

Student Behaviour Strategy

March 2021



Minister's foreword

In August 2020, I invited community input on a draft strategy to support positive student behaviour and create effective and engaging classrooms. We have listened to the diverse voices and experiences of teachers, principals, students, parents, carers, community members, non-government organisations, and service providers working in, learning in and supporting NSW public schools.

I would like to thank and acknowledge all stakeholders for their considered feedback on the draft Student Behaviour Strategy. Your views have informed the development of the Strategy.

We have heard that more support is required to meet the diverse learning and wellbeing needs of our students. We want to strengthen our system of effective behaviour support to create inclusive learning environments for our students and safe and respectful working environments for our staff.

The Government has made clear its commitment to lifting educational standards and improving the learning outcomes of all students across NSW public schools. We must ensure that every student can develop skills and talents to fulfil their potential. To do this, we need a system that meets the needs of every child.

Our Student Behaviour Strategy will help us build an inclusive education system where every student is known, valued and cared for and all students are learning to their fullest capability.

Our new Student Behaviour Strategy will provide greater support to schools to promote and manage positive, inclusive and safe student behaviour. This will include:

- An integrated, inclusive and student-centred system that streamlines pathways to learning and wellbeing support
- New and enhanced supports, resources and tools to build staff capability and confidence to support and manage student behaviour
- Designing targeted interventions and services for vulnerable students to ensure continuity of support both in and out of school
- An expanded specialist workforce and improved access to specialist behaviour support services

The new Student Behaviour Strategy supports student behaviour and teachers' classroom management with a preventive, student-centred and positive approach. Our approach is based on research undertaken by the Telethon Kids Institute in their 2018 evidence review of what works best to support student behaviour needs. It also incorporates the recommendations of independent reviews, data analysis of suspensions and stakeholder consultation over three years.

We will continue to work with stakeholders to ensure the Strategy reflects the needs of our school communities, taking a phased approach to its implementation. We will design, test and refine ideas and initiatives in collaboration with staff, students, parents and carers, school communities and stakeholder groups to make sure we get it right.



The Hon. Sarah Mitchell, MLC

Minister for Education and
Early Childhood Learning



Contents

Minister's foreword	3
Contents	5
Why this work is important	6
The case for change	8
A new student behaviour strategy	10
Practice	12
1. Inclusive, proactive, prevention-focused approach	13
2. A continuum of care	14
3. Explicit teaching of behaviour skills	15
4. Managing challenging behaviour	16
Support	18
5. Supports and resources: capacity building	19
6. A specialist workforce	20
7. Shared parent and community responsibility and action	21
Ongoing improvement and systems reform	22
8. Quality implementation of effective, evidence-based interventions	23
9. Development of evidence and data	24
10. Collaborative partnerships	25
What does this mean for teachers, students, school support staff and leaders, parents and carers?	26
Ongoing consultation	28
Next steps	28
Implementation schedule	29
Appendix – What we heard	30

Why this work is important

Our vision is to be Australia's best education system and one of the finest in the world. To do so, we must build an inclusive education system in which every student has the opportunity to access high-quality education and to fulfil their potential. Embedding inclusive education across our schools requires effective behaviour support and management.



We know that students who feel supported, safe and connected are more likely to be active participants in their learning. Positive and respectful learning environments promote engagement and improved academic achievement. A growing body of evidence points to the reciprocal and interconnected relationship between student wellbeing and learning outcomes.

This Student Behaviour Strategy aims to increase student engagement through evidence-based positive behaviour support. Fostering connected, cohesive and safe learning environments requires a whole-school community approach, and this new Strategy aims to strengthen relationships between schools, families and communities.

Effective behaviour support must ensure the safe inclusion and participation of all of our students. This includes students with complex, challenging and unsafe behaviours while maintaining the physical and psychological safety of all students and staff. We are committed to creating and sustaining safe, supportive and inclusive school communities with a holistic approach to driving positive student behaviour.

To do this, we need to strengthen the system of support for students and staff to create respectful learning and working environments that promote engagement and wellbeing. This Student Behaviour Strategy is a critical component of this work, alongside our Disability Strategy and the NSW Curriculum Review.

Schools currently implement a range of behaviour support and management strategies. Our teachers and school staff have told us that student behaviour can be complex and is increasingly challenging. We have listened to the safety, health and wellbeing challenges that can sometimes arise for our staff in responding to incidents.

Children and young people's behaviours span a continuum, ranging from positive, inclusive and respectful behaviours to complex, challenging and unsafe behaviours. To ensure we meet the needs of all students, the evidence tells us we need to adopt a multi-tiered continuum of care. The tiers of support range from

universal and preventative support, through targeted or secondary supports to tertiary or intensive interventions.

We are committed to supporting children to have a positive transition to school experience. This includes supporting children with behavioural support needs from the early years through to school. This commitment is achieved through encouraging the use of Transition to School statements and facilitating sharing of good practice in behaviour management in the early years between early childhood education educators and primary teachers.

By promoting the benefits of participation in early childhood education, more children will develop their skills in managing feelings and behaviour, cooperating with others and self-confidence earlier in life.

At the challenging and unsafe end of the continuum, exclusionary responses, such as suspension, will remain an option. However, Australian and international research shows that exclusionary discipline, such as school suspension, is linked to a range of adverse effects. This includes reinforcing and escalating behaviours, disengagement from learning, lower school attendance, increased likelihood of contact with the justice system, and poor long-term health and wellbeing outcomes.

In addition, we know that suspension rates for vulnerable students in NSW are too high, and disproportionately so for students with disability, Aboriginal students, students in rural and remote areas, students in out of home care and students experiencing socioeconomic disadvantage. Most importantly, there is no evidence that suspension is an effective mechanism for improving or managing student behaviour. Suspension does not provide students with the support they need to achieve behavioural change when they return to the classroom, so we need to provide new and better alternatives.

We are holding ourselves to account by working to change this by rolling out additional supports, resources and access to specialist services to provide new approaches for addressing complex, challenging and unsafe behaviour.



The case for change

This Student Behaviour Strategy is firmly grounded in evidence. The findings and recommendations from a series of independent inquiries, reviews of empirical research and international best practice, data analysis of suspensions, and input from stakeholders across the system have presented us with a compelling case for changing the way we support and manage student behaviour.

There is a clear view from stakeholders for change and adoption of better practice, and an equally strong voice for greater support for schools to adopt that practice and to maintain a safe and engaging learning environment. Key themes that emerged from the public consultation on the draft Student Behaviour Strategy conducted in August 2020 are outlined in the Appendix.

The need for systems reform and ongoing improvement has been highlighted in a range of recent independent inquiries into student wellbeing and disability, including: the NSW Ombudsman Inquiry into behaviour management in schools (2017); the NSW Legislative Council Inquiry into students with a disability or special needs in NSW schools (2017); and the NSW Auditor-General's Performance Audit Report on supporting students with disability in NSW public schools (2016). These inquiries recommended system-level change with key areas for improvement in the existing student behaviour framework, specifically:

- a need to better identify students at risk;
- the importance of building the capacity of teachers and school staff;
- a need to review the suspension policy and associated guidance; and
- a need for evidence-based practices and interventions.

As a result, in early 2018, the Department commissioned the Telethon Kids Institute, led by Professor Donna Cross, to conduct an evidence review of what works to address student behaviour needs, and how best to provide system-level implementation support to schools.

The review recognises that children and young people's development occurs within the context of multiple environments, with a vast array of factors influencing different aspects of learning and development. The theory supports a student-centred, school-family-community approach in which consistency across these domains is needed to support and reinforce change. It also demonstrates that 'behaviour support' is broader than 'behaviour change' and addresses a continuum of student needs beyond immediate response strategies for students demonstrating challenging behaviour; including ways to identify and support students who are at risk and universal behaviour strategies that help support positive behaviour among all students.

Based on this work, key principles were identified to guide the Strategy:

- student behaviour is integrated within a strategic, system-level approach to learning and wellbeing;
- a multi-tiered continuum of care to support all students – from the promotion of positive behaviour to proactive prevention and early intervention through to more targeted individual support, student-centred and evidence-informed policy and practice;

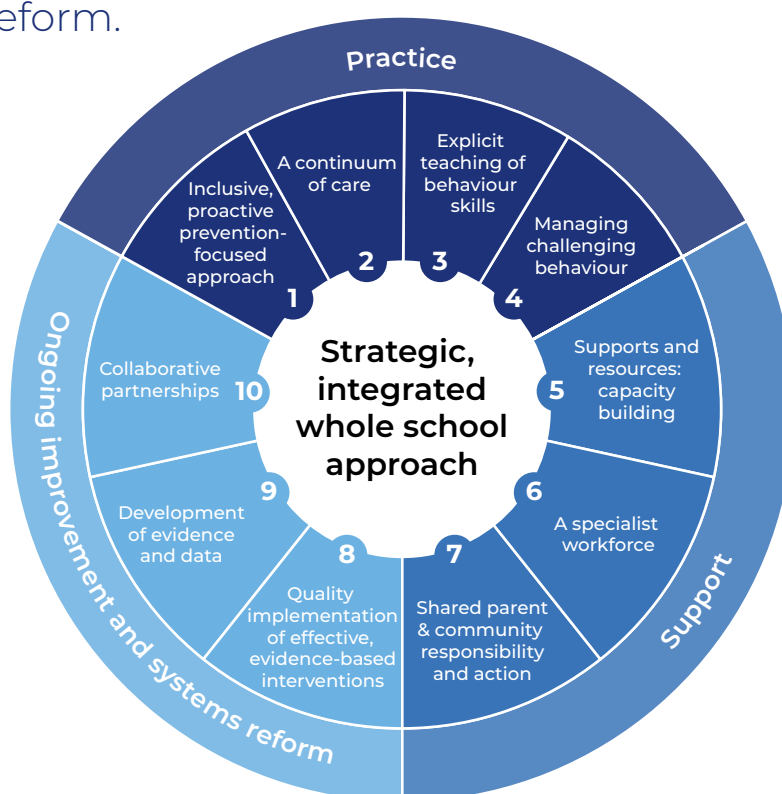
- social and emotional skills and behaviour expectations being explicitly taught to students with opportunities for developmental skill-building;
- balancing proactive prevention-focused, relationship-based and restorative practices with appropriate behaviour management practices;
- embedding inclusion and equity in all aspects of student behaviour support and management, including within relationships and wider programs, to meet the diverse needs of all students;
- fostering shared community responsibility and action through meaningful engagement between schools, families and support services;
- using evidence-based frameworks, programs and tools to plan, implement, monitor and evaluate school change and improvement;
- professional learning be accessible for school leaders, teachers and specialist staff to provide further support and engage in maintaining and building knowledge, skills and confidence;
- data-based identification, monitoring and assessment of school context, cultural strengths, student behaviour and wellbeing, and student and staff needs and support to interpret data;
- strengthening partnerships with other government agencies, such as NSW Health and the Department of Communities and Justice, to align policy and action across government; and
- staged approach (with meaningful planning, capacity building, and sufficient time and resources) for quality implementation of effective interventions to establish and sustain a whole-school approach to positive behaviour support.

We have based our Strategy on these principles.



A new student behaviour strategy

Underpinned by evidence and informed by input from our stakeholders, this Student Behaviour Strategy encompasses three key areas: practice, support and ongoing improvement and systems reform.



Practice:

Teaching and behaviour management approaches and practices aimed at building positive behaviours and learning environments, while reducing the occurrence of challenging and unsafe behaviours through proactive and preventive approaches and providing better options for managing challenging behaviours when they do occur.

Support:

Providing schools, teachers, students and parents with the supports and practice resources needed, including:

- professional learning;
- resource hubs;
- better-integrated support from specialist staff;
- new Behaviour Specialists;
- easier and increased access to specialist professional services; and
- tools to build partnerships with parents and service providers.

Ongoing improvement and systems reform:

Recognising that we need to:

- build our evidence base;
- measure outcomes;
- monitor our progress;
- establish what works best;
- continue to collaborate with stakeholders;
- update and expand tools and resources; and
- adapt our approaches.

A strategic, integrated whole-school approach

We believe the creation of a positive and safe learning environment best enables students to learn and engage at school. This requires student behaviour, learning, wellbeing and mental health support to be integrated at a strategic and systems-level and delivered as a whole-school, coordinated approach. Systems reform will be aligned with, and responsive to, the diverse needs of our students, staff and school communities.

Each of the key areas of the Strategy are given effect through ten integrated focus areas.





Practice

1. Inclusive, proactive, prevention-focused approach

Inclusive education means all students can access and fully participate in learning alongside their similar-aged peers, and be supported by reasonable adjustments and teaching strategies tailored to meet their individual needs, regardless of disability, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, nationality, language, gender, sexual orientation or faith. We are committed to a whole school, whole system approach to growing inclusive practice.

Developing positive behaviours and behaviour self-regulation skills in all students from an early age will lead to a safer learning environment for all, and will set up our students with the social skills needed in later life.

Aims

- Build prevention and early intervention into our approach
- Strengthen positive learning environments in all schools
- Strengthen student engagement and ownership of positive behaviours
- Reduce the occurrence of challenging and unsafe behaviours.

What we will do

- Support early intervention and ongoing development with the expansion of age-appropriate approaches and materials for K – 12
- Revise policy and procedures for behaviour support and management to guide school leaders and specialist staff
- Clarify the roles and responsibilities of principals, teachers, school staff, parents, services providers and the community in relation to supporting student behaviour
- Provide tools for planning and implementing positive behaviour support approaches and programs;
- Align behaviour support planning and implementation with the School Excellence Framework
- Embed a consistent, inclusive, evidence-based approach that is driven by student needs and abilities, and high expectations
- Incorporate inclusive education, positive behaviour support and strengths-based principles into behaviour management, wellbeing and disability professional learning
- Make behaviour support professional learning and all Positive Behaviour for Learning resources available to all schools.



2. A continuum of care

Children and young people display behaviours which span across a continuum from positive, inclusive and respectful behaviours to complex, challenging and unsafe behaviours.

In addressing the needs of all students, we need to develop a universal approach to positive behaviour, prevention, early intervention and individual student support across service and program delivery.

Some students may display more complex, challenging and unsafe behaviours and will require intensive, individual interventions, and specialist supports and resources.

Aims

- Improve early identification of students at risk or with complex needs
- The school workforce is clear about how behaviour support is delivered and their respective roles
- All students receive behaviour support appropriate to their needs
- Additional and targeted individual support is made available to vulnerable students with complex needs
- Fewer students engaging in challenging and unsafe behaviours
- Fewer suspensions and suspensions of shorter duration, especially for our youngest students.

What we will do

- Rollout universal behaviour support and management for all students, built on Positive Behaviour for Learning principles
- Provide professional learning on behaviour management across the continuum of care for teachers and other school staff to build confidence and capability
- Align existing specialist staff to provide early and targeted support and to assist with intensive interventions when required
- Provide enhanced and streamlined guidelines for the development and implementation of behaviour support planning and the engagement of specialists.

3. Explicit teaching of behaviour skills

Delivered within the continuum of care, explicit teaching works best when working directly with students to develop their social, emotional and behaviour skills.

Aims

- Enhanced achievement of positive behaviour outcomes for students
- Social and emotional skills and behaviour expectations are explicitly taught to students with opportunities for developmental skill-building
- Teachers feel enabled and confident to deliver programs and behaviour support interventions
- Positive social, emotional and behavioural learning and wellbeing outcomes.

What we will do

- Provide teachers with new and improved professional learning based on positive behaviour support principles, together with tools and resources
- Provide guidelines about incorporating positive behaviour support approaches into teaching practice
- Provide access to new Positive Behaviour for Learning professional learning to staff in early childhood settings.



4. Managing challenging behaviour

We need to explore and develop new options and approaches for managing challenging behaviour.

Aims

- A safe, respectful and inclusive environment for staff and students
- Equitable and consistent approaches in deciding next steps in managing challenging and unsafe behaviour
- Clarity and confidence of school leaders in behaviour management support and planning processes
- Reduced frequency and duration of suspensions
- Improved restorative practice following intensive interventions.

What we will do

- Continue to prioritise the safety and wellbeing of staff and students
- Retain the use of suspension as a last resort under new policy guidelines
- Provide professional learning to all staff on identifying the function of a student's behaviour and on responding to behaviour escalation
- Explore a range of evidence-based changes and options for how suspensions are issued and managed, in collaboration with principals and school staff. Areas to be explored include:
 - Access to alternative educational programs and a range of alternative options to suspension, including in-school suspensions
 - Review of suspension centres and tutorial centres
 - Clarifying the criteria for suspension and reducing the duration of suspensions
 - Reducing the disproportionate suspension rates of vulnerable student cohorts, including students with disability, students in rural and remote areas, students experiencing socioeconomic disadvantage and Aboriginal students
 - Consideration of factors that may have played a role in producing the challenging behaviour
 - Improvements, such as new support, provided during the period of suspension.





Support

5. Supports and resources: capacity building

Teachers and school staff have told us that their experiences of responding to complex, challenging and unsafe behaviour have increased in recent years. There is an improved capability of teachers and school staff to understand, recognise and identify disability or additional learning needs. Although experiences vary, it is clear that our teachers and school staff are working to ensure every child is known, valued and cared for.

We need to ensure that schools, leaders, teachers and specialist staff are engaged and positioned to develop and manage student behaviour through capacity building and wellbeing practices.

Aims

- Education leaders, teachers and specialist staff have the capacity and confidence to implement evidence-informed practice that supports student behaviour and wellbeing and specifically to implement the 'continuum of care', 'explicit teaching' and other components of this Strategy
- Teachers, schools and specialist staff are equipped with the supports and resources needed for effective service delivery.

What we will do

- Provide a suite of foundational and specialist professional learning, tools and resources on behaviour support and management for all NSW school workforce
- Provide access to new professional learning including:
 - Classroom management fundamentals
 - An introduction to Positive Behaviour for Learning
 - Positive Behaviour for Learning: school-wide systems of support
 - An introduction to functional behaviour assessment
 - Understanding behaviour for non-teaching school staff
 - Advanced and specialist courses in behaviour
 - Restorative practices
 - Prevention, responses to and de-escalation of challenging behaviour.
- Provide a toolkit of advice, guidance and assessment tools on the Department website, including:
 - classroom assessments and checklists for behaviour support (including room set up and layout, sensory assessments, general classroom management)
 - individual student assessments and checklists (including the behaviour continuum, restorative practice scripts to resolve conflicts between students and checklists to keep students on task)
 - guidance for teachers to manage difficult conversations with parents and carers
 - resources and guidance on how to implement restorative practices in behaviour support and management
- Continue to incorporate the core principles underpinning Positive Behaviour for Learning, which are currently used in many schools. Many aspects of positive behaviour support are reflected in this Strategy, including the multi-tiered continuum of behaviour support.

6. A specialist workforce

To provide the targeted and intensive support needed across schools we need an expert workforce to provide guidance, advice and input for both proactive behaviour support activities and programs and for individual case management with teachers for students with complex needs.

Aims

- Improve positive behaviour support across schools
- Establish a new workforce of Behaviour Specialists to facilitate integrated service support through advice, collaboration and complex case management
- Teachers, schools and specialist staff are equipped with the supports and resources needed for effective service delivery
- Rural and remote students and schools are able to access the behaviour support they need at the time they need it
- Opportunities exist to develop the knowledge of existing specialist staff to better support students with complex and challenging behaviours
- Delivery Support teams work closely with schools to form wraparound support in complex and challenging behaviours.

What we will do

- Establish a new workforce of behaviour specialists to facilitate integrated service support through advice, collaboration and complex case management
- Identify opportunities for specialist staff, including Behaviour Specialists, to inform or contribute to explicit teaching activities related to behaviour support and interventions
- Build equitable, consistent, evidence-based guidelines, supported by tools and development for staff and expert resources that increase positive outcomes
- Provide rural and remote schools access to a range of behaviour supports, including the Behaviour Specialists, in innovative ways to help increase the available support to students and schools
- Build awareness among the school workforce of the internal specialist staff and when and how they can access them.
- Expand the Specialist Allied Health Scheme to include additional behaviour support service providers to support evidence-informed interventions and local decision-making
- Develop co-commissioning solutions with other NSW Government agencies, particularly the Department of Communities and Justice to ensure continuity of support for vulnerable students both in and out of school settings
- Provide professional learning in functional behaviour assessments and behaviour support planning to all support and specialist staff
- Provide all staff with access to Positive Behaviour for Learning Tier 3 Individual Supports professional learning.

7. Shared parent and community responsibility and action

We recognise the value of greater communication and engagement between schools, parents and carers, and the community to foster shared responsibility for student wellbeing and learning outcomes. We will work to improve collaboration through the development of new resources for schools, parents and carers.

Aims

- Schools and parents partnering and collaborating to support student behaviour
- School staff and specialists feel confident and capable to engage parents and carers about behaviour support challenges
- Parents are engaged to support their child around behaviour issues and to actively support and promote positive behaviour development with their child and within the school community
- Schools partner with the community to support positive student behaviour, recognising what happens outside the school gates is as equally important as it is at school.

What we will do

- Create guidelines and resources for schools to strengthen their ability to:
 - Engage with parents and carers about behaviour
 - Develop partnerships with parents with a focus on responsibilities for behaviour management
- Create and provide access to tools and resources on the Department's website for parents to enable them to better engage in behaviour support approaches
- Provide schools with guidance and resources to foster shared responsibility for student behaviour support through meaningful communication and engagement with parents, carers, support services and local communities.





Ongoing improvement and systems reform

8. Quality implementation of effective, evidence-based interventions

Our Strategy will be implemented through a staged approach with clear planning, capacity building and with sufficient time and resources to establish and sustain a whole-school approach to positive behaviour support.

Aims

- Effective implementation of this Strategy adopting a staged approach with meaningful planning
- All school staff are familiar with the key elements of the Strategy before the new policy is implemented
- Additional supports are in place before the new policy is introduced
- Staff and schools are well-positioned to implement the policy when it is released
- Ensure adequate capability building of staff to implement and respond to behaviour support interventions.

What we will do

- Implement the Strategy in a phased approach:
 1. Establish new Behaviour Specialist positions
 2. Professional learning and toolkit
 3. Expanded prequalified panel of service providers
 4. Ongoing collaboration with teachers, school leaders and students, to develop details of the policy and procedures
 5. Familiarisation of the new policy and procedures
 6. Implementation of the new policy and procedures
 7. Additional professional learning and practice resources
 8. Monitoring and evaluation plan in place
- Provide information about the Strategy to familiarise all staff and other stakeholders with its content before the policy and revised procedures are implemented. We will use various methods for this including:
 - Making it available on the Department's website
 - Information sessions with key stakeholder groups
 - Optional remote drop-in sessions for school leaders, teachers/school staff, and parents and carers.
- Seek feedback regularly from stakeholders regarding implementation and effectiveness of professional learning, tools and resources.

9. Development of evidence and data

We plan to build the evidence base and measure outcomes to plan, implement, monitor and evaluate school change and use data to sustain and improve what we are doing. We will continue to strengthen our understanding of what works best to support positive behaviour, improve school performance and lift student performance.

Aims

- To strengthen the evidence-base for best practices in supporting student behaviour, learning, engagement and wellbeing
- To build the necessary data sets to monitor and evaluate interventions and their impact on different student cohorts at school and system level
- To test the equity of our adoption of new policies and practice
- To have visibility of program outcomes and effectiveness
- To learn from what we do and improve our approaches when needed.

What we will do

- Develop an evaluation and monitoring plan to identify measures and track outcomes across wellbeing, learning, engagement, inclusion and equity. Our approach will be informed by outcomes measurement work occurring across the Department and the results logic developed by the Telethon Kids Institute
- Undertake process evaluations focused on reviewing the quality and effectiveness of behaviour supports; adjust our approaches as the evidence tells us
- Strengthen our data collection systems to support analysis of suspensions and student wellbeing, to guide the ongoing development of the Strategy and track our progress.



10. Collaborative partnerships

We will collaborate with NSW Government agencies, the non-government sector and advocacy groups to promote effective approaches and enhance service design and delivery.


Aims

- Student-centred practice based on a holistic understanding of needs and context
- Proactive coordination and integration of behavioural support services and sharing of best practices
- Wraparound, seamless support for vulnerable students across NSW Government and partners.

What we will do

- Strengthen partnerships with other agencies, including NSW Health and the Department of Communities and Justice, to ensure a holistic, streamlined approach to supporting students with complex needs
- Equip our Behaviour Specialists and Delivery Support team to work collaboratively across the Department and with external agencies to ensure integrated service delivery
- Implement support across the continuum of care in collaboration with partners.





What does this mean for teachers, students, school support staff and leaders, parents and carers?

This Strategy seeks for students, schools, and our community to be empowered to champion and drive a culture of positive behaviour support to achieve positive outcomes for all students.

Teachers

This Strategy strives for you to:

- feel supported by expert behaviour colleagues to deepen your practice as part of a professional, systemic community
- have clarity about the key principles of positive behaviour development and the importance of these for your students and the part you play in this
- work in a safe and respectful environment
- be confident that the professional learning you engage in and the resources you access have a strong evidence base and strengthen your practice
- make evidence-informed decisions to help improve your students' learning and wellbeing outcomes
- be confident and capable to deliver existing and new positive behaviour programs and activities.

Students

This Strategy strives for you to:

- understand what is expected of you in school and in the classroom
- participate in and benefit from learning activities to build your social, emotional, relationship and behaviour management and self-regulation skills
- learn in a safe and respectful environment; make a positive contribution to that environment
- be protected from bullying and discrimination
- know where you can go to for help
- feel empowered to use your voice and know that it is heard and respected
- be confident your teacher is clear about what you need to do to improve in and outside of the classroom, show you what great work looks like and give you clear feedback to help stretch your thinking and make good choices.

Support staff

This Strategy strives for you to:

- be supported, as a member of a broader expert team, to provide schools with evidence-informed professional learning and resources
- work in a safe and respectful environment
- be informed about the importance of positive behaviour support and be clear about the part you play in it
- be actively involved in the evaluation and refinement of support delivered under this Strategy
- feel confident that our collective support is cohesive, consistent, high quality and drives teaching quality and improves student learning and outcomes.

School leaders

This Strategy strives for you to:

- be clear about the importance of positive behaviour support, the integrated elements of the Strategy and how it can best be implemented in your school
- work in a safe and respectful environment
- be confident that the professional learning and resources offered to teachers and teams in your school have a clear research base, support you to make evidence-informed decisions, deepen your teaching practice and have positive impacts on student learning outcomes
- contribute to, and have confidence that, ongoing evaluation will enable us to see what works best and to improve over time
- be confident that we are improving the way that we manage challenging behaviours, with better access to specialist resources
- feel that your work is connected to a strong system that provides you with the right support to drive equitable student outcomes.

Parent and carers

This Strategy strives for:

- your child to be able to say what they can do well and what they need to do to improve; to be able to have constructive conversations with you about their behaviour and the behaviour of others
- you to have better access to information, tools and resources through a Parents and Carers hub on the Department's website and strengthened communication with your school
- you to participate in a safe and respectful school community
- you to be increasingly clear about how you can help your child improve based on a strengthened partnership with your child's school as part of the public education system.

System leaders

This Strategy strives for you to:

- have clarity about how we are improving behaviour support in schools and the role you will play in this
- support and facilitate integration and coordination of cooperative arrangements and service delivery
- support the Strategy's data gathering and evaluation activities and contribute, where possible, to strengthening our evidence base
- feel that your work is connected to a strong system that provides you with the right support to drive equitable student outcomes
- role model and champion the changes.

Ongoing consultation

We want to hear the views of students, staff, parents and carers, community members, stakeholder groups and advocacy organisations. They remain central to shaping change across schools. We will continue our collaboration as we move into the next phases of design, planning and implementation. We will adopt a staged approach to ensure we are getting it right.

We will work with our stakeholders to drive systemic change and address areas of concern, and co-design a system with lasting and sustainable solutions for students. Our structures, processes and systems will support the changes we are proposing and will foster understanding and conviction and build talent and skills across the Department.

Next steps

Our immediate next steps are to:

- engage with stakeholders including through information sessions and the ongoing seeking of feedback on this Strategy and its implementation
- collaborate with key stakeholders, especially teachers, school leaders and students on details of the policy and procedures.

The new Student Behaviour Policy and Procedures will come into effect later in 2021.

This new Student Behaviour Strategy places our students, their families and our staff at the centre of decision-making, design and implementation. It will equip schools and school staff to better manage behaviour. It will strengthen the creation and maintenance of safe and respectful places to learn and work.

We will continue to seek your input as we continue the critical work of building an inclusive public education system for NSW.



Implementation schedule

Semester 1, 2021

- Foundational and specialist professional learning, tools and resources available
- Behaviour specialists commence
- Streamlined access to a panel of behaviour support service providers
- Additional Positive Behaviour for Learning professional learning available
- Consultation on behaviour policies and procedures
- Review of integrated roles in learning and wellbeing workforce and system supports
- Review of suspension centres, tutorial centres and alternate learning programs.

Semester 2, 2021

- New student behaviour policy and procedures released
- Changes across data systems to support suspension data collection
- Expanded panel of behaviour support service providers released
- Monitoring and evaluation plan rolled out.

2022

- Advanced and specialist professional learning available
- Co-commissioned services to ensure continuity of support in and out of school to commence
- Learning and wellbeing support service responses strengthened
- Improved data collection and outcomes measurement.





Appendix – What we heard

In August 2020, the Department of Education released a consultation paper, *A new Student Behaviour Strategy: Lifting educational outcomes through early intervention and targeted support*, outlining proposed reform directions to support and manage student behaviour in NSW public schools.

The consultation paper outlined four potential areas of change:

- integrating student behaviour within our broader approaches to learning and wellbeing
- providing targeted support to vulnerable student cohorts through evidence-based interventions and a dedicated expert workforce
- building capacity across the workforce to better manage complex needs through professional learning
- co-commissioning services with other parts of government, in particular the Department of Communities and Justice, to ensure continuity of support and information sharing in a timely manner both in and out of school settings.

Over 900 submissions were received. The vast majority of submissions were from principals, teachers and school staff. Across all submissions, stakeholders expressed strong interest in improving how student behaviour is supported and managed. Stakeholders told us that supports and resources should be strengthened to address the learning and wellbeing needs of all students and teachers.

Key concerns expressed by stakeholders included:

- the high-level at which the reform directions were outlined and a desire to see more detail and links to the evidence base;
- the need to balance any changes to suspension with appropriate safeguards and supports to ensure the safety, health and wellbeing of staff and students;

- the diverse experiences of staff and students; and
- the need to support vulnerable student cohorts.

Submissions highlighted the need for:

- ongoing consultation and engagement;
- access to additional supports, services and resources for staff, including multiagency and multidisciplinary solutions;
- ongoing improvement, systems reform, implementation support, and monitoring and evaluation; and
- greater communication and engagement between schools, parents and carers and the community to foster shared responsibility for student wellbeing and learning outcomes.

Overall, there was broad endorsement of the proposed positive and student-centred approach to student behaviour support and strengthening the Department's commitment to equity and inclusion stakeholders, subject to the strengthening of supports, services and resources for both staff and students. There was also a strong interest in ongoing consultation on the detail underpinning the Strategy (in policies and procedures).

Key themes and issues raised during the public consultation process have been summarised in an outcomes report available on the Department's website.






We acknowledge the homelands of all Aboriginal people and pay our respect to Country.

For more Information

If you have any questions about this progress report, or to request a text-only version, please email:

Behaviour.Strategy@det.nsw.edu.au

Say hello

 @NSWDepartmentofEducation

 @NSWEducation

 @NSWEducation

education.nsw.gov.au

© 2021 NSW Department of Education

GPO Box 33 Sydney NSW 2001

Australia T 1300 679 332