

Strengthening school and system capacity to implement effective interventions to support student behaviour and wellbeing

BACKGROUND

Education can assist young people to achieve great long term outcomes.

Recent inquiries and reports show the need to better assist schools to support a range of student behaviours¹. This work aimed to identify, what:

- Early intervention, prevention and individual approaches and strategies have been rigorously evaluated and found to be effective in addressing student behaviour?
- School and system strategies can best build the capacity of schools to implement effective interventions?

METHOD

Drawing from the research and practice-based evidence, this work:

1. Mapped the current policy and practice context within the NSW Department of Education to support student behaviour.
2. Reviewed policy and practice across education settings nationally and internationally.
3. Explored approaches and strategies across key themes our staff require more support with.
4. Identified opportunities to strengthen support to schools to address strengths-based (i.e. social skills) and risk-based (i.e. aggressive) behaviours.

RESULTS

Principles of good practice

- Meaningful engagement between schools, families and services to foster **shared community responsibility and action**
- Student behaviour is integrated within a **strategic whole-school approach** to learning, wellbeing and mental health
- All students are supported through a **continuum of care** that includes promotion, prevention, early intervention and individual student support
- **Evidence-informed programs, practices and processes** are used to plan, implement, monitor and evaluate school change and improvement
- **Proactive prevention focused, relationship-based and restorative practices** are balanced with appropriate discipline practices
- **A student-centred strengths-based approach** is adopted with developmentally appropriate and relevant content for students
- **School leaders, teachers and specialist staff are engaged and supported** through capacity building and wellbeing practices
- **Social and emotional skills and behaviour expectations are explicitly taught** to students with opportunities for developmental skill building and authentic practise
- **Quality implementation of effective interventions** is facilitated through a staged approach with clear planning, capacity building and with sufficient time and resources to establish and sustain a whole-school approach to positive behaviour support
- **School, student and staff needs are considered, assessed and monitored** through collective data systems that support evidence-informed decision-making processes

Findings identified 11 areas for capacity improvement, 10 principles of good practice in schools and eight themes with key drivers needed to strengthen school and system capacity to address student wellbeing and behaviour. The eight themes included:

- A systematic approach to **professional learning**
- Building system **capacity and expertise**: school and specialist services
- Increase access to **resources, implementation support and information**
- Strengthening **leadership support** for policy and practice change
- Effective **communication and stakeholder partnerships** to support student behaviour and wellbeing
- A positive, preventative and inclusive approach to the complexity of **student needs**
- Connecting the dots - implementation of **student behaviour and wellbeing policies and guidelines**
- Proactive coordination and integration of **behavioural support services**



CONCLUSION

These findings will inform the development of a Behaviour Strategy and capacity building tools to support schools to assess their needs, implement evidence-based practices and monitor their impact on student behaviour and wellbeing outcomes.

The strategy will support every student to be known, valued and cared for in NSW public schools.