

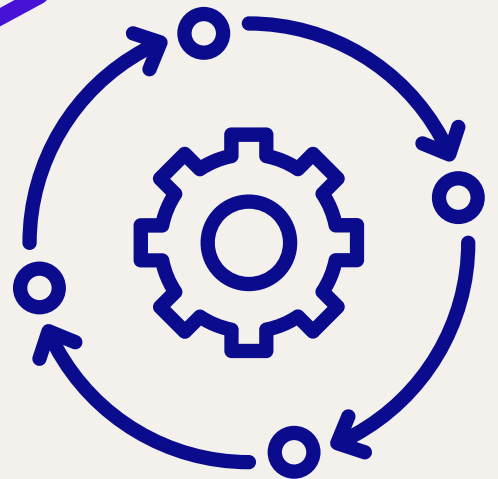
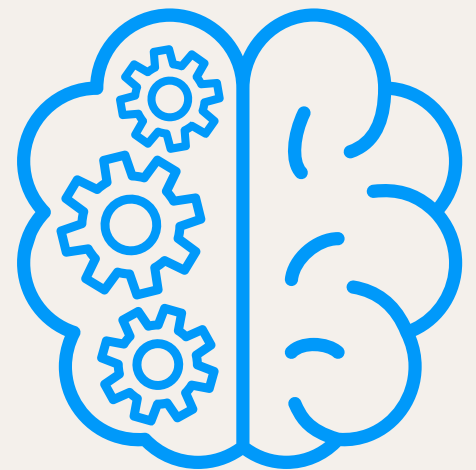
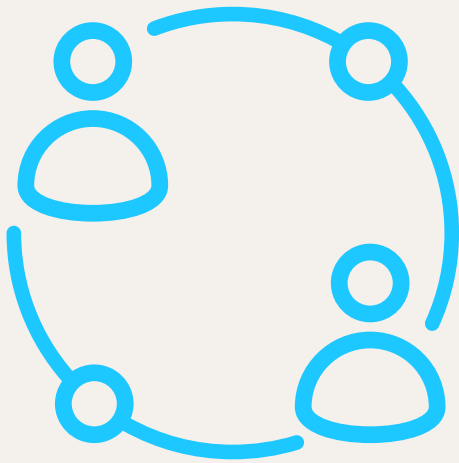


EVIDENCE
FOR LEARNING

Guidance Report

All year levels

Effective behaviour supports in schools



This Guidance Report is based on original content from 'Improving Behaviour in Schools' produced by the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF). The authors of the original Guidance Report are Igraine Rhodes (EEF) and Michelle Long (Dixons Music Primary).

The original content has been modified for the Australian context based on a review process conducted by Evidence for Learning (E4L) in consultation with an Advisory Panel.

Australian content for this E4L Guidance Report was authored by Susannah Schoeffel with input from E4L team members Danielle Toon, Michael Rosenbrock and Hannah Matthews.

E4L thanks the Australian researchers and practitioners who provided input to and feedback on drafts of this Guidance Report. We particularly acknowledge the insights of the Advisory Panel Members: Dr Katherine Dix (Australian Council for Educational Research), Karina Stocker (Docklands Primary School), Tom Cain (Monterey Secondary College), Sarah Richardson (Australian Education Research Organisation) and Dr Russ Fox (Monash University).

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E4L acknowledges Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia. We pay our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders past, present and emerging. We also accept the invitation in the Uluru Statement from the Heart to walk together with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in a movement of the Australian people for a better future.

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Foreword

In the 2013 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) study of 15-year-olds, 43% of Australian students surveyed reported that their classrooms were noisy and disruptive, well above the average of 33% for Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries.¹ This is consistent with the experiences of Australian middle school teachers, captured in the Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS), who report spending nearly 15% of class time managing student behaviour during an average lesson.²

While most students in most lessons are demonstrating behaviours conducive to learning, poor behaviour is a major cause of stress for teachers – especially new teachers – and can have a lasting impact on the school experience and outcomes of students.¹ There is a need for schools to have consistent and clear approaches to behaviour that set and maintain behaviour expectations in lessons and throughout the school environment.

This Guidance Report has been developed to support school leaders in primary and secondary schools to make evidence-informed decisions about their approaches to behaviour supports. It includes practical examples that may be helpful in schools and classrooms where behaviour is generally good as well as where there are challenges.

The recommendations in this report are developed from a systematic review of the international research evidence with input from Australian researchers and practitioners. The recommendations focus on strategies related to three areas: proactive, responsive and implementation.

Proactive: The first area focuses on strategies to reduce the chance of misbehaviour occurring in the first instance. A key theme from these recommendations is the importance of knowing individual students well, so that schools and teachers know which factors might affect student behaviour and what the school can do to address these. Many simple approaches or routines that don't take much time or money to implement – like greeting students individually before a lesson – can help build good relationships and, in turn, can have a positive impact on behaviour.

Responsive: The second area focuses on how to approach behaviour that doesn't meet the school's expectations, either once-off or where there is an ongoing issue. A key message is that schools should use personalised approaches that consider behavioural influences for students who require additional support. It recommends teachers are trained in specific strategies and supported with adequate resourcing if they're dealing with students with complex behaviour needs.

Implementation: The third area focuses on the importance of consistency and coherence when it comes to the implementation of behaviour supports. This means once school leaders have considered the rationale for putting a new behaviour strategy or approach to work, they need to dedicate time and care to embed it across the entire school.

While this report focuses on behavioural supports related to learning in classrooms and school environments, we recognise many interconnected factors influence overall learning, wellbeing and engagement of students. We encourage you to use this report in conjunction with other guidance and resources – including other E4L resources – to help support a consistently excellent, evidence-informed education system in Australia that creates great opportunities for all children and young people regardless of their background.

The Evidence for Learning team

Introduction

Why behaviour?

While Australia has many students who meet behavioural expectations in classrooms and school environments, Australian teachers and students report disruptive behaviour as a challenge.^{3,4}

Teachers report it is difficult to deal with disruptive behaviour and it affects teacher attrition and retention.^{5,6} The 'Teachers Perceptions of their Work' research conducted by Monash University surveyed 5,495 Australian teachers in the 2022 school year. Of note it reported that 24.5% of respondents did not feel safe in their workplace; the leading reason relating to student behaviour.⁷ In one recent Australian study, many teachers reported that most of their time managing behaviour was spent being reactive, or responsive,⁸ rather than utilising proactive approaches which can have a greater impact.

The impact of undesirable behaviour is not just felt by teachers. Surveys exploring the experience of students also highlight that students notice and are impacted by poor behaviour, both in their feelings of safety and in their ability to focus during lessons. OECD data indicates that, on average, Australian students find their classes considerably more disruptive than students in other OECD countries.¹

We have published this Guidance Report to help support Australian school leaders and teachers with challenges related to behaviour. The report helps educators to explore the best international research evidence on effective behaviour supports and reflect on examples from Australian researchers and educators about how to put that evidence into practice.

Who is the guide for?

Given the evidence literature consulted was for students aged four to 18, this Guidance Report is applicable to primary and secondary settings. Parts of the report will be useful for classroom teachers, while all should be relevant to school leaders who are considering approaches to support behaviour.

Further audiences who may find the guidance relevant include other school staff, school councils, families, policymakers, and educational researchers.

E4L has specific [resources on behaviour](#) for those working in the early childhood education sector. E4L has commissioned and published a systematic review report on the Australian and international literature on responding to challenging behaviours in early childhood education and care settings. This report, alongside accompanying 'tip sheet' resources for educators, explores behaviour strategies for those working with children aged two to five years.

Introduction

What does (and doesn't) this guide cover?

The strategies outlined should be helpful in schools and classrooms where behaviour is generally good, as well as where there are challenges. 'Behaviour', throughout this report, is taken to mean a range of ways students can act in school, including disruptive or aggressive behaviours, prosocial behaviours, and learning behaviours (which are explained in [Recommendation 2](#)). It is focused on recommendations related to school and classroom behaviour that affects learning and either meets or challenges the expectations for student conduct at school.

The report consists of six recommendations which fall into three categories: **proactive strategies**, **responsive strategies**, and **implementation**.

While this Guidance Report aims to help schools to support their students with a range of general behaviours they may encounter, it does not attempt to cover approaches to supporting behaviour in every situation or student need. Specialist guidance and resources may be required to support students with significant additional learning, behavioural or health and wellbeing needs, and students who have entirely disengaged from schooling.^{a,b}

Box 1: Behaviour has many influences and effects – it does not exist in a vacuum

- School-based behaviour supports are one aspect of supporting students. This report should be considered in conjunction with the many other resources that are available to schools to support their students – whether that be related to academic achievement, social and emotional development, or wellbeing.
- Decisions about your school's approach to behaviour are likely to be most effective if made in conjunction with a range of stakeholders, including teaching and support staff, students, families and community members.

a E4L has specific resources on [supporting students at risk of disengagement from school](#), including a literature review, insights papers for school leaders and case studies of Victorian schools.

b Detailed discussion about school exclusions (suspensions and expulsion) are outside the scope of this report. The [Campbell Systematic Review \(2018\)](#) on exclusions outlines the differential rates at which children and young people aged 4-18 from different backgrounds are excluded from schools and reviews evidence for various interventions schools may use to reduce their exclusion rates.



Summary of recommendations

PROACTIVE

1



Knowing and understanding students:
Know and understand your students and their influences

- Students' behaviour has multiple influences, some of which teachers can address directly
- Knowing and understanding a student, including their influences, strengths, interests and cultural background, will inform effective responses to misbehaviour
- It is important that every student has a supportive relationship with a member of school staff

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8

2



Teaching students:
Teach learning behaviours alongside managing misbehaviour

- Teaching and reinforcing learning behaviours will reduce the need to manage misbehaviour
- Teachers should encourage students to use strategies to monitor their own behaviours
- Consider how teaching and learning, and classroom conditions support learning behaviours, including how classroom culture supports student participation; and whether students are able to successfully engage with lesson content and access appropriate learning supports

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3



Classroom strategies:
Use strategies and routines in the classroom to support expected behaviour

- Effective classroom management, including routines and the use of specific behaviour-related praise, can reduce challenging behaviour, student disengagement, bullying, and aggression
- Improving classroom management usually involves intensive professional learning with teachers reflecting on their classroom management, trying a new approach and reviewing their progress over time
- Reinforcement systems can be effective when they are part of a broader classroom management strategy

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PROACTIVE

4



School-wide supports:
Use school-wide supports and initiatives to build expectations and norms around behaviour

- School leaders should ensure the school's approach to behaviour is clear and consistently applied, e.g. by having clear expectations, well-documented policies and procedures, and using data to inform decision-making
- Working in partnership with families and community can support expected behaviour
- Whole school professional learning can encourage consistency of school-wide supports and initiatives

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RESPONSIVE

5



Targeted approaches:
Use targeted approaches to meet the needs of individual students

- Universal behaviour systems provide a foundation, but are unlikely to meet the needs of all students
- For students with more challenging behaviour, the approach should be adapted to individual needs
- Teachers should be trained in specific strategies if supporting students with complex behaviour needs

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IMPLEMENTATION

6



Implementation:
Consistency is key

- Consistency and coherence at a whole-school level are paramount
- Whole-school changes usually take longer to embed than individually tailored or single-classroom approaches
- Behaviour approaches are more likely to impact academic outcomes if implemented at a whole-school level
- It is important to monitor and evaluate any approach being implemented to best understand the impact on students and identify where adjustments are needed

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1

Knowing and understanding students: Know and understand your students and their influences



*'A multitude of interrelated factors influence each child's developmental course and academic growth.'*⁹

Good relationships matter

Supportive relationships are a key motivation for teachers joining the profession.¹⁰ The perception of Australian students is that teachers usually have positive relationships with students, although this is reported more positively by students from higher socio-economic backgrounds.¹¹

Research suggests that teachers knowing their students well can have a positive impact on classroom behaviour.^{12,13} Understanding students better can be more effective than relying on a default response as it can help match a teacher's response with the underlying cause of the student's behaviour. When two students are disruptive in class, their behaviour may have different motivations and require different responses from the teacher. Student A may want attention even if it is negative attention while Student B may want to escape from tasks that they don't have the skills to complete, or find too easy. The teacher's response can reinforce or discourage their behaviour. For example, sending Student B out may encourage escape behaviour and reduce the student's instructional time, rather than address the underlying cause of the issue. For Student A, a reprimand may just reinforce rather than reorient the behaviour by providing attention.

In settings where multiple adults frequently work with individual students, such as secondary schools, effective communication between those key adults is important. Information needs to be sought and willingly shared by staff, students, and families. E4L's Guidance Report '[Working with parents to support children's learning](#)' is a useful reference when thinking about effective ways to develop relationships with families.

How can we get to know our students?

Consider your school context and the system that would work for you. Is it possible to structure your school such that someone knows each student, their strengths and interests? Can this be managed for some students, if not all? In primary schools, the class teacher may be able to provide this role. In secondary schools, an existing pastoral or 'home group' system might be a good place to start to proactively support your students to respond well to influences in and out of school that could affect their behaviour.

At the teacher level, regularly and intentionally focusing small amounts of time working on relationships with individual students can have a big impact. This could be as simple as asking about their weekend, how their favourite sports team is performing or observing a student to best understand what feedback is likely to be acceptable and impactful.

Knowing and understanding students' cultural background

There is a rich diversity reflected in students attending Australian schools. Around 30% of students speak a language other than English at home,¹⁴ and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students account for 6.2% of all Australian students.¹⁵ For teachers, understanding a student's cultural background and identity is important, as its influence on the student as a learner may be both significant and subtle. For example, knowing the cultural expectation of what learning looks like may help a teacher to identify if a student is engaged.^{16,c}

Consider the things that might affect student behaviour and what the school can do to address these

There are many factors that can explain student behaviour in schools. [Figure 1](#) highlights the interactions between positive and negative influences over behaviour and illustrates how students move between quadrants depending on the influence of life and educational events. By becoming aware of events before their effect becomes extreme, there is more chance of mitigating any negative change and of being able

c See [Glossary](#) for a definition of engagement.



to keep the student in positive zones, both in terms of overall school behaviour and overall influences. When the school becomes aware of a negative change in circumstance, they could act to increase the number of positive influences or reduce the negative, for example, through counselling. If behaviour deteriorates, they will be in a better position to counteract the negative influence with an appropriate positive approach.

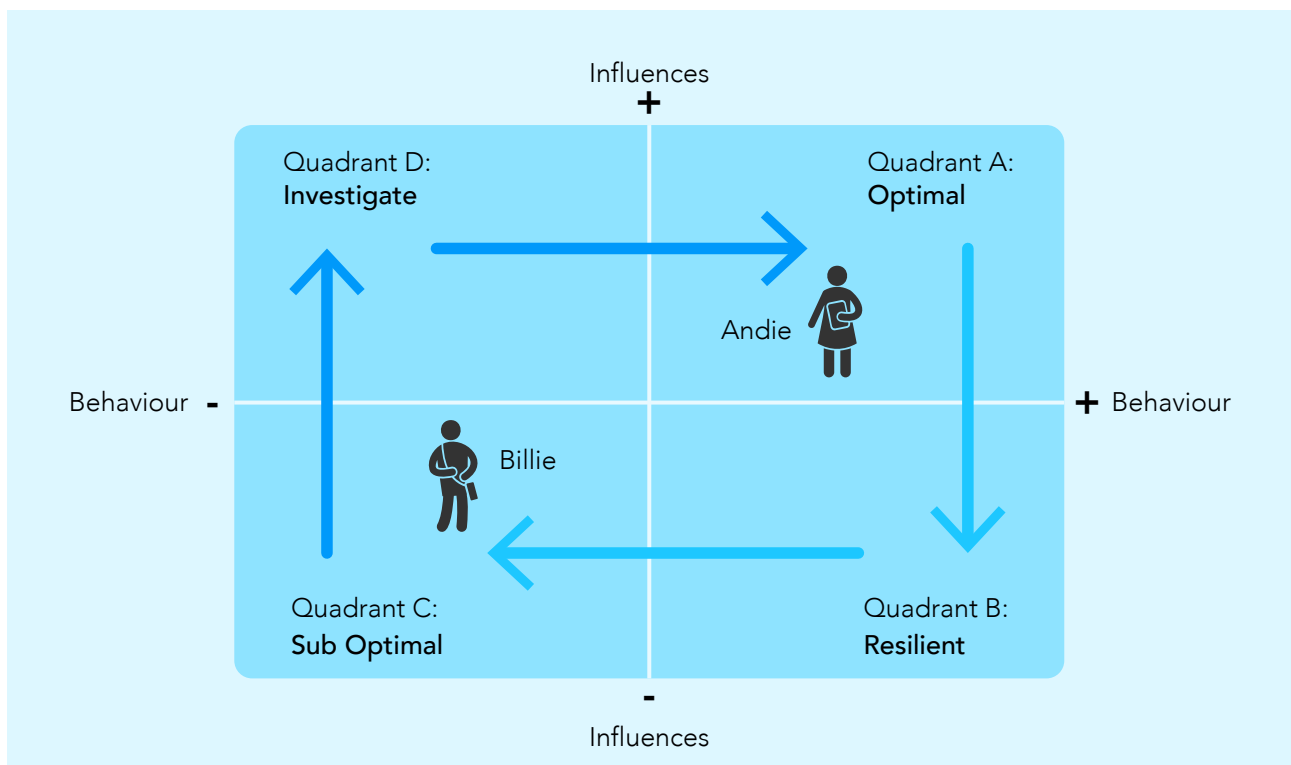
Consider, for example, Andie in Year 8 who has experienced the death of a close relative. Andie begins in Quadrant A (the optimal position). However, the loss of a relative is understandably a negative influence on behaviour and they may gradually move through the quadrants (first to bottom right and then bottom left). These changes may be subtle but over time they can have a substantial effect on the student's wellbeing or learning.

Or consider the example of Billie, a Year 10 student who has been disrupting lessons and walking out of class. Investigating this behaviour, the school staff team becomes aware that she has not made

solid friendships so has low social confidence since moving to the school the previous term. Alongside implementing the appropriate response to the disruptive behaviour, as per the school's wider approach to behaviour, school staff focus on improving the influences on Billie's behaviour. An informal meeting with her 'home group' teacher reveals that she is a talented musician, so she is encouraged to join the school band where she can connect with like-minded peers. She is also encouraged to have regular conversations with her in-school mentor. As her influences in school improve, Billie becomes more aware of her own behaviours as well as being positively influenced by the friends and mentor she has grown close to; she adjusts her behaviour positively without much disciplinary action being taken.¹⁷

Being in an informed position where staff can be aware of negative influences starting or continuing to affect a student's life is key to building understanding and to identifying the most effective behaviour management approach.

Figure 1: The link between positive and negative school behaviour and influences





Box 2: The Establish-Maintain-Restore (EMR) method¹⁸

One way to build positive relationships with students is the EMR method, which has promising results from a small study. Summarised below, it involves focusing intentionally on the students who it is most difficult to connect with, who may be most in need of a consistent, positive relationship.

It is recommended that this technique should take no longer than 30 minutes per week and can be completed during periods the adult already spends with students, representing an efficient use of time.

	Establish	Maintain	Restore (R ³)
Definition	Intentional practices to cultivate a positive relationship with each student (i.e. build trust, connection & understanding)	Proactive efforts to prevent relationship quality from diminishing over time (i.e. ongoing positive interactions)	Intentionally repairing harm to the relationship after a negative interaction (i.e. reconnecting with student)
Practical strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set aside window of time to spend with student • Inquire about student's interests • Communicate positively: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Open ended questions – Affirmations – Reflexive listening – Validation – Reference student info – Deliver constructive feedback wisely 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5-to-1 ratio of positive to negative interactions • Positive notes or postcards home • Greet students at the door • Relationship check-in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • R³ = Reconnect, Repair, Restore • Take responsibility for negative interaction • Deliver an empathy statement • Let go of the previous incident and start fresh • Communicate your care for the student • Engaging in mutual problem-solving

There are influences on behaviour which teaching staff can affect directly, others where there is a potential for teaching staff to influence or advise, and a third category where influences may be outside the purview of teaching staff.

Challenging experiences for students at home or in the community may negatively affect their ability to learn or cope with the school environment, which could lead to a withdrawal from learning.¹⁹ In some cases, this can lead to the void being filled with negative behaviour, which is sometimes linked to maintaining self-esteem and social standing with peers. This can become more pronounced in the later primary and secondary years where the social skills aspect becomes more valuable.²⁰

Behaviour and mental health can be closely linked. A recent review of the global evidence conducted by VicHealth found that risk factors for mental health for children and adolescents are high

screen time, cyberbullying, out of home care, poor family functioning, chronic illness and obesity, and factors related to refugee status. Protective factors include positive family functioning, social support, supportive communities and physical activity.²¹

In-school risk and protective factors that affect student mental health as identified by the Department for Education in the United Kingdom are outlined in [Table 1](#). These factors could play a major role in behaviour presenting in the classroom.

Considering both the influences and the extent to which the school can influence them should lead to a more effective choice of strategies when considering approaches, policies and individual response plans for positive and negative behaviours in school. This may also involve considering how wellbeing and behaviour approaches intersect. School-based wellbeing programs, for example, can have small to moderate effects on behavioural adjustments.²²



Table 1: Factors affecting mental health in schools²³

Risk factors	Protective factors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bullying including online (cyber) • Discrimination • Breakdown in or lack of positive friendships • Negative or risky peer influences • Peer pressure • Peer on peer abuse • Poor student to teacher/school staff relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear school-wide approaches to, and policies on, behaviour and bullying • Staff behaviour policy (code of conduct) • 'Open door' policy for students to raise problems • A whole-school approach to promoting good mental health • Good student to teacher/school staff relationships • Positive classroom management • A sense of belonging • Positive peer influences • Positive friendships • Effective safeguarding and child protection policies • An effective early help process • Understand their role in and be part of effective multi-agency working • Appropriate procedures to ensure staff are confident to raise concerns about policies and processes, and know they will be dealt with fairly and effectively

While every person's behaviour and their motivations for it are complex and unique, the age of your students, or their actual stage of development, can affect their behaviour in ways that are predictable.

Adolescence—most broadly defined as 10–25 years old—is a significant time for brain development associated with developing a stronger, more independent, and more fixed sense of self. During the teenage years, peer influence is more important than at any other age. Social pressure (real or imagined) contributes to increased risk-taking behaviour at this age and can also lead to risk aversion, such as a sudden reluctance to answer questions in class. It is common to be acutely self-conscious, particularly in early adolescence (11–14 years old).

In 2016, researchers in America carried out an experiment to find an effective way to reduce bullying in middle schools for students 11–16 years old using social norms, as outlined in [Box 3](#).

Box 3: A social network experiment²⁴

Students were encouraged to start a grassroots campaign against bullying, designing posters to be displayed around school with their own name and photo on, or handing out orange wristbands to other students who were engaging in friendly behaviours as a visible reward for action against bullying; 2,500 wristbands were given out and tracked during the study.

In the schools that implemented the anti-bullying campaign, reports of student conflict reduced by 30% compared to a control group. Researchers also asked students at the beginning of the program to name whom they had chosen to spend time with over the last week; they found stronger effects in schools where 'highly connected' students (those whom more people had chosen to spend time with) were chosen for the anti-bullying program.

This experiment fits with our understanding of adolescent motivation: many teenagers are influenced by their peer networks and motivated by social justice. These levers can be more powerful than the risk of negative consequences.



Negative experiences that might influence behaviour

There is a growing body of research identifying the harmful effects of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) on the rest of a person's life. ACEs are significant stressful events occurring during childhood or adolescence and can be direct, such as the child suffering abuse or neglect, or indirect, such as the child's parent suffering mental illness or drug addiction. The research suggests that ACEs have a strong link with chronic diseases, social and emotional issues, with a higher ACE score correlating with worse outcomes on all fronts. Two thirds of people have at least one ACE, but the 8% of people in England who have four or more ACEs are at an increased risk of a range of negative health outcomes such as heart disease, respiratory disease, drug addiction, or self-harm.²⁵ Currently, researchers are studying the impacts of ACEs in Australia, with outcomes due to be published in 2023.²⁶

ACEs can be a helpful way of understanding how services can be tailored towards individuals. This research is in its early stages even within healthcare, but as the terminology is becoming more prevalent in schools, some are beginning to use ACEs as a framework to understand their students. Knowing about any trauma a student has experienced or is experiencing can inform the support a school provides. For example, positive verbal praise may be ineffective, or at worst, a trigger for some students. A teacher should consider an appropriate modification and monitor its impact – in this instance the modification might be to deliver praise quietly or privately or starting with high-ratios of non-verbal positive feedback before introducing more positive verbal feedback.

Bullying

A key influence on a child's behaviour in school is being the victim of bullying. During the 2018 administration of PISA, 21% of Australian students reported that 'other students made fun of me' frequently.¹¹ As well as causing stress for the student, being bullied is linked to lower achievement outcomes.²⁷ School approaches to prevent and respond to bullying are likely to involve establishing and maintaining high expectations for, and management of, behaviour throughout the whole school with support from parents and other community members.

In a systematic review and meta-analysis of anti-bullying programs produced by the Campbell Collaboration in 2009, the authors reviewed 53 school initiatives and identified effective programs and program features.²⁸

The review found that anti-bullying programs were often effective at reducing bullying, with an average reduction in bullying of 20-23% after implementing a program. Successful programs tended to be more intensive and implemented over an extended period, containing the following elements:

- Whole-school anti-bullying policy;
- Classroom rules: often set collaboratively by the class;
- Whole school sessions: assemblies to introduce the initiative and inform students about bullying;
- Cooperative group work: school staff cooperating to work with students on both sides of bullying;
- Information for parents: this could include a manual to structure a teacher's conversation or a leaflet translated into a family's first language for parents to digest at home;
- Improved playground supervision;
- Classroom strategies and routines: see [Recommendation 3](#);
- Disciplinary methods: measures such as being sent to the principal or being deprived of benefits;
- Teacher training: training taking place over more than 4 days and lasting 10 hours or more was most effective; and
- Parent training/meetings: educational events for parents relating specifically to bullying.



Evidence summary

Evidence from psychology demonstrates a clear development pattern that affects behaviour in children and young people, which can support teacher understanding.

Research on ACEs demonstrates that being exposed to four or more significant adverse experiences tends to affect children and teenagers' behaviour as well as their physical and mental health, both immediately and throughout their lives. This is a relatively new field of research, and it appears that targeted approaches can reduce the harmful effects, but more research is needed to understand the most useful ways of applying this knowledge to support children and young people in schools.

There is a strong evidence base that teacher-student relationships are key to good student behaviour and that these relationships can affect student effort and academic achievement.



First stop for further reading:

Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL)

The first Australian Professional Standards for Teachers is 'Know students and how they learn' which includes the 'physical, social and intellectual development and characteristics of students', as well as their backgrounds, abilities and how students learn. aitsl.edu.au/standards

AITSL have a range of resources to help teachers support students with diverse backgrounds, such as tools to encourage working closely with community members who have languages in common with families. aitsl.edu.au/tools-resources/resource/how-can-i-build-relationships-with-students-who-come-from-different-cultural-language-and-educational-backgrounds

Additionally, AITSL have resources which support teachers' professional development in the areas of culturally responsive and inclusive practices. aitsl.edu.au/teach/intercultural-development/building-a-culturally-responsive-australian-teaching-workforce

Emerging Minds

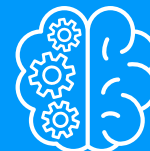
Emerging Minds provides a clear synopsis of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) with particular reference to their impact on the health of young people. d2p3kdr0nr4o3z.cloudfront.net/content/uploads/2020/02/19102540/ACES-Summary-of-Evidence-and-Impacts-V2.pdf

Sarah-Jayne Blakemore

In 'Inventing Ourselves: The Secret Life of the Teenage Brain' (2018), neuroscientist Professor Sarah-Jayne Blakemore explains the changes in the brain during adolescence and relates this to behaviour in children, teenagers, and young adults in an accessible and enlightening manner.

2

Teaching students: Teach learning behaviours alongside managing misbehaviour



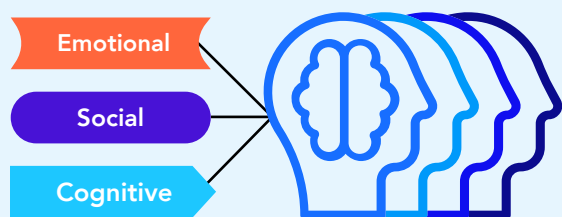
*'The successful management of behaviour relies on far more than a set of strategies to draw upon when students misbehave.'*²⁹

Teachers want their students to learn yet report disruptive behaviours as preventing this. In a 2021 survey of Australian teachers, 86% reported spending a tenth of their day managing behavioural issues.³⁰ Teachers often have an abundance of techniques in their repertoires to manage misbehaviour and low-level disruption within their classroom. However, whilst it is impossible to eradicate all misbehaviour, it can certainly be minimised and the general climate for learning can be improved through the explicit teaching of learning behaviours, reducing the need for teachers to constantly 'manage' misbehaviour.^{31,32,33,34,35,36,37,38}

A learning behaviour is any behaviour that supports learning, such as paying attention to the teacher or persevering with a difficult task.

The importance of teaching learning behaviours

'A learning behaviour can be thought of as a behaviour that is necessary in order for a person to learn effectively in the group setting of the classroom.'³²



Managing a student's misbehaviour does not necessarily lead to that student learning: they may be quieter, but not necessarily engaging with the content of the lesson (passively disengaged).³⁹ Instead, research suggests that when students improve their learning behaviours, this skill set can improve both academic achievement and cognitive ability.⁴⁰

Students who are aware of their own behaviour, who can self-regulate and deploy coping skills, will be less likely to misbehave in school. Once such strategies have been developed and strengthened, they turn into essential life skills and help students to become motivated and determined to succeed. Behaviour-for-learning approaches can be supported by the evidence on social and emotional learning, self-regulation, and essential life skills.^d

Teachers should consider how teaching and learning, and classroom conditions can support learning behaviours. The importance of establishing a classroom culture through routines and expectations is further explored through [Recommendations 3](#) and [4](#).

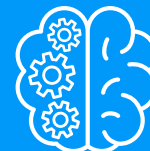
*'A huge proportion of unwelcome behaviours can be traced to a problem with what students are being asked to learn.'*⁴¹

In relation to teaching and learning, 'classroom management and student learning are inextricably linked'.⁴² Where students are unable to engage, because – for example – the work is too difficult or they do not have the appropriate scaffolding or support, it increases the probability that they will display disruptive or challenging behaviours in the classroom.⁴³ Often, effective teaching strategies can circumvent behaviours that might otherwise have led to a student becoming distracted or becoming disruptive to others.

Ensuring students can participate and engage with lesson content and can access appropriate learning supports should be kept front of mind in the planning and delivery of lessons. During the lesson itself, teachers should look out for signs of engagement in learning, such as asking check-for-understanding questions, and be able to identify where students may be slipping into passive disengagement, such as extended periods of tapping fingers on the table, off-topic discussion with peers, or playing with a pen.

E4L has a range of resources which can support school leaders and teachers plan for and deliver effective instruction, which are outlined in 'First stop for further reading' at the end of this section.

^d While these aspects sit outside of the scope of this Guidance Report, school leaders will find insights and recommendations on SEL, metacognition and wellbeing in other E4L resources which can be found in the 'Further Reading' section.



What are the learning behaviours that we should focus on?

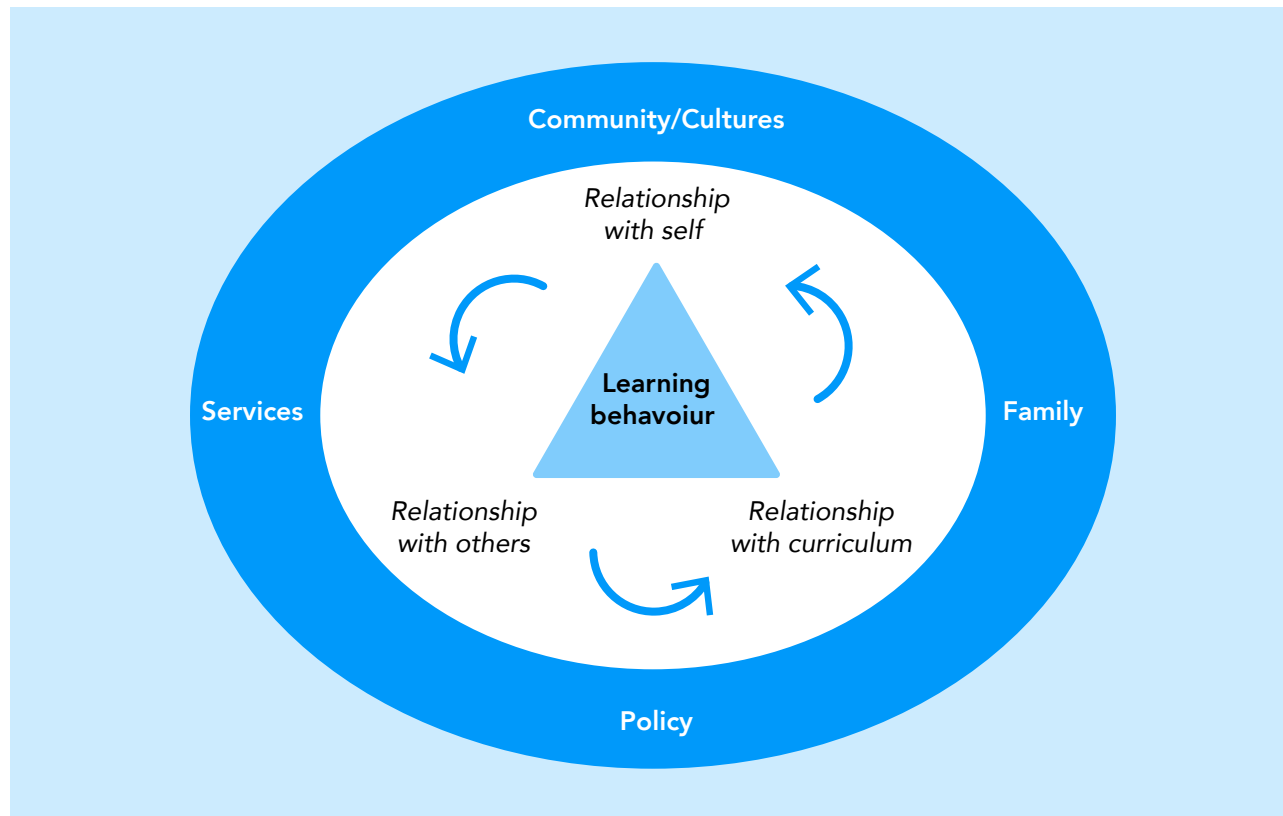
Although much of the research available focuses on evaluating specific programs or outcomes,^{44,45,46,47} Ellis and Tod's review of the literature provides a conceptual framework for teachers to use to evaluate approaches to managing misbehaviour and to teach behaviour for learning.³²

The model shown in [Figure 2](#) suggests that each of three student relationships – with themselves, with others and with the curriculum^e – impacts on the other, and positive change can be achieved by recognising which of these relationships needs to be developed or strengthened with specific teaching. This could be for the whole class, a small group, or on an individual basis.

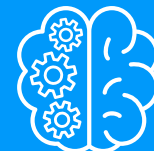
In [Recommendation 1](#) we explored the possible factors that influence student behaviour and the extent to which schools can affect these. The framework suggests that learning behaviours fall within the realm of the school's — and even the individual teacher's — influence and thus warrant more attention from school staff.

Ellis and Tod's model is adapted from a previous framework from Powell and Tod,³⁸ shown in [Figure 2](#). In this model, a single learning behaviour (from those detailed below) is placed at the centre of the model. The triangle surrounding this behaviour is the 'triangle of influence' representing the behaviour being influenced by emotional, social, and cognitive factors. These factors and the learning behaviour itself can be addressed through the three relationships (with self, others, and the curriculum) experienced by the individual in the classroom.

Figure 2: The behaviour or learning conceptual framework adapted from Powell and Tod, 2004.



^e Curriculum is defined in the [Glossary](#).



Changing a learning behaviour is a dynamic process with reciprocal influences, as represented by the arrows. The circle, and terms inside this, show the influence of context. For example, if dealing with setbacks was placed in the middle of the triangle, although this is a mostly emotional learning behaviour, it will be influenced by social and cognitive factors — perhaps being embarrassed in front of peers (a social factor) is often a reason the student wants to give up, and limited experience of success is influencing the want to give up more quickly. A teacher hoping to improve this student's responses to setbacks could respond by:

- **Increasing engagement (relationship with self):** discussing a time the student has given up when experiencing a setback and challenging them to stick with the next task, listening to any concerns the student has about being able to achieve or issues with self-motivation;
- **Improving access (relationship with curriculum):** ensuring the student has work at the appropriate level, and access to appropriate support and resources, that will lead to the experience of success as long as they stick with it; praising the student for achieving and highlighting that their perseverance got them through it; and
- **Ensuring participation (relationship with others):** fostering a classroom culture where students are proud to say they found a task difficult at first and are not afraid to get things wrong.

A range of learning behaviours are outlined below as suggestions – there may be other terms and concepts you already use that suit your own school context better.

- **Emotional learning behaviours:** inner voice, mental well-being, dealing with setbacks; and self-esteem, self-worth, and self-competence.
- **Social learning behaviours:** student relationship with teacher, student relationship with peers, collaborative learning, and bullying.
- **Cognitive learning behaviours:**^f motivation, growth mindset, working memory/cognitive load, and communication — improving through effective teacher-student dialogue, modelling.

Some of these learning behaviours may also be very practical in nature, for example, being on time, having all the required materials, and following classroom routines.

Box 4: Motivation

Extrinsic motivation — in the form of external influences such as gaining rewards and praise — is useful to address some minor misbehaviours or to encourage expected behaviour. Teachers can use tangible techniques such as rewards, or less tangible strategies such as praise and critique, to improve motivation, behaviour, and learning.

However, it is intrinsic motivation, or self-motivation, that is crucial to improving resilience, achieving goals, and ultimately is the key determiner to success. Students who are intrinsically motivated tend to have greater success in learning and are less likely to misbehave – this relationship appears to be mutually reinforcing.⁴⁸

School leaders and teachers should consider that motivation moves along a continuum, depending on the student, the day, and the context, and that extrinsic and intrinsic motivation aren't independent of one another. Extrinsic motivators may help a student develop intrinsic motivation, especially when linked to a student's own experience of success, and when faded over time as the student builds internal motivation.

Intrinsic motivation approaches are rooted in cognitive psychology but are challenging to implement impactfully in schools. Growth mindset, for example, has become very popular for schools to promote, but study results have been mixed.^{49,50} School leaders should be aware that light-touch training in a growth mindset approach is unlikely to be effective on its own: this strategy requires careful consideration.

^f E4L's Guidance Report, '[Metacognition and self-regulated learning](#)', which you can find in the 'Further Reading' section of this report, contains detail on effective approaches in this area.



Evidence Summary

Several high-quality studies suggest that a shift of focus from managing a student's behaviour towards teaching a student learning behaviours may be beneficial.¹⁴

The body of evidence relating specifically to self-regulation is covered more thoroughly in E4L's Guidance Report, 'Metacognition and self-regulated learning', and the underpinning evidence review.⁵¹ The importance of explicitly teaching students metacognitive strategies that allow them to plan, monitor and evaluate their learning can be applied to students self-monitoring their own behaviour. The report also explores motivation as a core element of self-regulation and the impact that motivation has on personal wellbeing.

First stop for further reading

Evidence for Learning

E4L has a range of resources which can support school leaders and teachers plan for and deliver effective instruction, including:

Approaches within the Teaching & Learning Toolkit

- Collaborative learning approaches
- Feedback
- Metacognition and self-regulation
- One to one tuition
- Oral language interventions
- Peer tutoring
- Phonics
- Reading comprehension strategies

Guidance Reports

- Improving literacy in lower primary school
- Improving literacy in upper primary school
- Improving literacy in secondary school
- Improving maths in upper primary and lower secondary school
- Improving science in secondary school
- Making best use of Teaching Assistants
- Metacognition and self-regulated learning

Simon Ellis and Janet Tod

In 'Behaviour for Learning: Promoting Positive Relationships in the Classroom' (2018), Ellis and Tod provide a conceptual framework for schools and teachers to critically evaluate different approaches to managing behaviour and how to implement a behaviour-for-learning approach.

Guy Claxton

Claxton's 'The Learning Power Approach: Teaching learners to teach themselves' (2018) book distils learning from his experience and new research since the launch of his Building Learning Power approach 15 years ago, outlining how learning behaviours can enhance learning outcomes.

Tim McDonald

'Classroom Management: Engaging Students in Learning' 3rd Edition (2019), explores behaviour at all levels of schooling, highlighting the importance of teaching, connecting with students and cultural competency aligned with Recommendations 1 and 2 of this report.

3

Classroom strategies: Use strategies and routines in the classroom to support expected behaviour



Classroom management is a major concern for teachers, often leading to stress, burnout, and exit from the profession as well as being a deterrent for those considering teaching (and school leadership) as a career.^{7,52,53,54,55,56}

Effective classroom management can reduce challenging behaviour, student disengagement, bullying, and aggression, leading to improved classroom climate, attendance, and achievement.^{56,57,58}

While attendance at school and bullying are not wholly the preserve of schools, schools have a role to play. Increasing school absence or being bullied are linked to lower achievement outcomes.²⁷

As noted in [Recommendation 2](#), ensuring students have access to high-quality learning opportunities through appropriate curriculum, supports and effective teaching strategies is essential. As is a school-wide approach to training and implementation (see [Recommendations 4](#) and [6](#)). Some complementary strategies, however, do not require complex pedagogical changes or school-wide efforts and have been shown to be promising. The message here is not to overlook simple things done well, such as:

- Greeting each student positively at the door;
- Having interesting 'arrival tasks' ready to engage the students as soon as they enter the classroom;
- Giving specific behaviour-related praise throughout the lesson;
- Using simple approaches to improve teacher – student relationships (see [Recommendation 1](#)); and
- Using checklists to ensure the approach to behaviour, including policies and procedures, is embedded with rigour.

Most of these strategies have little or no cost, yet the research suggests that they could reduce challenging behaviour and lead to improved achievement, improved attendance, and a more purposeful learning climate.

Furthermore, each of these practices when delivered in a friendly and calm manner will aide in building a positive classroom climate and support a teacher to enhance their relationships with their students.

Professional development for classroom management

Evidence suggests that effective training for building classroom management expertise involves teachers and school staff:

- Reflecting on their own approach;
- Trying a new approach; and
- Reviewing progress over time.¹⁷

Training teachers in classroom management practices can improve student behaviour in the classroom — and not just for those students most likely to misbehave. As with any new approach, activities that support teachers to put new learning into practice will increase the likelihood of the practice being maintained. Follow ups and reminders are also useful in ensuring a new practice doesn't get set aside or when old habits creep back in.

For example, there are user-friendly time-based applications for smart watches or phones that can provide a regular prompt to a teacher who is looking to increase the frequency of behaviour specific praise in the classroom. It can also be effective for a teacher to record which skill they will practise and in what lesson in their planning documents.

E4L's Guidance Report '[Effective Professional Development](#)' details the common features of effective PD to support school leaders design, select and implement learning for teachers.



Box 5: Proactive approaches

Proactive behaviour approaches aim to improve behaviour by reinforcing expected behaviours, prior to negative behaviours occurring. Below is a summary of two easily implemented approaches with very small-scale but promising results.

Positive greetings at the door

Recent research conducted with 11-14 year-olds suggests that greeting students positively at the classroom door is not only very low cost but has a high yield in terms of improving student behaviour in the classroom.^{17,59}

Misbehaviour often occurs in schools around the start and end of lessons and when moving around the school building. By intentionally promoting and practising successful transitions into the classroom, teachers are empowered to help their students to be ready to learn.

When delivered consistently, greeting students at the classroom door can help teachers to positively and personally connect with each student, deliver 'pre-corrective' statements to remind students of class expectations, and deliver behaviour-specific praise.

This strategy can be delivered by an individual teacher, but in secondary school in particular, there is likely to be an additional advantage to consistency at whole-school level, as well as structures that support these actions such as appropriate time to transition between classes.

The 5:1 ratio

In another promising study, teachers in disruptive classes of students aged between nine and 14 years old were trained over two 45-minute sessions to increase their use of behaviour-specific praise.¹⁷ Teachers were given reminders at intervals to praise students, alongside training focused on the 'magic 5:1 ratio' of positive-to-negative interactions.

The 5:1 ratio theory is that for every criticism or complaint the teacher issues, they should aim to give five specific compliments, approval statements and positive comments or non-verbal gestures. This ratio has been shown to be key to long-lasting marriages and has been explored in other fields, such as medicine and business.

Several programs focusing on positive approaches to behaviour in classrooms promote this idea, but this research was the first experimental study to explore the feasibility and effectiveness of the approach. Over the two-month study, students increased their on-task behaviour by an average of 12 minutes per hour (or an hour per day), while students in similar comparison classes did not change their behaviour. This study implies that teachers with disruptive classes could benefit from increasing their positive interactions with students.



One school's approach: Simple routines, consistently applied

Rosebud Secondary College in regional Victoria



At Rosebud Secondary College in regional Victoria, simple routines have been introduced to help support teachers, students and families build a strong culture and shared expectations around behaviour and learning. As part of a wider approach, the leadership team at Rosebud have implemented simple routines across the school.

The three routines, expected to take place in every classroom, include:

- An entry routine, beginning with students lining up in pairs at the classroom door with the materials required for learning, moving to their desks, being greeted by and greeting the teacher, and taking their seats;
- An exit routine, which is initiated on hearing the bell, followed by a standard response from the teacher to guide students out of the classroom in an orderly way; and
- A cue to action routine, where teachers use a call and response to signal to students that they require the students' attention. This cue to action routine is tailored by teachers, and can be used to bring students back after group work or to refocus the class.

Before the introduction of the routines, all staff were involved in dedicated professional learning time to develop a shared understanding of what the routines would look like across the school. During key transition times, the leadership team are a constant and visible presence throughout the school. This has allowed the leadership team to monitor the consistency of routines and support staff, as students and teachers adapt to the new routines.

These simple routines aim to provide a consistent experience for students and to help develop the confidence of teachers – particularly new teachers – as they establish relationships and build classroom culture.

Which staff might need most support?

Classroom management tends to be more of a problem for teachers earlier in their careers than for those with more experience.⁶⁰ For all teachers, but particularly those new to the profession, the challenges of, and stress related to, responding to challenging behaviours is one factor that has been documented as a contributor to teacher burnout and attrition.⁶ OECD data from the TALIS survey of teachers across 40 countries suggests that there is substantial improvement in classroom climate associated with being in the profession for longer than five years.²

While all teachers are likely to benefit from support, early career teachers may require tailored support to help them create a positive classroom climate whilst they develop their craft. Coaching and mentoring approaches may be effective, in partnership with more explicit learning about classroom behaviour strategies.

Early career teachers should understand that:

- It is normal for them to have more challenges with behaviour management in their classroom than more experienced colleagues; it is okay to ask for help;
- Not everything needs to be mastered immediately; it may be more effective to develop one key practice at a time;
- Even the most experienced teachers implementing universal classroom management strategies well will find they do not work for all students all the time;
- Some students will need a more tailored approach (see [Recommendation 5](#)) which may require reflection and adapting to the situation; and
- What works for one teacher might not work for another with the same student: it may take a while to find the right strategy and it may help to ask a range of colleagues about their approaches.



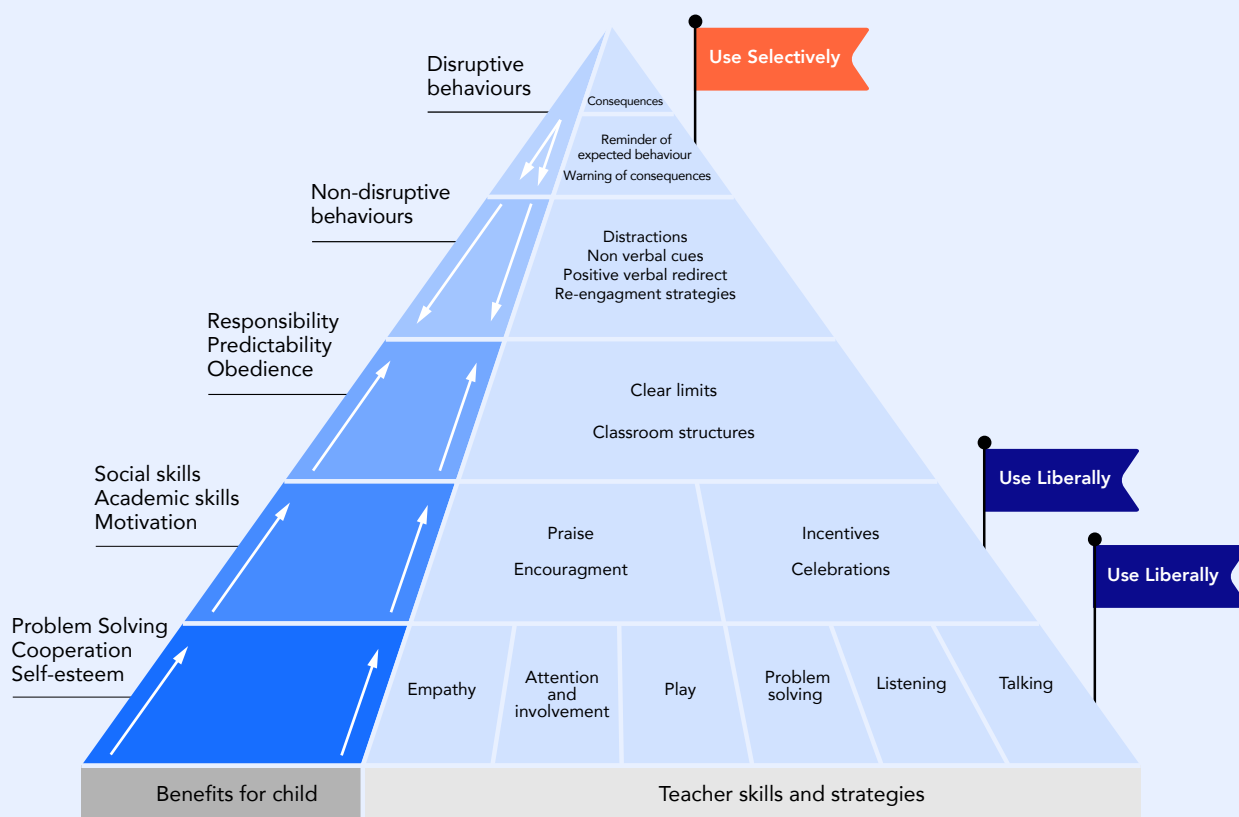
Box 6: Incredible Years® Teacher Classroom Management

Several high-quality studies suggest that Incredible Years® Teacher Classroom Management (TCM) can have a positive effect on student behaviour.¹⁷

The TCM program is part of a suite of programs for children, parents, and teachers (incredibleyears.com). This program aims to provide teachers of three to eight-year-olds with the skills to effectively manage their classroom and promote children's social, emotional, and academic competence. The focus is on strengthening teachers' classroom management strategies, promoting children's prosocial behaviour, and reducing children's classroom aggression and non-cooperation with peers and teachers.

The program also helps teachers work with parents to support their school involvement and promote consistency between home and school. Teachers attend a full-day training session each month for six months using collaborative learning, discussions of staff's own experiences, and group work to find solutions to problems encountered in the classroom.

Figure 3: The Incredible Years Teaching Pyramid®, adapted from Webster-Stratton & Reid (2001)⁶¹





Reinforcing expected behaviours

Putting in place clear systems to reinforce⁹ expectations can improve student behaviour in the classroom when used as part of a broader teacher classroom management strategy.¹⁷ Such systems mainly involve the presentation of something after the desired behaviour has occurred, such as praise, positive attention or something tangible to increase the chances of desirable behaviours occurring in the future. Reinforcement differs from rewards as it can also involve the removal of something – such as a non-preferred task or condition – for example, removing a seating plan condition so the student can pick their preferred seat.⁹

Following on from [Recommendation 2](#), reinforcement systems can be an effective way to improve students' learning behaviours. Explicit reinforcement systems are often included in whole-class and whole-school approaches to behaviour and could include star charts or house points systems. The systematic evidence review¹⁷ that underpins this report, highlighted that strategies to reinforce desired behaviours had less impact on students who had more challenging backgrounds or multiple risk factors at play, and schools should consider how they provide tailored support for students who do not respond to such strategies.

The Incredible Years Teaching Pyramid ([Figure 3](#)) suggests some different reinforcement strategies, the potential benefits for children, and the extent to which schools should consider using them.

Evidence Summary

A review of the literature found 31 studies of classroom-based strategies to manage behaviour aimed at the whole class. Studies came from a range of countries, though most were from the USA (19). The vast majority of studies took place in primary schools, with only three studies including secondary-age students.

Overall, consistently positive (small to medium) effects are seen for approaches that train teachers in classroom management approaches. The Incredible Years[®] Teacher Classroom Management program is the 'off-the-shelf' program with the largest evidence base, accounting for seven studies in the underpinning literature review.

Evidence for 'bought-in' reinforcement programs is mixed; however, most programs that focus on teacher training in classroom management also involve reinforcement systems. This combination of training teachers alongside delivering a rewards-focused reinforcement program holds most promise.

There is also a substantial and growing evidence base relating to 'behaviour kernels': 'specific activities that have been shown to bring about specific behaviour changes'.^{62,63} These are behaviour influence techniques for ensuring an orderly classroom and a harmonious school culture that, if implemented with fidelity, should change behaviour. The greatest impact on improving behaviour with simple strategies is seen in classrooms with high rates of disruptive and inattentive behaviour but there is potential for strategies implemented consistently across the school to see bigger changes. Some of the research is small-scale or much of it is not specific to Australia. More studies are needed to ensure that teachers and school leaders can make informed decisions about simple strategies to implement.

⁹ Reinforcement and reward are often used interchangeably. The definition of each and the difference between the two is explained in the [Glossary](#).



First stop for further reading

Australia Education Research Organisation (AERO)

AERO have produced a short resource to support teachers to manage their classroom to maximise learning. edresearch.edu.au/sites/default/files/2021-02/AERO-Tried-and-tested-guide-Focused-classrooms.pdf

This short video explores how one school is thinking about developing routines and shared expectations to support their students as learners. youtu.be/5UJS76Jx8zQ

AERO has examples from classroom practice which demonstrate effective approaches to supporting behaviour in a primary classroom. edresearch.edu.au/resources/focused-classrooms-example-practice

Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL)

The fourth Australian Professional Standards for Teachers, 'Create and maintain supportive and safe learning environments' explores how teachers support student participation, maintain student safety and manage challenging behaviour when it arises. aitsl.edu.au/standards

Dennis Embry and Anthony Biglan

Behaviour kernels are simpler, easier to implement actions to change behaviour. Whilst the research literature is not as strong in all areas, these strategies have the advantage of being easier to try out, with the effect (or lack thereof) often seen more quickly than with more complex programs. Embry and Biglan's paper, 'Behaviour kernels: fundamental units of behavioural influence' (2008), describes 52 behaviour kernels with links to research surrounding them.

Peps Mccrea

In 'Evidence Snacks', Mccrea explores the importance of routines in being able to redeploy attention, highlighting the role of both instructional routines, and behavioural routines as powerful tools to support learning. snacks.pepsmccrea.com/p/routines-redeploy-attention

Roderick D. O'Handley, D. Joe Olmi, Brad A. Dufrene, Keith C. Radley and Daniel H. Tingstrom

O'Handley and colleagues, in their 2022 paper, 'The effects of different rates of behavior-specific praise in secondary classrooms', found promising impacts of behaviour-specific praise on improving class-wide appropriately engaged behaviour. doi.org/10.1177/10983007221091330

4

School-wide supports: Use school-wide supports and initiative to build expectations and norms around behaviour



While effective classroom management is critical to creating conditions conducive to teaching and learning, a consistent whole-school approach can enhance effective strategies and processes deployed at the classroom level.⁴³

Developing and implementing school-wide approaches present greater difficulties than those strategies that can be actioned by individual teachers.⁶⁴ Staff turn-over and time pressures, as for many change projects in schools, can be barriers to successful implementation.

Refining and improving your school's approach to behaviour is likely to require training, external expertise, and coordination across the school. Having school-wide supports that overlap and reinforce classroom level strategies, and create a consistent experience for students are likely to be important. Whole-school approaches also typically support teachers to sustainably implement individualised approaches for those students who need them.

Public Health England provides a model of elements of a whole-school approach for wellbeing interventions⁶⁵ (Figure 4) which may be of relevance in considering whole-school approaches to behaviour.

Enhance the effects of universal, whole-school approaches by considering how these interact with targeted approaches you employ.

Figure 4: Elements of a whole-school approach for wellbeing interventions⁶⁵





Each element needs considering by school leadership. It may be helpful to discuss as a leadership team:

- Which elements are our school performing strongly in?
- Which elements do we need to work on?
- Are there any elements where we are unsure of our performance? What might we need to do to have enough information on how we are performing?

Develop clear and consistent expectations

In supporting [Recommendations 1, 2, 3 and 5](#), school leaders should ensure the school's approach to behaviour is clear and consistently applied. This will likely include having clear expectations, well-documented policies and procedures available to the whole school community, and a system for, and culture of, using data to inform decision-making. Establishing these expectations and norms will have the additional benefit of providing a backbone from which to build flexibility as is needed for individual students.

One approach to do this is to adopt a program or approach that has already been tested, such as School-Wide Positive Behaviour Support, which encompasses both the school-wide, and teacher led, aspects of an approach to behaviour. The available research indicates that programs with these features — school-wide strategies paired with teacher led strategies in the classroom — can be effective, but do require schools to implement them with fidelity.¹⁷

Professional development

As was explored in [Recommendation 3](#), the role of [professional development](#) is crucial to the success of any initiative, and school-wide supports for behaviour is no exception.¹⁷ Changing staff behaviours related to student behaviour is often challenging because some staff may have long-held views, unconscious beliefs and in-grained practices.

Building a shared understanding of expectations and the approach to behaviour, and how these translate to process and then practice, is important to ensure staff understand and accept the rationale for the school-wide approach, and are capable of consistently modelling the strategies within the approach to behaviour.

Working with families and community members to build consistency

Behaviour supports provided to a student are often made more effective when parents, families, caregivers and the student themselves are involved. E4L's Guidance Report, '[Working with parents to support children's learning](#)', is a good place to begin when thinking about involving families in tailored strategies.

Promising approaches involve parents and teachers setting goals for their child, agreeing and implementing specific strategies that can be implemented at home and school to help their child's behaviour, responding consistently to children's behaviour, and gathering information to understand their child's progress. While much of a student's home life is out of reach of the school influence, partnership with families can strengthen a school's ability to provide appropriate and targeted support where it is required.¹⁷ Strengthening connections with community, cultural organisations and support services that provide support to students is also important.

Breakfast clubs

Breakfast clubs – the provision of free breakfast for students before school – may have potential for improving student behaviour. Early research trials of 'Magic Breakfast' conducted by the EEF in the UK showed that student behaviour and achievement improved for schools that ran a breakfast club.⁶⁶ More recently, the program has shown to be scalable, but questions remain about the sustainability at a school level, an impact evaluation has not been conducted at this scale.⁶⁷

There is less research to support the impact of breakfast club programs on learning in Australia. While there is some evidence that breakfast clubs provide a valuable space for building relationships and encourage engagement,⁶⁸ implementation occurs in a variety of ways, and they may not be cost-effective for schools to run. As with any initiative, school leaders are encouraged to understand the relative impact of the initiative on students in their school through monitoring and evaluation activities.



One school's approach: Ready to Learn plans and staff messaging systems

Monterey Secondary College in Frankston, Victoria



Monterey Secondary College in Frankston, Victoria has a whole-school approach to behaviour supports that contains several elements.

Every student has a tailored and co-developed 'Ready to Learn' plan. These plans reinforce the school's high expectations of learning and behaviour, while ensuring that all students have the tools and support that they need to be effective learners and positive members of the school community.

Developed annually, in partnership with individual students, the Ready to Learn plans are simple descriptions of strategies that the student may need to ensure they are ready to learn. The strategies, such as 'put my head on the desk' are mutually agreed upon and the plans are held on a school-wide system, accessible to all teachers.

Monterey has two supports in place to help students when they access their Ready to Learn plans: an instant messaging system between staff, and members of the leadership team being assigned to be on duty each period. The "on-call" leader, highly skilled in trauma-informed practice, works with the student to determine the most appropriate next steps. This may include a conversation with a teacher or another student, a change of environment to prepare for learning, or a recommendation to return home and try again the following day. Supports are non-punitive and underpinned by an approach of unconditional positive regard.

Each afternoon, school leaders track and review students who were exited from classes, misused their ready-to-learn plans or had significant behaviour incidents that day. The team creates engagement plans underpinned by a positive reinforcement focus to support more positive behaviour. These plans are communicated to the staff and the parents.

One objective of Monterey's approach is to be inclusive rather than exclusive. The college found that when students were singled out to complete behaviour plans, they were less likely to utilise the strategies on their plans. While every student has a Ready to Learn plan, around three quarters of students utilise in-class strategies (e.g. put head on desk) and one quarter of students use out-of-class strategies (e.g. go for a walk).



Where's the evidence?

While the effects of school-wide approaches are less impactful than the effects of discrete classroom strategies when measured in research studies, school-wide approaches are important for reinforcing classroom level strategies and creating a consistent experience for students. There is evidence to suggest that when school-wide approaches are implemented in parallel with classroom-level strategies, they are more effective than just focusing on one level or approach. Limited, but positive, impacts on achievement due to school-wide approaches were highlighted in the systematic review that underpins this report.¹⁷

Many of the studies included in the systematic review explored these types of approaches in primary school settings, so further exploration of these universal approaches in secondary school, and in an Australian context, would be valuable.

First stop for further reading

Education Endowment Foundation

The 2016 report from an evaluation funded by the EEF looked at the effect of universal, before-school breakfast clubs run by charity Magic Breakfast. educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/projects-and-evaluation/projects/magic-breakfast/

A subsequent report, published in 2021, explored how the breakfast clubs could be scaled and adapted by schools, and demonstrated that while scale was possible, the ongoing sustainability and impact was unclear. educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/projects-and-evaluation/projects/national-school-breakfast-programme

Brandi Simonsen, Sarah Falcon, Amy Briesch, Diane Myers & George Sugai

This review from 2008 provides clear advice for school leaders looking to establish tiered approaches to improving behaviour across their school setting. researchgate.net/publication/236785368_Evidence-based_Practices_in_Classroom_Management_Considerations_for_Research_to_Practice

In addition to the above resources, several education systems in Australia have resources on school-wide behaviour supports for their schools, such as the School-Wide Positive Behaviour Support (SWPBS) in Victoria. education.vic.gov.au/pal/behaviour-students/guidance/5-school-wide-positive-behaviour-support-swpbs-framework

5

Targeted approaches: Use targeted approaches to meet the needs of individual students



'A flexible but consistent approach is not a soft option and requires considerable resilience in the adults who are trying to support and teach young people immersed in their own difficulties'⁶⁹

Recommendations 1–4 focused on structuring the school and classroom such that behaviours that do not meet expectations are less likely to occur. While universal systems provide a necessary and important foundation, they are insufficient to meet the needs of all students. For those students who need more intensive support with their behaviour, a personalised approach is recommended. This may involve targeted approaches implemented by trained teachers. Teachers reflecting on their classroom management techniques for the whole class may also be particularly beneficial for the individuals with greater needs. For students who are disruptive, targeted approaches are often most effective when adapted to the needs of the individuals involved and the context in which behaviour is most challenging or most likely to occur.

Functional behaviour assessment is one evidence-based approach used to understand the relationship between a student's behaviour and the environments within which it occurs that can be used to inform individualised supports.

A tailored approach to support an individual's behaviour should complement the school's broader approach to behaviour without lowering expectations of any student's behaviour. Low expectations communicated from teachers can detrimentally affect students' achievements.⁴⁸ Furthermore, children, and particularly adolescents, have a heightened awareness of fairness: they are unlikely to respond well to differential treatment.

Examples of tailoring an approach to support an individual's behaviour that maintains expectations include:

- If a secondary school student is feeling unsettled or unfocused during a class, they may action a strategy from an agreed plan (e.g. Monterey Secondary College's Ready to Learn plan), such as going for a short walk. The strategy called upon will be different for each student, and different depending on the circumstance. A time limit is in place for such occasions, to ensure the student is ready to reengage with learning quickly.
- If a primary or secondary school student has difficulty following the entry routine or taking their seat quickly and quietly, the teacher may consider assigning them a "helping" role in the routine. For example, the student could assist with tasks such as distributing papers, setting up the learning intention on the board, or greeting classmates as they enter. This approach not only helps the student to stay engaged and focused, but also promotes a sense of responsibility and contribution to the classroom community.
- If a secondary school student struggles to work quietly in class, the teacher may consider allowing them to listen to music, provided that the student still meets other expectations, such as completing their work and following the school's device policy. Allowing the student to listen to music can help them to stay focused and engaged, and may be particularly helpful for students who have difficulty blocking out distracting noises in the classroom.
- An increase in the amount or frequency of support. For example, if a primary school student frequently calls out in class, the teacher may provide them with extra, explicit instruction on this behavioural skill and more opportunities to practice and receive feedback on the skill until it becomes fluent and transferable.
- If a primary school student is finding it difficult to have all their items ready for class, the skill can be broken down into its component parts and placed on a checklist. Visually the student can see what is required and tick off each item as they get it. The teacher may increase prompts and reinforcement for each step in the task until the behaviour becomes fluent – the support is then slowly phased out, in a planned way.



Targeted approaches benefit from tailoring

There is a wide range of approaches that may improve aspects of school behaviour, including social and emotional learning, parental engagement, making better use of teaching assistants, and metacognition and self-regulation (see further reading below). Other areas which may be effective for individuals include programs to encourage physical activity, support to improve social skills, and approaches to reduce specific types of unwanted behaviour.¹⁷

It is noteworthy that the approaches found to have a positive effect on behaviour largely focused on positive responses to the challenge of misbehaviour — training teachers to positively encourage learning behaviours and putting in place reinforcement systems — rather than primarily focusing on responsive measures. The approaches tended not to be radically different from the proactive approaches detailed in Recommendations 1–4, just more intensive or more targeted, for example:

- More intensive or frequent feedback, reinforcement and prompting;
- Teaching of replacement behaviours;
- Increased opportunities to respond or practice the behavioural skill with reinforcement;
- More intensive individual approaches within a whole-school framework, for example a tailored strategy within a 'Ready to Learn' plan (see the Monterey example in [Recommendation 4](#) for more);
- Additional support in other areas, such as academic work or wellbeing.

Professional development

Responsive approaches require specific and deep training to ensure teachers, or those who are delivering the approaches, are fit for purpose. This may include a focus on:

- The available research evidence on behaviour, influences and effective approaches;
- Ensuing staff understand and are comfortable with supporting students with complex behaviour needs;
- Methods to assess higher-level behavioural and academic need (e.g., functional behaviour assessment), and the corresponding, effective targeted approach options (and knowledge of support within the school);
- Knowledge of how to practically implement, tailor and adjust reinforcement systems with fidelity;
- Knowledge of internal school systems and training to support teachers to do this well in first instance, as well as the procedure for when staff need more immediate help;
- Clear, accessible and up to date documentation that describes behavioural systems, processes, procedures and practices; and
- In-class coaching and modelling of effective practices.

Teaching Assistants and support staff

As well as the up-front and ongoing professional development required for teachers, Teaching Assistants (TAs) and other support staff should have access to school – and approach-specific training, as they often work most closely with students who require additional support.^h If TAs are expected to provide targeted support for students they will be most effective when they have appropriate and ongoing professional development.

^h E4L's '[Making best use of Teaching Assistant's](#)' Guidance Report contains further support for school leaders exploring how to work with Teachers and TAs for maximum impact.



Program types with positive outcomes

Additional programs may be put in place for students who are struggling with behaviour or in classes where behaviour is a particular issue. Large effects were seen for both:

- Functional behavioural assessment approaches; and
- Programs using daily behaviour report cards.

Functional behavioural assessments are structured processes that help teachers or other key school staff to collect information to help understand the relationship between a student's behaviour and the classroom or school contexts in which it occurs. They may involve collaborative decision-making and shared intervention planning between in-school staff and other key external bodies such as a social worker or speech therapist. Observation is used to learn about the reasons for a student's behaviour including any triggers for challenging behaviour, and is often conducted by a wellbeing leader, school psychologist or assistant principal in order to reduce the load on a teacher. An assessment by a school leader, for example, might conclude that a particularly disruptive child's behaviour is attention-seeking. A school counsellor could speak with the student to confirm.

The leadership team could then decide if modifications to the environment are required, new social or collaborative skills are to be explicitly taught, or if there is a need to structure the delivery of student attention proactively when the student engages in positive and engaged behaviour in class. The results of a functional behaviour assessment may indicate a need for more effective teaching strategies and learning support that is matched to the student's level, even when attention is identified as the function.

While effective, this approach can be time-consuming, but the individual techniques may be useful in isolation:

- Identify the challenging behaviours, the triggers and the previous strategies used;
- Identify the environmental conditions that reinforce challenging behaviours;
- Use data to inform a decision on which strategy to adopt;
- Set goals, benchmarks and responsibilities;
- Implement and monitor progress; and
- Summarise and evaluate outcomes.

Daily behaviour report cards are usually completed once or twice daily by the class teacher in a primary school, or carried to each class and completed by all class teachers in secondary. The teacher reports against key behaviour targets set in relation to the individual student's improvement needs (an example target could be, 'paid attention in class'). These report cards aim to improve communication between the student and adults surrounding them about the student's behaviour.

Using a simple tool to observe and monitor behaviour, such as the [BETL tool](#), widely used in Australia, supports teachers to identify the best approach or intervention. In both cases, these were to some extent tailored to the behavioural needs of individual children.

Students with additional learning needs and behaviour

While students with behavioural issues might need a tailored approach, they may not necessarily have additional learning needs, mental health challenges or disabilities. Similarly, children with additional learning needs may not necessarily require additional support with their behaviour. If you know that a student who has behavioural issues also has an additional learning need, understanding best practice for supporting that specific need may help with their behaviour and thus could be a good starting point for their behaviour support.



Where's the evidence?

Evidence for targeted approaches comes from 25 targeted studies, including 15 Randomised Control Trials (RCTs). Most of the research available is based in primary school settings: there is a need for more research on targeted approaches in secondary school settings.

Targeted programs tend to demonstrate a bigger effect on behaviour outcomes compared to whole-class or whole-school programs — this is to be expected as students are generally selected because they need specific support. However, targeted approaches have less consistent results than universal approaches, with studies varying from reporting no effect to very large effects.



First stop for further reading

Evidence for Learning

E4L has a range of Guidance Reports on high-priority topics, three of which may provide further guidance for school leaders implementing this recommendation:

- [Improving social and emotional learning in primary schools](#);
- [Working with parents to support children's learning](#);
- [Making best use of Teaching Assistants](#); and
- [Improving metacognition and self-regulation](#).

Be You

Be You have a suite of resources available for Australian schools that can help school leaders and teachers ensure students have the appropriate strategies and support to succeed. beyou.edu.au/resources

6

Implementation: Consistency is key



“It is reasonably straightforward to identify what a good culture might look like, but like a diet, the difficulty lies in embedding and maintaining it.”²⁹

While classroom-level strategies have a big impact on student behaviour, consistency and coherence are paramount at a whole-school level. This recommendation explores the preparation and delivery of the first five recommendations. It is helpful to consider the extent to which approaches to behaviour ([Recommendation 4](#)) fit frameworks for whole-school approaches more broadly:

- Are all staff trained, including teaching assistants, office staff, and everyone else who interacts with children and young people?
- Is there a sense of shared responsibility among staff and ideally students too, or is this new policy going to feel ‘done to’ the school community by leadership?
- Are those in the wider school community (beyond the leadership team and teachers) involved?
- What impact will you see in school if this strategy is successful? How do you plan to measure this?
- When would you expect to see an impact? Is it feasible for this approach be left in place until then, or will changes be made that will blur the outcome? If so, is now the right time to implement the strategy?

Considering research evidence is important, but as there is not robust evidence in every topic, there are decisions school leaders need to make that the research literature cannot help with. Where evidence gaps exist, a useful framework for school leaders to consider involves assessing the effectiveness of their particular approach against the outcomes they are aiming to achieve as well as any unintended consequences.⁷⁰

Furthermore, leaders need to consider whether a strategy that has been shown as promising from research can be implemented in their setting, with the expectation that it can be put in place consistently and with similar results. Your school’s context – including size, stage of schooling, staffing

and resources available – will affect your choices, and continuous assessment of how policies are working can ensure you deploy the most successful strategies. It is likely you already have staff in your team who are behaviour experts able to share examples of what works for them with other staff.

Box 7: Zero tolerance approaches

Zero tolerance behaviour policies, sometimes described as “no excuses”, aim to create a strict and clear whole-school approach to discipline. Typically, under such policies, students will automatically receive detentions for a range of misbehaviours such as being late, forgetting homework or using rude language. Other more serious conduct, such as violence, may result in exclusion – without exception.

Advocates of zero tolerance approaches include some successful leaders within the charter school movement in the United States, who regard zero tolerance approaches as key contributors to improving the outcomes of students in areas of high disadvantage.⁷¹ On the other hand, some have criticised the use of zero tolerance, expressing concern that such policies may be linked to unnecessary exclusions, and disproportionately affect students who are experiencing disadvantage, and can lead to unintentional, negative outcomes.⁷²

To date, very few robust studies have assessed the impact of zero tolerance policies on student outcomes, and no high-quality studies have been completed in Australian schools. In the absence of such studies, the wider evidence base may help schools considering whether to change any aspect of their behaviour policy. For example, providing training for teachers in classroom management and having a consistent approach across the school that can be adapted for some students with specific needs are likely to improve behaviour in a variety of contexts.



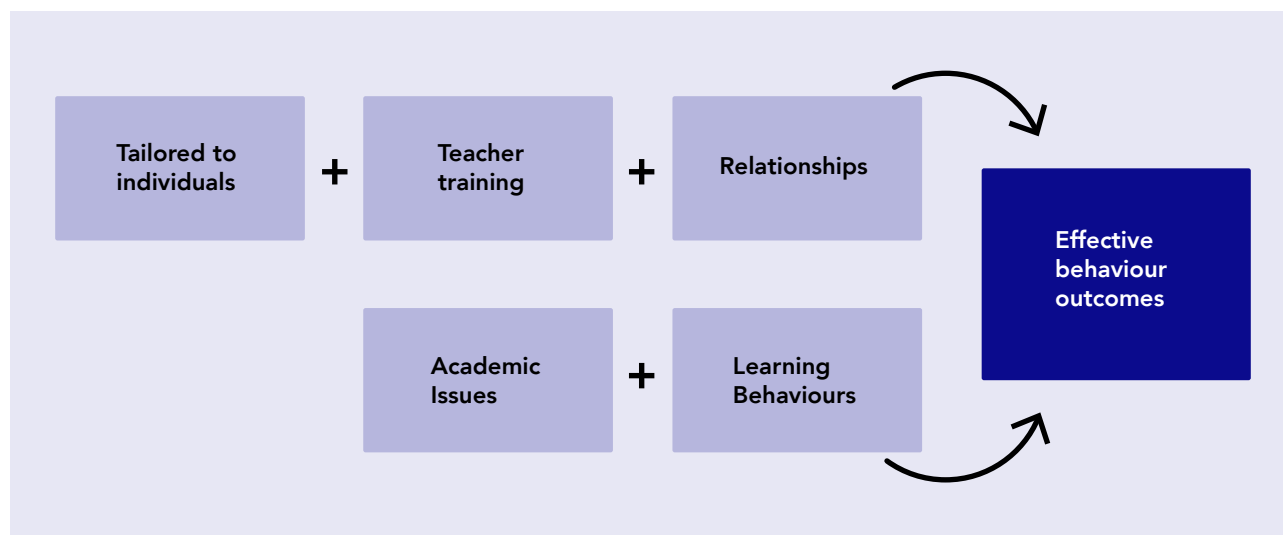
Consider combinations of strategies that are more powerful together

When deciding which behaviour approaches to adopt as part of your school's behaviour strategy, it may be helpful to consider combining two approaches which are supported by evidence:

- Tailor approaches to individual students, focus on improving relationships, and include intensive teacher training (over 20 hours); and
- Focus on academic issues, teaching coping and resilience skills (separate from any efforts to improve relationships). School-wide Positive Behavioural Interventions and Supports (PBIS) are an example of an approach supported by the evidence that incorporates both an academic focus and structured ways to target individual supports.

As shown in [Figure 5](#), tailoring approaches to individuals and focusing on building relationships can be effective, but this needs to occur with an appropriate amount of teacher training. An alternative is to focus on academic issues and teaching learning behaviours (described in [Recommendation 2](#)), but not focus on relationships. This might be interpreted as a response to behaviour that is more focused on individual student responsibility for behaviour and academic goals.

Figure 5: Pathways to effectiveness from QCAⁱ findings



ⁱ QCA is the Quality Comparative Analysis method which is described in the underpinning evidence review.¹⁷



Implement whole-school approaches strategically to see sustained change

Whatever approaches you adopt, they will need time to embed, often years. Implementation of whole-school programs can be slower and take more sustained coordination to see a change. Implementing such changes will require longer-term planning and monitoring.

When assessing the success of a school-wide behaviour initiative, school leaders should consider:

- The aims of the initiative;
- The realistic rate and scale of change expected; and
- Anticipated pressure points: times or situations when maintaining the change may become difficult.

Behaviour approaches usually have a behavioural outcome as their primary aim: to reduce disruptive behaviour in lessons, for example, or to increase respectful behaviour in the playground. Achievement outcomes may be expected to follow, particularly with approaches that reduce disruption in lessons. Whole-school approaches can promote inclusion, improve school culture and ultimately improve the school for staff as well as students; thus, a comprehensive behaviour strategy might, in time, expect to see an impact on wide-ranging measures such as student and staff attendance, satisfaction and wellbeing.^{73,74,75,76,77,78}

An implementation plan may be valuable to construct when implementing changes to a school's approach to behaviour and associated policies and practices. Even relatively simple changes are likely to benefit from careful implementation, wide consultation and iterative feedback. Any change to a behaviour approach in your school is, by its nature, calling for behavioural change, whether in a targeted group of students, all students, staff, or a combination of these.

Whether implementing a new system of reinforcement or moving towards using a refreshed approach to respond to behaviour incidents, teacher and student behaviours become ingrained and can be difficult to change, so most whole-school behaviour policy or practice change will likely take more than a school term to demonstrate impact.

The [implementation checklist](#) on page 42 may provide a discussion framework for school leaders as they chart a course through complex whole-school change. For an example of an implementation plan that includes a school-wide approach to behaviour as part of a broader approach to wellbeing, E4L has published [Monterey Secondary College's implementation plan](#) for improving wellbeing.

Using data to inform your implementation of behaviour approaches

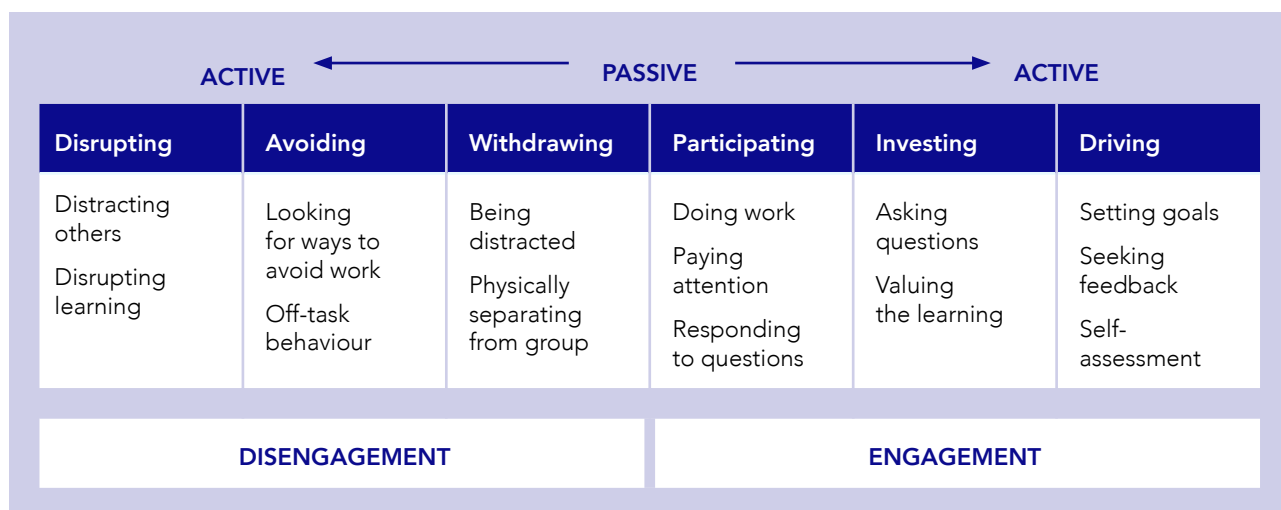
Implementing a school-wide approach to behaviour should involve having a system to gather and analyse data in order to best understand the needs of students. Such a system should include indicators relating to behaviour, academic and broader wellbeing outcomes.

For a school introducing a new approach to behaviour, existing sources of data, and methods of using data should be explored before new data and methods are introduced. Schools should consider data that will help paint a picture of the overall effectiveness of the approach, and help the school identify which students require additional support at what time, and what additional support is appropriate. School leaders may find that having some, or all, or the following in place will provide useful insights if used well:

- A continuum of engagement,⁷⁹ which could help teachers (and students) understand how engaged students are in learning (see [Figure 6](#));
- Academic and wellbeing indicators;
- Student, teacher and family perception surveys;
- Records of behaviour incidents;
- Universal screening methods; and
- Less formal interactions and conversations with individual students.



Figure 6. A Continuum of Engagement, adapted from Berry (2020).⁷⁹



Data should be used to identify and monitor students and review the success of targeted approaches. The aim being to give early support to students so that they can return to the umbrella of more universal approaches (Recommendations 1–4) as soon as it is appropriate – this will be different for every student.

Take care to use screening methods and assessments to identify students who need additional support as an opportunity to support those students, rather than as a label or to permanently group students.

Implementing a regular process of data collection, analysis and review as part of a whole-school approach will mitigate some of the risks associated with identification being perceived as the end-point for students. It will also likely prevent students being ‘missed’, particularly in secondary schools where having numerous teachers may mean a student’s behaviour isn’t seen as a whole.



Box 8: Lessons from Australian school leaders: common challenges and tips for implementation

Common challenges and pressure points to anticipate during early implementation include:

- **Resistance to change:** Some teachers, staff members, or students may be resistant to change, may be reluctant to try a new approach to classroom behaviour or may have strong personal beliefs about behaviour.
- **Lack of genuine support:** Without support and buy-in from school leadership or other stakeholders, the implementation of the new behaviour approach may not be successful. This can include lack of funding, inadequate training, or insufficient time or resources.
- **Inconsistency in implementation:** If the new behaviour approach is not implemented consistently across all classrooms or by all teachers, it may be less effective in changing student behaviour.
- **Misalignment with existing policies:** The new behaviour approach should align with existing school policies and procedures. If it conflicts with other policies, it may cause confusion and undermine its effectiveness.
- **Lack of data:** Without data on student behaviour and the effectiveness of the new behaviour approach, it is difficult to make informed decisions about how to adjust the approach over time.
- **Limited stakeholder involvement:** Involving students, parents, and other stakeholders in the development and implementation of the new behaviour approach can increase buy-in and the likelihood of success.
- **Competing priorities:** If there are many projects and approaches occurring in a school setting, understanding priorities during high-pressure times can be difficult and lead to a lack of coherence. Considering de-implementation of less impactful approaches might be important.
- **A focus on the immediate not the long-term:** It is difficult to prioritise time and focus on implementing school-wide approaches when needing to address frequent instances of very disruptive behaviour. It is important to understand that a proactive, school-wide approach to behavioural supports can reduce the amount of behaviour that needs to be responded to.



Box 8 (continued)

Tips on implementation of school-wide approaches to behaviour:

- **Dedicate time:** Upfront professional development for all staff is particularly critical in the first year of implementation, with follow up support provided afterwards. One school, for example, devoted two staff professional learning days in their first year of implementation of a new school-wide approach to behaviour.
- **Give it time:** Be realistic about the amount of time it takes to introduce a new whole-school approach to behaviour.
- **Focus on consistency:** Achieving consistency across school staff members is challenging, but the following strategies can assist:
 - Consistent and on-going professional development;
 - Having clear and consistent documentation such as playbooks and flowcharts to support staff make decisions and provide students with the most appropriate supports;
 - Regular classroom observations to learn what's working and what's not;
 - Mechanisms for collecting and responding to data including student voice; and
 - Capturing and sharing videos of teachers demonstrating best practice.
- **Consider the needs of all students and how behaviour and instructional approaches are linked:** When planning and implementing approaches to behaviour, think about what the whole student population requires as well as the needs of the smaller percentage of students who may display highly disruptive behaviours. This may involve exploring links between behaviour and teaching and learning for both whole-school approaches and the learning and behavioural needs of specific students. It could involve starting with high-leverage practices such as teaching, modelling, prompting, and reinforcing behaviour, using high rates of student opportunities to respond, and explicit instruction.
- **Balance consistency with flexibility:** It requires thoughtful planning and implementation to achieve a balance between a consistent, school-wide approach to behaviour and the necessary flexibility to target individualised supports to students who need them. The best approach will be one grounded in the needs of students. The more that staff can understand the barriers to students meeting behaviour expectations and advocate for the interests of individual students, the more appropriate and effective interventions will be. It is also important to have clear referral systems, structures and processes including which additional internal and external supports are available.
- **Effective and efficient use of data is important:** Regular meetings (e.g. weekly) to review trends in data can help monitor whether particular approaches and strategies are effective for students. This may involve a small team of staff members such as a 'student support team'. There is a balance to strike between simplicity and thoroughness. Data needs to be collected as simply as possible and in a way that doesn't add to teachers' workload, but still provides robust information about what is happening for students across the day. Leveraging data that is already generated by other activities can be a good way to achieve this balance. At Monterey Secondary College, for example, the text content from the instant messaging system is downloaded, coded and tracked data – this doesn't involve additional tasks for teacher than what they need to do to request classroom support.
- **Think about sustainability:** Individual approaches can be quicker to implement but may be susceptible to drift or abandonment without the systems and supports that come from whole-school implementation.



Where's the evidence?

Among behaviour approaches, those aimed at the whole-school level more *consistently* improve learning outcomes.

And while the effects of whole-school approaches on behaviour and learning outcomes tend to be smaller and take longer to emerge than in classroom-based approaches, they are an important focus area for schools.¹⁷

The difference in these effects — as measured in research studies — may be due to the the difference in the level of disruption between classrooms in most schools: improving behaviour across the school may not have much of an effect on the lessons where behaviour was already good, but that does not mean the policy is not working.

The effect of a whole-school approach can be enhanced when deployed in combination with targeted additions and modifications for students who consistently struggle to meet the standard set by the approach.⁸⁰

First stop for further reading

Evidence for Learning

The E4L Guidance Report on implementation is a key document for school leaders implementing any strategic change: [Putting evidence to work: a school's guide to implementation](#).

E4L also has resources on '[Insights into de-implementation](#)' for schools who may want to re-consider the continued use of approaches that do not align with the evidence.

When considering using data to inform your approaches, both proactive and responsive, E4L's '[Gathering and interpreting data to identify priorities](#)' resource provides school leaders with the key questions and concepts to consider.

Russ Fox, Umesh Sharma, Erin Leif, Karina Stocker & Dennis Moore. (2021).

"Not Enough Time": Identifying Victorian Teachers' Perceptions of the Facilitators and Barriers to Supporting Improved Student Behaviour' explored the facilitating conditions and challenges associated with implementing school-wide positive behavioural interventions and supports in Victoria. doi.org/10.1017/jsi.2021.6



Acting on the evidence

These recommendations do not provide a 'one size fits all' solution. Major decisions about your school's approach to behaviour are likely to be most effective if made in conjunction with a range of stakeholders including teaching and non-teaching staff, students, families and community members.

E4L has produced '[Putting evidence to work: a school's guide to implementation](#)', a Guidance Report to assist schools as they approach any change within the school.

[Figure 7](#) provides an overview of the implementation process which schools can apply to any implementation challenge.



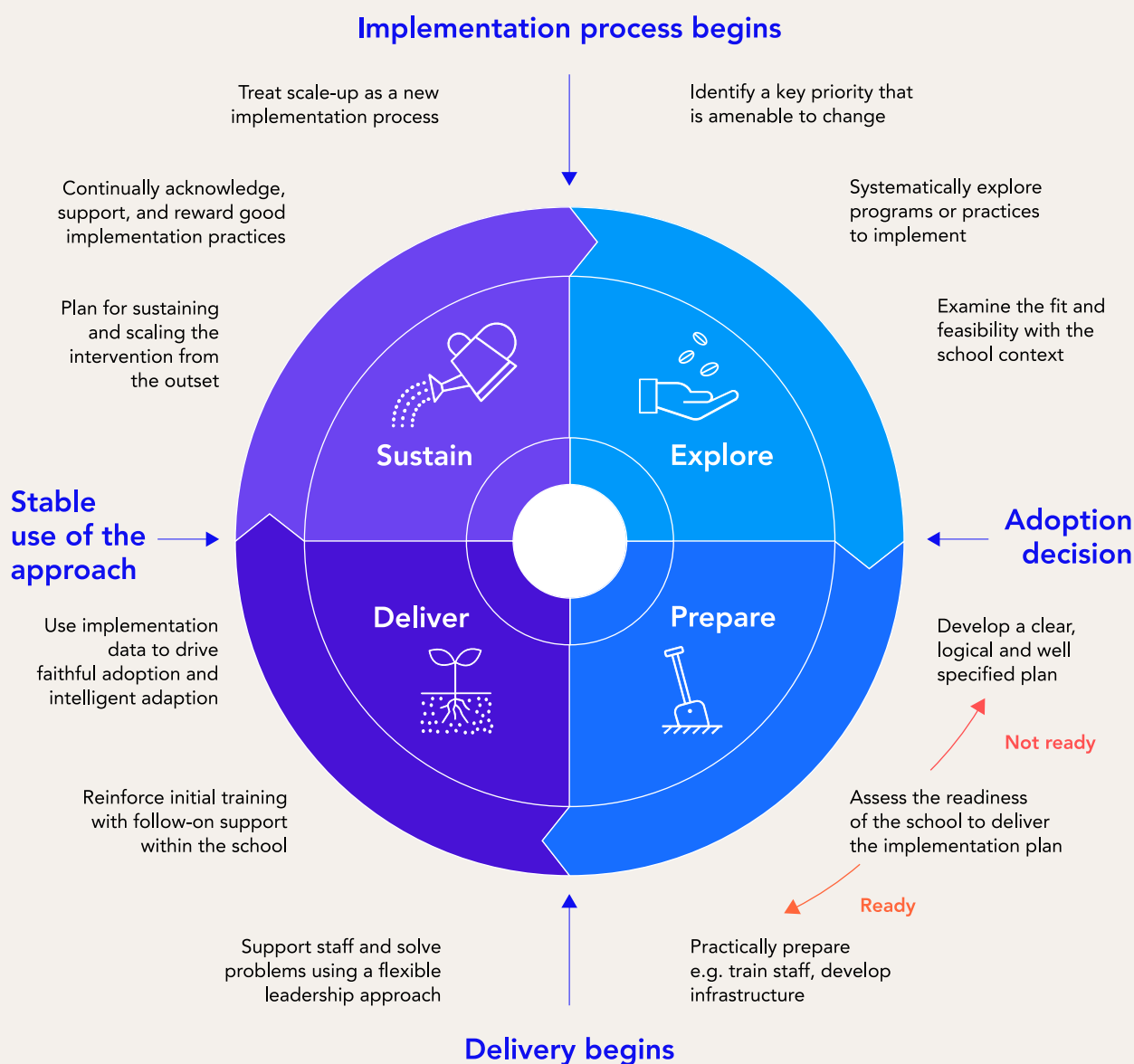
The stages of implementation

Foundations for good implementation

- ✓ Treat implementation as a process, not an event. Plan and execute it in stages.
- ✓ Create a leadership environment and school climate that is conducive to good implementation.

Implementation can be described as a series of stages relating to thinking about, preparing for, delivering, and sustaining change.

Figure 7: The stages of implementation



We have provided these questions to prompt reflection, aligned to 'The Stages of Implementation', detailed on the previous page. These stages are explored further in Evidence for Learning's Guidance Report '[Putting evidence to work: a school's guide to implementation](#)'. There may be additional questions that will guide your school, depending on the approach that you are looking to implement.



Foundations for good implementation

Checklist questions

- ✓ Have the school leadership team created a clear vision and understanding of the expectations of behaviour across the school?
- ✓ Is there a team responsible for managing the implementation of school-wide behaviour approach, policies and strategies?
- ✓ Is there a sense of shared responsibility among staff, and ideally students too, or is the approach to behaviour going to feel 'done to' the school community by leadership?



Explore

Checklist questions

- ✓ What does your existing data say about student behaviour, behaviour trends over time and the factors that may influence it?
- ✓ Does the approach to behaviour that you are looking to implement cover proactive and responsive strategies that are likely to be feasible in your school?
- ✓ Do staff understand the rationale for the new or adapted approach to behaviour? (does it have acceptability?)
- ✓ Is it feasible for this approach to be implemented? Is now the right time to implement the strategy?



Prepare

Checklist questions

- ✓ Has ongoing professional learning – in both classroom management strategies and school-wide approaches aligned with your approach – been planned for all school staff?
- ✓ Are those in the wider school community (beyond the leadership team and teachers) involved and supportive of the plan?
- ✓ What impact will you expect to see in school if this approach to behaviour is successful? How will this be measured?



Deliver

Checklist questions

- ✓ Are all staff trained in the approach to behaviour, including teaching assistants, receptionists, and everyone else who interacts with students? Do they have access to ongoing support?
- ✓ Have early career teachers been provided with additional support, such as coaching and mentoring?
- ✓ Is there a process in place to monitor the progress against the aims of the approach to behaviour?



Sustain

Checklist questions

- ✓ Has the approach to behaviour achieved the desired outcomes? (or has it shown indicators that you will achieve these outcomes?)
- ✓ Do you have an ongoing plan for monitoring and evaluating your approach to behaviour?
- ✓ Do you have a plan to sustain the approach to behaviour through appropriate resourcing and ongoing professional development? This may include how to upskill new teachers in the school's approach to behaviour.

Further reading

Evidence for Learning resources

'Improving social and emotional learning in primary schools' explores the research evidence on effective SEL approaches through six key recommendations for school leaders.

'Improving metacognition and self-regulated learning' contains seven key recommendations and may be valuable to school leaders and teachers looking to support students' behaviour by building their capacity to self-regulate and monitor themselves in the classroom.

'Working with parents to support children's learning' outlines key recommendations for building partnerships with families in support of their child's learning and development.

For school leaders and teachers who also have responsibilities for young children, E4L has recently published an evidence review and associated set of resources to support early childhood educators respond to challenging behaviour. You can find these [resources here](#).

In considering the importance of supporting staff while developing an approach to behaviour, school leaders will find E4L's 'Effective Professional Development' report valuable to guide the selection and development of activities most likely to influence practice.

E4L's Teaching & Learning Toolkit contains a number of approaches that school leaders may find relevant including:

- Behaviour interventions;
- Feedback;
- Metacognition and self-regulation;
- Parental engagement;
- Social and emotional learning; and
- Teaching Assistant interventions.

Australian Professional Standards for Teachers

Standard 1, 'Know students and how they learn' includes the 'physical, social and intellectual development and characteristics of students', as well as their backgrounds, abilities and how students learn.

Standard 4, 'Create and maintain supportive and safe learning environments' explores how teachers support student participation, maintain student safety and manage challenging behaviour when it arises.

The full Australian Professional Standards for Teachers can be found here: aitsl.edu.au/standards

New South Wales Department of Education

The NSW DoE have published a summary which describes an ecological perspective on behaviour. education.nsw.gov.au/content/dam/main-education/student-wellbeing/attendance-behaviour-and-engagement/media/documents/An-ecological-perspective-on-behaviour-fact-sheet.pdf

NSW DOE's Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation (CESE) published a literature review in 2020 exploring classroom management, highlighting the importance of both preventative (proactive) and responsive strategies. education.nsw.gov.au/about-us/educational-data/cese/publications/literature-reviews/classroom-management

Glossary

Term	Definition
Behaviour	In this report, 'behaviour', is taken to mean the whole range of ways students can act in school, including disruptive or aggressive behaviours, prosocial behaviours, and learning behaviours.
Curriculum	In this report, curriculum is used not just to mean the formal Australian Curriculum, but refers to ensuring the student has work at the appropriate level, and access to appropriate support and resources, that will lead to the experience of success as long as they stick with it. ^{32,38}
Engagement	'Any sustained connection a learner has towards any aspect of learning, schools or education'. ⁸¹
Learning behaviour	A learning behaviour is any behaviour that supports learning, such as paying attention to the teacher or persevering with a difficult task.
Misbehaviour	Behaviours that do not meet the expectations set by the school community.
Protective factor	Characteristics that buffer, mediate or moderate the influence of risk factors, thereby reducing the likelihood that risk factors will lead to later problem outcomes. ⁸²
Reinforcement	The provision of verbal, symbolic, tangible or other consequence (praise, reward, event) following the occurrence of desirable performance or effort, that has a significant level of relevance for the individual. ⁸³
Reward	A tangible thing given in recognition of an effort or achievement, such as an award or gold star.
Risk factor	Something which increases a person's chances of an adverse development or later life outcome. ⁸²

Note: The terms reinforcement and reward are often used interchangeably, however, it is important to understand the distinction. The research evidence underpinning this report demonstrates the efficacy of 'reinforcement', but occasionally this is labelled 'reward systems'.

How is the guide compiled?

This Guidance Report draws on the best available evidence regarding behaviour in schools, based on a systematic evidence review conducted by Dr Darren Moore and his team at the University of Exeter.

E4L developed a panel process to guide the development of recommendations for the Australian context. This process is outlined briefly below and is available in more detail on our website.

The original UK Guidance Report was created over three stages.

1. Scoping. The process began with a consultation with teachers, academics, and other experts, including visits to several schools. The EEF team appointed an Advisory Panel and evidence review team, and agreed research questions for the evidence review. The Advisory Panel consisted of both expert teachers and academics.

2. Evidence reviews. The evidence review team conducted searches for the best available international evidence on three areas relating to behaviour: models for why children and young people misbehave in schools, evidence about classroom-based approaches to behaviour, and evidence about school-wide approaches to behaviour.

3. Writing recommendations. The authors worked with the support of the Advisory Panel to draft the recommendations. Academic and teaching experts were consulted on drafts of the report.

The Australian Guidance Report was created over four stages, building on the EEF report.

1. Prioritisation. Through consultation with the E4L Schools Expert Reference Council, 'behaviour' was determined as a priority for further exploration in the Australian context, and evidence on this topic a timely and useful resource for Australian educators.

2. Panel review. E4L convened a panel of academic and practicing experts who reviewed the original evidence review to develop a series of recommendations relevant for Australian practitioners. These recommendations were tested against the EEF's findings and the recommendations developed by the UK panel.

3. Australian research. The panel members and E4L team identified high-quality, local research evidence and supporting resources which align with the evidence review and recommendations.

4. Localisation. E4L consulted with Australian school leaders to develop illustrations of practice to demonstrate how recommendations within the report are enacted in Australian schools.

We particularly acknowledge the insights of the Australian Panel Members: Dr Katherine Dix (Australian Council for Educational Research), Karina Stocker (Docklands Primary School), Tom Cain (Monterey Secondary College), Sarah Richardson (Australian Education Research Organisation) and Dr Russ Fox (Monash University).

We also thank Rosebud Secondary College for providing us with an illustration of practice.

E4L would like to also thank the many UK researchers and practitioners who provided support and feedback at the scoping stage and on drafts of the EEF's original guidance.

The EEF advisory panel included John d'Abbro OBE (New Rush Hall Group), Jane Bateman (Underwood West Academy), Prof Neil Humphrey (University of Manchester), Dr Alex Sutherland (RAND) and Jenny Thompson (Dixons Trinity Academy).

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