7%	8.6%	9.3%	6.9%	8.3%
Students long suspended (%)	3.8%	3.5%	3.9%	2.9%	3.6%
All students suspended (%)	10.5%	10.2%	11.1%	8.5%	10.0%

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 2.5 days, whereas the average short suspension for Aboriginal secondary students was 3.2 days.

Table 5: Aboriginal students receiving short suspensions – Semester 1 2021

Year	Aboriginal enrolments	# Aboriginal students short suspended	% Aboriginal students short suspended
K-2	18,058	351	1.9%
3-6	23,595	1,263	5.4%
Primary total	41,653	1,614	3.9%
7-10	22,097	3,726	16.9%
11-12	5,272	359	6.8%
Secondary total	27,369	4,085	14.9%
All	69,022	5,699	8.3%

The average length of a long suspension for Aboriginal primary students was 9.4 days, whereas the average long suspension for secondary students was 13.2 days.

Table 6: Aboriginal students receiving long suspensions – Semester 1 2021

Year	Aboriginal enrolments	# Aboriginal students long suspended	% Aboriginal students long suspended
K-2	18,058	55	0.3%
3-6	23,595	296	1.3%
Primary total	41,653	351	0.8%
7-10	22,097	1,914	8.7%
11-12	5,272	189	3.6%
Secondary total	27,369	2,103	7.7%
All	69,022	2,454	3.6%

Students identified as receiving adjustments due to a disability, by suspension type and education level, Semester 1 2021

In 2021, students identified as receiving adjustments due to a disability accounted for approximately 18% of all government school student enrolments.

In 2021 there were approximately 803,000 enrolments in NSW government schools. More than 144,000 enrolments were students identified as receiving adjustments due to a disability. 8.7% of students identified as receiving adjustments due to a disability received a suspension in Semester 1 2021, 7.4% received a short suspension, while 2.9% received a long suspension.

Table 7: Students identified as receiving adjustments due to a disability who were suspended – Semester 1 2017–2021

All students with disability	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Short suspensions	14,261	15,546	16,490	11,407	16,120
Long suspensions	4,974	4,954	5,740	3,859	5,372
Total suspensions	19,235	20,500	22,230	15,266	21,492
Students short suspended (#)	9,311	9,984	10,751	8,204	10,681
Students long suspended (#)	3,804	3,838	4,384	3,176	4,141
All students suspended	11,020	11,610	12,605	9,899	12,573
Students short suspended (%)	7.6%	7.8%	8.3%	6.1%	7.4%
Students long suspended (%)	3.1%	3.0%	3.4%	2.3%	2.9%
All students suspended (%)	9.0%	9.1%	9.8%	7.3%	8.7%

(Notes 1–3, 5, 6)

The average length of all suspensions for students identified as receiving adjustments due to a disability was 5.3 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 8: Students identified as receiving adjustments due to a disability who were short suspended – Semester 1 2021

Year	Enrolments of students with disability	# Students with disability short suspended	% Students with disability short suspended
K-2	36,578	899	2.5%
3-6	51,019	2,575	5.0%
Primary total	87,597	3,474	4.0%
7-10	43,413	6,599	15.2%
11-12	13,687	608	4.4%
Secondary total	57,100	7,207	12.6%
All	144,697	10,681	7.4%

(Notes 1–3, 5, 6)

The average length of a long suspension for primary students identified as receiving adjustments due to a disability was 9.3 days, whereas the average for secondary students was 13.0 days.

Table 9: Students identified as receiving adjustments due to a disability who were long suspended – Semester 1 2021

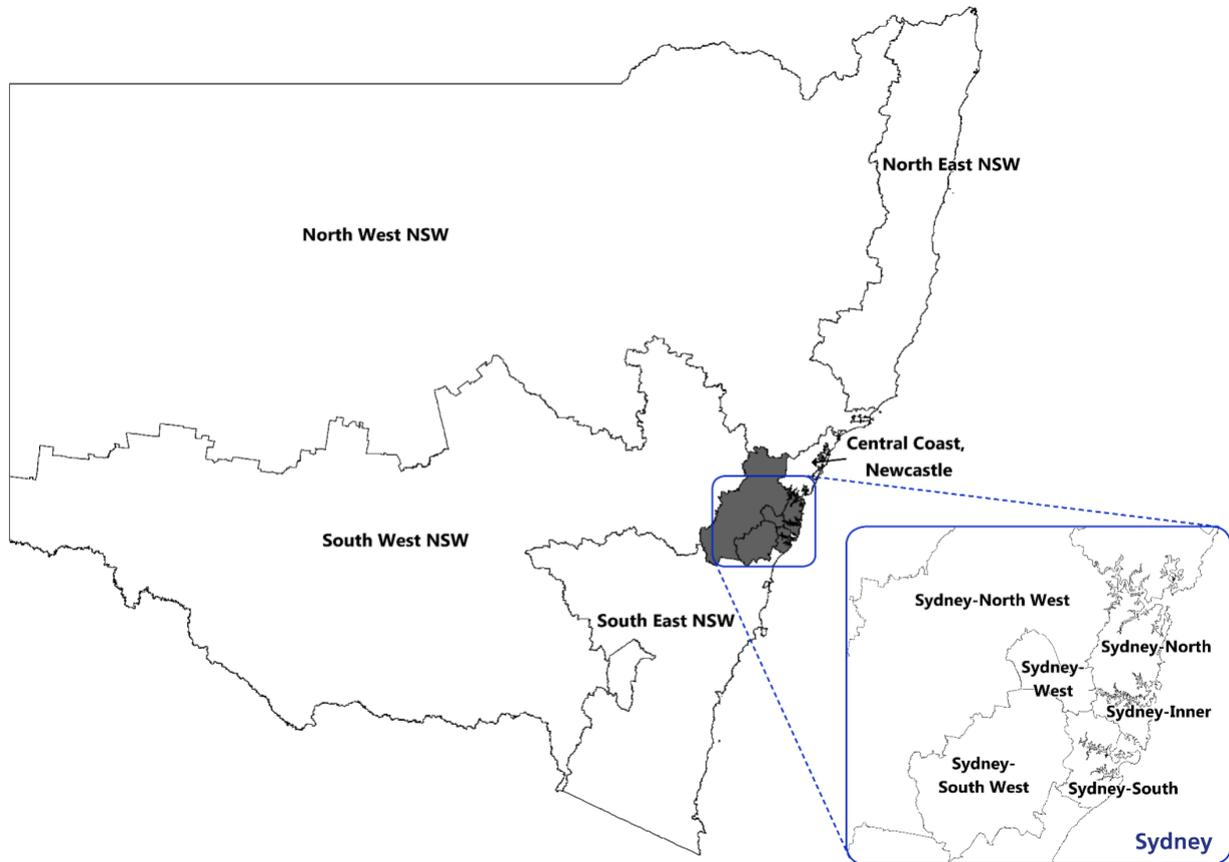
Year	Enrolments of students with disability	# Students with disability long suspended	% Students with disability long suspended
K-2	36,578	152	0.4%
3-6	51,019	674	1.3%
Primary total	87,597	826	0.9%
7-10	43,413	3,067	7.1%
11-12	13,687	248	1.8%
Secondary total	57,100	3,315	5.8%
All	144,697	4,141	2.9%

(Notes 1–3, 5, 6)

Data by SA4 groups, Semester 1 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 was the only area of NSW where less than one percent of students were suspended in Semester 1 2021. Students in North West NSW were most likely to receive a suspension, with 5.3% of students receiving a short suspension and 2.1% receiving a long suspension.

Table 10: Short suspensions by SA4 group – Semester 1 2021

SA4 Group	Total short suspensions	Total number of students short suspended	Students short suspended as % of SA4 group enrolment
Sydney-North	609	530	0.6%
Sydney-Inner	1,088	862	1.5%
Sydney-South	2,075	1,613	2.1%
Sydney-South West	3,356	2,624	2.9%
Sydney-West	2,852	2,071	2.2%
Sydney-North West	1,585	1,213	1.8%
North East NSW	3,821	2,701	4.4%
North West NSW	4,960	3,439	5.3%
South West NSW	2,692	1,894	3.6%
South East NSW	3,917	2,670	3.7%
Central Coast, Newcastle	3,663	2,690	3.4%
Grand total	30,618	22,267	2.8%

(Notes 7–8)

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

Table 11: Long suspensions by SA4 group – Semester 1 2021

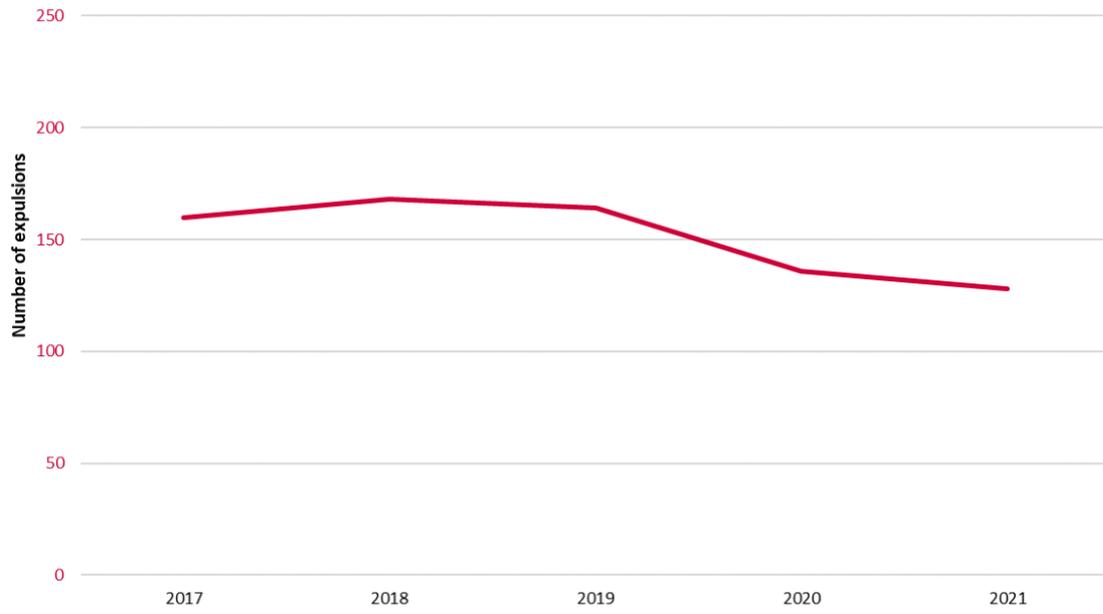
SA4 Group	Total long suspensions	Total number of students long suspended	Students long suspended as % of SA4 group enrolment
Sydney-North	244	212	0.2%
Sydney-Inner	329	268	0.5%
Sydney-South	706	586	0.8%
Sydney-South West	1,078	905	1.0%
Sydney-West	701	590	0.6%
Sydney-North West	572	479	0.7%
North East NSW	1,344	1,082	1.8%
North West NSW	1,733	1,353	2.1%
South West NSW	994	745	1.4%
South East NSW	986	817	1.1%
Central Coast, Newcastle	1,343	1,131	1.4%
Grand total	10,030	8,152	1.0%

(Notes 7–8)

Expulsions, Semester 1 2017–2021

In Semester 1 2021 there were a total of 128 students expelled from NSW government schools and 130 expulsions, including students expelled from more than one school. Of these, 64 expulsions were for misbehaviour, and 66 were for unsatisfactory participation.

Figure 2: Expulsions and enrolments at NSW government schools – Semester 1 2017–2021



(Notes 1, 2)

Notes:

1. NSW suspension data in Semester 1 2020 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 a seven-week period from 24 March to 22 May 2020.
2. In 2019 and 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 Semester 1, 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 Semester 1 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.