A GUIDE TO

STEPS

Steps to examine programs and approaches for schools

BULLYING. NO WAY!®

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The Safe and Supportive School Communities (SSSC) Working Group is a national collaborative project focused on supporting Australian schools to implement workable solutions to bullying, harassment and violence.
The working group includes representatives from all states and territories, including the Catholic and independent sectors. It operates under COAG and reports to the Australian Education Senior Officials Committee.
Queensland Department of Education and Training manages all aspects of the SSSC project on behalf of all Australian Education Authorities, including the Bullying. No Way! website (www.bullyingnoway.gov.au) and the annual National Day of Action against Bullying and Violence for Australian schools.

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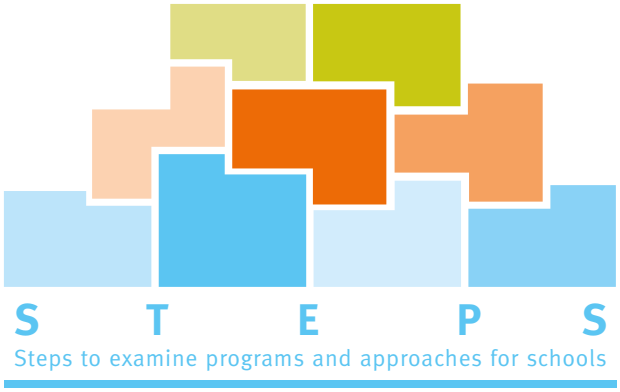
INTRODUCTION TO STEPS

WHAT IS STEPS?

STEPS — Steps to examine programs and approaches for schools — is a decision-making tool to help schools select appropriate and evidence-based anti-bullying programs and approaches.



Local decisions determine and drive your school's success. You want to select programs and approaches that lead to real results for your students.

A wide range of frameworks, strategies, resources and programs which aim to counter bullying is available to schools. Some of these have a strong theoretical basis, solid evidence and are designed for sustainable implementation in schools. Others lack any theory or evidence and do not align with the educational context.

The STEPS decision-making tool supports school staff to examine these various programs and resources.

STEPS consists of:

- *A guide to STEPS* (this booklet) with information on using the framework
- *STEPS decision-making framework*
- *STEPS form for schools* to complete
- detailed information about each component of the STEPS framework on the Bullying. No Way website.

WHO IS STEPS FOR?

STEPS is for Australian schools that want a robust, transparent and comprehensive process for selecting an evidence-based anti-bullying approach that is appropriate for their school.

STEPS is also for schools that want to avoid using inappropriate and ineffective approaches or programs.

WHY SELECT AN EVIDENCE-BASED APPROACH?

Schools want to know the anti-bullying approach they select will work. A strong evidence base for an approach gives schools confidence that the time and effort required to implement the approach will result in positive and sustainable outcomes.

WHAT MAKES AN APPROACH APPROPRIATE?

Schools want to know the anti-bullying approach they select will work in their school.

An appropriate approach matches your identified goals, and can be implemented in your school context on a sustainable basis. Only you can determine your school's strengths and needs, as well as your resources and constraints for implementing an approach.

WHO DEVELOPED STEPS?

STEPS has been developed through extensive consultation by Australia's Safe and Supportive School Communities Working Group, which includes representatives from all Australian educational authorities. It is available at Bullying. No Way! at bullyingnoway.gov.au

CAN I GIVE FEEDBACK ON STEPS?

STEPS is currently in a pilot stage in schools. Schools are welcome to provide feedback by email to bnw.website@dete.qld.gov.au

THE STEPS FRAMEWORK

The STEPS decision-making framework is composed of three layers of questions that schools need to answer in order to choose an anti-bullying approach for their school.

Layer 1: Does it work? What is the evidence?

- Through examining Definition, Theory, Evidence and Practice

Layer 2: Will it work to achieve our school's goals?

- Through examining Suitability, Feasibility and Perspective

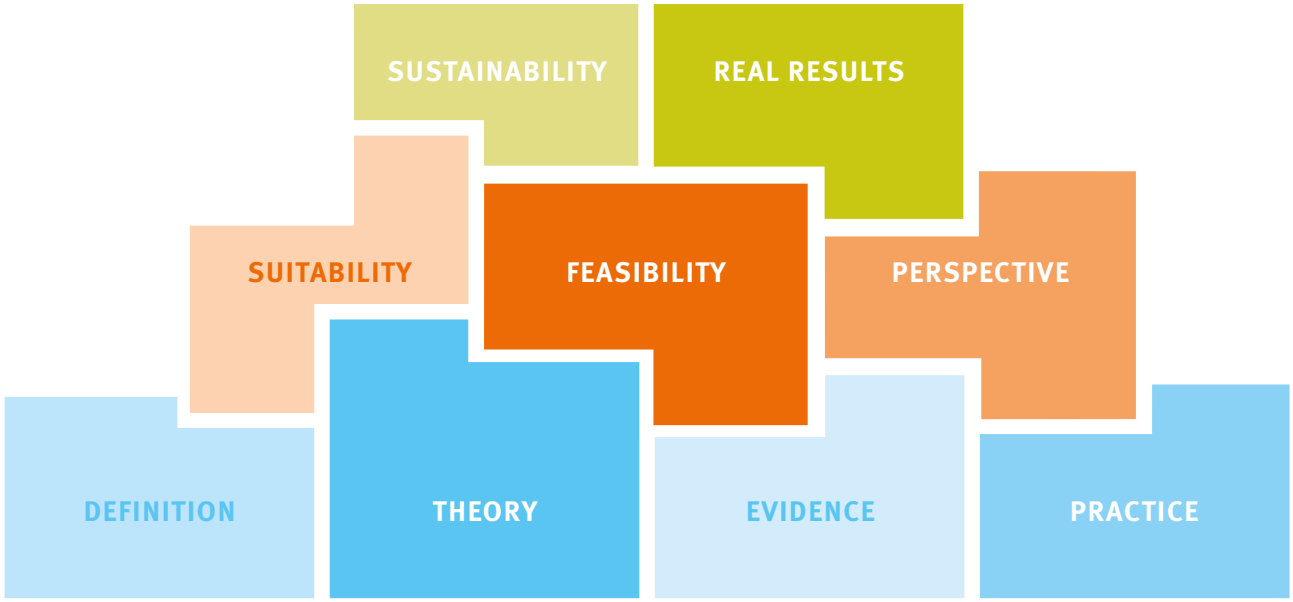
Layer 3: How will we know it has worked?

- Through examining Sustainability and Real results.

In combination, these three layers with the nine key concepts make up the STEPS framework.

Each of the nine concepts is explained in detail in the section **The nine key concepts**. Each concept is explored through extensive background information and an explanation of key concepts, and concludes with further prompt questions for schools.

See Appendix 1 for the complete form.



See the appendix for the complete STEPS framework or download from the STEPS section of Bullying. No Way!

The nine concepts each involve a key question that guides schools to fully examine an approach.

Concept	Key question
	Layer 1: Does it work? What is the evidence?
Definition	Is the approach based on a contemporary understanding of bullying that is consistent with the school's definition?
Theory	Is the approach based on a sound theory that draws on the existing knowledge from previous research in bullying?
Evidence	Does the approach have evidence from well-designed research which shows measurable change in behaviour?
Practice	Have other schools used this approach and achieved positive outcomes?

	Layer 2: Will it work to achieve our school's goals?
Suitability	Does the approach address the target students and needs that the school has identified?
Feasibility	Is the approach feasible and practical in the school context?
Perspective	Is the philosophical perspective underpinning the approach compatible with the school's approach to behaviour, learning and student wellbeing?
	Layer 3: How will we know it has worked?
Sustainability	Can the school implement and sustain the approach as required for it to be effective?
Real results	Does the approach indicate how outcomes will be measured and timeframes within which to expect to see real results?

HOW TO USE STEPS

Selecting an anti-bullying approach is an important decision.

The decision-making process is multifaceted, and it will require some time to gather all the necessary information.

The STEPS decision-making framework organises the relevant information about an anti-bullying approach within nine key concepts. It provides you with a transparent process for your selection.

This section addresses some questions that you might have about using STEPS in your school.

WHERE DO WE START?

The decision about your school's anti-bullying approach should be made in the context of knowing the individual strengths and needs of your school, and what you want to achieve.

The starting point for selecting an approach for your school community is formulating a clear goal statement. (On the Bullying. No Way! site you can read about school audits and goal setting. You may also find it useful to read about the different types of approaches that are available, so you can think innovatively about your options.)

Review the STEPS framework itself and the content provided about each of the key concepts so you are familiar with the structure and scope of the decision-making process it covers. Once you have used the STEPS framework a few times, you may find the nine Key questions alone sufficient to examine an approach, without always needing to refer to the additional prompt questions.

WHEN WOULD WE USE STEPS?

STEPS can be used flexibly to suit your needs. The information you collect stays with the school so you can use STEPS in whatever way works for you. The suggestions below are provided to assist schools.

IF YOU ARE LOOKING FOR A NEW ANTI-BULLYING APPROACH FOR YOUR SCHOOL

Based on your school's goal statement, seek out approaches and programs that claim to address your goals, and then use STEPS to examine and select from them. You can find approaches and programs at KidsMatter (primary schools), MindMatters (secondary schools), the CASEL Guide for Effective Social and Emotional Learning Programs (US), and Blueprints for Healthy Youth Development (US Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence).

In this situation, it is logical to first examine the Key questions for Suitability and Feasibility.

If you find the topic area or students targeted (Suitability) or cost or other requirements (Feasibility) do not match your identified goals or your available budget, there is no need to consider any further Key questions. If you are satisfied with the answers, then methodically work through the other questions.

IF A NEW PROGRAM OR APPROACH IS SUGGESTED TO YOU

Schools often receive suggestions from parents, staff, visiting specialists, other schools, product developers or advertisers for new approaches or programs to counter bullying. STEPS is a useful process to explain the sorts of information about anti-bullying approaches that is important to schools to other people.

In this situation, it is logical to first examine the Key questions related to the evidence for the approach, specifically Definition, Theory, Evidence and Practice. In fact, it may be useful to ask the person suggesting the new approach to answer those questions.

If you are happy with the answers, your school's goal statement will then guide you in working through the other STEPS questions to examine other aspects of the suggested approach.

It is suggested that all Key questions are considered to make the decision to select an approach.

However, it is not necessary to complete all Key questions to determine that an approach is not appropriate. For example, if your investigation reveals that what claims to be an appropriate approach is actually based on an outmoded or simplistic understanding of bullying (Definition), there is no need to spend time looking for research findings (Evidence), or examining the methods for measuring the outcomes (Real results).

HOW DO WE COLLATE ALL THE INFORMATION ABOUT AN APPROACH?

The STEPS form for schools is an interactive PDF form that enables you to collate the information gathered about an approach or program you are examining and record the rationale for your decision.

Download the STEPS form for schools to your system to complete it electronically. Make sure you 'Save as' to keep the information that you add to the STEPS form.

You need a separate form for each approach if you are considering a number at one time.

WHERE DO WE FIND THE INFORMATION TO ANSWER THE STEPS QUESTIONS?

The information to answer the STEPS key questions and probe questions should be readily available. Lack of information should raise concern for schools. Well-designed and evidence-based anti-bullying programs suitable for school contexts will provide all information.

Information **about the approach** itself, combined with information **about your school**, is needed to answer each of the nine key questions in the STEPS framework.

ABOUT THE APPROACH

These questions examine the approach's conceptual basis, theory, evidence, philosophical perspective, practical features and support systems.

Useful sources: the manual provided by the developer, websites providing reviews and research on the approach, journal articles, or the developer (or promotor) of the approach.

ABOUT YOUR SCHOOL

These questions examine the school's strengths and needs, systems, requirements, understanding, capacity, experience, philosophy and values.

Useful sources: your school's annual plan and various policies and curriculum documents, school data, staff and other members of the school community, and staff from other schools that have used the approach.

HOW DO WE COMPLETE THE STEPS FORM FOR SCHOOLS?

How you complete the STEPS form depends on your situation.A suggested process is:

- Download the STEPS form for schools.
- Leave the front page summary till last, as it auto-populates as you completed the details under each question.
- **The nine Key questions can be answered in any sequence, depending on your situation, what information you already have and the questions remaining.**
- Review the nine questions and determine who will look for the information to answer each question.
- As necessary to answer the questions, read more about the nine concepts within the framework (see the menu) to learn how to find and interpret the information you need.
- On the STEPS form for schools, record answers under the columns: **To ask about the approach and To ask about the school**.
- Where you identify a lack of information, consider if this is sufficient reason **not** to adopt an approach.
- If the manual (or other instructions) for the approach or program is not sufficiently clear, you may want to contact the program developer to complete the answers under **To ask about the approach**.
- Check the answer **Yes** or **No** next to each of the nine Key questions where you have recorded the information that supports your decision. The answer to each Key question on the form will auto-populate to the cover page to form a summary section. You may have a combination of Yes and No answers.

- Discuss the findings with teaching colleagues and school administration (see Scenarios for types of findings you may be considering).
- Based on your examination, reach consensus on the suitability of the approach for your school and record your decision under **Record of decision**.

WHAT SORTS OF DECISIONS DO SCHOOLS MAKE WITH STEPS?

Gathering all the necessary information will take some time. With all this information, schools may decide:

- to use an approach
- not to select an approach; STEPS will provide a rationale to share with those who may be advocating implementing it in your school
- to investigate the school's strengths and needs further or to further develop the school's goals
- to change or consolidate the approaches already used in the school
- to use an approach, but also look for an additional program for the gaps identified, conduct the identified staff training, or undertake other activities.

HOW DO WE INTERPRET THE FINDINGS (SCENARIOS)?

IF YOU CAN'T FIND THE INFORMATION ABOUT THE APPROACH

The information to answer the STEPS Key questions for **To ask about the approach** should be readily available. Schools should not need to do significant work to answer these questions, although additional but important work might be required to answer some of the questions for **To ask about your school**.

Lack of information should raise concern for schools. Well-designed and evidence-based anti-bullying approaches suitable for school contexts will provide all information.

IF ONE OF THE KEY QUESTIONS IS ANSWERED WITH NO

STEPS is a tool for your decision making. You need to weigh up the consequences of a No answer in any one Key question when other answers are Yes.

It is assumed schools would not select an approach with a No answer in Suitability and Feasibility. In terms of the other Key questions, it is suggested that schools avoid approaches when the Key questions for Definition and Theory are answered with No. See below for the scenario where an approach 'ticks all the boxes' except Evidence, where the answer is No.

Refer to the information provided in the content areas (see the menu) to make this assessment. You may be able to minimise the consequences or risks by taking other actions within the school.

Based on your answers, you may also decide staff development or changes within the school are indicated prior to selecting a new anti-bullying approach.

IF YOU FIND A SMATTERING OF YES AND NO ANSWERS TO THE NINE KEY QUESTIONS

It is possible you may want to select approach even if not all the questions are answered Yes.

An approach that results in more No answers than Yes answers to the Key questions should be considered with some caution.

As indicated above, it is suggested that schools avoid approaches when the Key questions for Definition or Theory are answered with No.

Refer to the information provided in the content areas (see the menu) to make this assessment. You may be able to minimise the consequences or risks by taking other actions within the school.

IF WE KNOW THE ANSWER TO A KEY QUESTION WITHOUT LOOKING AT ALL THE PROMPT QUESTIONS

The prompt questions under each Key question are provided to help schools explore the complexity involved in selecting an appropriate approach.

These questions do not need to be individually answered. They are a guide to content and the range of information that should be considered. They are designed to help school staff understand the concepts. After you are familiar with the STEPS framework and the concepts behind each of the Key questions, you may not need to refer to the prompt questions.

IF YOU FIND AN APPROACH THAT 'TICKS ALL BOXES' EXCEPT EVIDENCE

The ideal is to use only those approaches that have a strong evidence base. However, well-designed research is expensive and time consuming, so lack of evidence is not necessarily sufficient reason to discount an approach if all the other Key questions, particularly Definition, Theory and Practice, are very strong.

Some considerations include:

- the reasons for the lack of evidence. If the approach is relatively new, and is yet to be researched, the lack of evidence is understandable. However, if the approach is, for exampl 10 years old and never thoroughly researched, this should raise some concerns
- what is presented as 'evidence' is not robust or strong evidence, or is actually opinion or promotional material with a weak theory for why the approach should work (see Theory). Sometimes, the word 'evidence' is used when it is not warranted. Developers of high-quality anti-bullying approaches should be keen to submit their products to robust research, so poor quality information presented as 'evidence' is an indication that an approach should not be selected.

- whether the Practice information is high quality and compensates partly for the lack of research evidence.

If all other aspects of the approach seem very positive, an option might be to 'pilot' the approach with a small group of students to gather some local data about its effectiveness before committing to full implementation.

IF YOU HAVE MORE QUESTIONS

STEPS is in a pilot phase, and your questions and comments are welcome. Please email bnw.website@dete.qld.gov.au

THE NINE KEY CONCEPTS

1. DEFINITION

Our understanding of bullying has evolved over time. A contemporary understanding of bullying looks beyond the observable behaviours and encompasses a range of individual, social, cultural and community-wide factors.

NATIONAL DEFINITION OF BULLYING

The national definition of bullying for Australian schools is:

> *Bullying is an ongoing misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that causes physical and/or psychological harm. It can involve an individual or a group misusing their power over one or more persons. Bullying can happen in person or online, it can be obvious (overt) or hidden (covert).*
>
> *Bullying of any form or for any reason can have long-term effects on those involved, including bystanders.*
>
> *Single incidents and conflict or fights between equals, whether in person or online, are not defined as bullying.*

Read more about the national definition of bullying at bullyingnoway.gov.au

BULLYING IS COMPLEX; COUNTERING BULLYING IS ALSO COMPLEX

An approach based on a contemporary understanding of bullying:

- acknowledges that the reasons for bullying occurring are complex
- recognises that positive change requires a comprehensive and long-term approach
- promotes a positive vision of a safe and supportive school community
- fosters student engagement, leadership and activism for changing social attitudes, prejudices and norms
- targets key peaks in bullying identified by research (i.e. Years 3–5 and the transition to secondary school)
- integrates and embeds concepts within the everyday curriculum
- challenges stereotypes about identity and behaviour
- incorporates critical reflection about social interaction and power
- supports professional learning for a long-term, integrated and sustainable pedagogical approach
- seeks to educate and support the broader community, particularly acknowledging the key role of parents/caregivers, and the role of bystanders, in supporting or challenging bullying behaviour.

NOT ALL CONFLICT IS BULLYING

Not all conflict is bullying, so schools can use the national definition to develop a shared understanding among the whole school and wider community.

It is important for schools to respond to **any inappropriate behaviour** and to ensure every person feels safe. But it is just as important to identify when the behaviour is part of bullying, and to look into the underlying reasons and all the people involved.

PEOPLE HOLD A RANGE OF IDEAS ABOUT BULLYING

Some outdated, sometimes simplistic and unhelpful ideas about bullying are still around. Approaches based on these outdated ideas are unlikely to have a positive effect in your school. Issues that are critical to long-term prevention of bullying may not be addressed.

You may identify that a range of ideas about bullying are held by members of staff. As well, students often have different ideas about what bullying is compared with teachers or parents. It may be worth considering:

- Do we need to investigate the ideas about the definition of bullying held by members of our school community?
- Before we implement an anti-bullying approach, do we need to invest in professional development or community education activities to establish a shared and contemporary understanding of bullying?

PROMPT QUESTIONS (USE THE STEPS FORM FOR SCHOOLS)

Key question: Is the approach based on a contemporary understanding of bullying that is consistent with the school's definition?

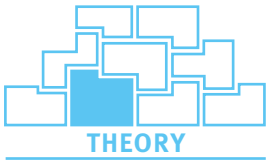
To ask about the approach

- How does the approach define bullying?
- Does it align with the national definition of bullying for Australian schools?
- How does the approach identify the causes and factors involved in bullying?

To ask about your school

- Is the definition in this approach consistent with our school's understanding of bullying?
- Do all members of our school community share this definition of bullying? Is it included in our school policies?

2. THEORY



The theory for an approach links the existing knowledge about why bullying happens and how to counter it with the content, design and strategies of the approach.

WHY IS A SOUND THEORY IMPORTANT?

When guided by a sound theory, approaches are more likely to be effective, feasible for schools to implement, and sustainable.

Approaches with a sound theory based on previous research are more likely to avoid the traps of simplistic approaches. The theory provides a degree of confidence about the likely effectiveness, even if the approach has not been researched extensively yet. They are also less likely to be based on strategies that previous research found to be harmful or cause negative impacts.

A sound theory is also a defence against approaches with a 'veneer' of research — data that appear rigorous and findings that seem compelling, but which are based on shoddy or unsophisticated reasoning.

THE KNOWLEDGE BASE FOR A SOUND THEORY

Approaches based on the existing knowledge from previous research can be described as evidence-informed (as distinct from 'evidence-based' which refers to having direct evidence for the effectiveness of that approach).

Over 40 years of research is available to inform the development of anti-bullying approaches. Although more remains to be learnt, what we do know is important. Examining whether an approach is evidence-informed protects against propaganda and faddism.

Schools can ensure that the approaches they adopt are evidence-informed, while recognising this research may have been carried out in different countries, cultures, school contexts and student populations.

Sound theories may also draw on what is known from the relevant research in other areas, for example, research into child and adolescent development, behaviour theory and research, and social change theories.

THE THEORETICAL BASIS FOR AN APPROACH SHOULD BE CLEARLY STATED

Well-designed approaches will clearly state their theoretical basis, how the theory relates to what is already known about bullying, and how this theory has informed the development of the approach.

Schools should not have to look for this detail, as well-designed and theoretically sound approaches will provide this information in a manual or a website for the approach. If it is not available, it should raise concerns about the basis of the approach.

Each approach will draw on different relevant research depending on the way it defines bullying and its philosophical perspective on bullying.

NATIONAL SAFE SCHOOLS FRAMEWORK

The National Safe Schools Framework (NSSF) incorporates sound theory and the existing knowledge about bullying to provide a set of guiding principles for safe and supportive school communities. It presents a range of evidence-informed practices to guide schools in preventing and responding to situations of bullying. (Find the NSSF at safeschoolshub.edu.au)

PROMPT QUESTIONS (USE THE STEPS FORM FOR SCHOOLS)

Key question: Is the approach based on a sound theory that draws on the existing knowledge from previous research in bullying?

To ask about the approach

- What is the specific aim of the approach, i.e. does it impact on attitudes, skills, behaviours or knowledge?
- What theory underpins the approach and how has this been incorporated into the content, design and strategies of the approach?
- What previous research in bullying and related areas does the approach draw on?
- How does the approach promote a positive school climate and respectful relationships?
- How does the approach align with the National Safe Schools Framework?

To ask about your school

- Is the theoretical basis of this approach consistent with our school's approach to behaviour, learning and student wellbeing?
- Should we undertake some professional development to learn more about the existing knowledge on countering bullying?
- Does the approach complement how we have implemented the National Safe Schools Framework?

3. EVIDENCE

A strong evidence base for an anti-bullying approach gives schools confidence that the time and effort required to implement an approach will result in positive and sustainable outcomes.

WHY IS EVIDENCE IMPORTANT?

Schools want to know an approach they select will work. Evidence that an approach makes a difference reassures schools about the value of investing time and money, that the approach will not cause unintended negative outcomes, and that it will lead to a real and lasting positive impact for students.

Unfortunately, many approaches have limited or no evidence of their effectiveness. Some research is not well-designed, and sometimes the claims made are so vague they are impossible to research.

DOES IT WORK AND HOW DO WE KNOW?

The first question often asked by educators about an approach is: 'Is it evidence-based?' A most important second question is: 'How was that evidence generated?'

Approaches and programs designed to be implemented in schools should be researched in schools, and generate real-world measures of the results.

Well-designed research relevant to school contexts is necessary so that you can be confident that the evidence is strong, and the claim that an approach is 'evidence-based' is valid. Strong evidence that an approach really 'works' can only be provided by well-designed research studies.

WHAT MAKES RESEARCH 'WELL-DESIGNED'?

'Well-designed' describes research that uses a careful method to ensure that the findings are valid and not influenced by other factors.

Researchers have established a number of important ways to provide the highest confidence that the findings are valid. Without the necessary rigour in the method of the research, it is possible for studies to suggest benefits and results that are not actually present. Well-designed research provides protection from misleading results.

Interpreting research can be challenging for non-researchers. Read about the features of high-quality research and how to gauge if research evidence is strong enough to warrant your school's investment of time and money in the Research section of Bullying. No Way!

IS IT STRONG EVIDENCE?

The term 'evidence-based' is sometimes used when not warranted. Not all information provided in support of an approach is strong evidence of real change.

Examples of information that **does provide strong evidence** that an approach is effective include:

- well-designed research with measured change in behaviour which has been published in peer-reviewed journals
- information from well-designed independent evaluation/s that includes specific measurement
- measurement of specific behaviour change taken at suitable times in appropriate ways.

Examples of information that **does not provide strong evidence** that an approach is effective include:

- poorly designed research published without review by academic peers
- reports written by the developer published on their website
- satisfaction ratings and opinion surveys conducted in schools with this approach
- stakeholder reports and expert testimonials
- anecdotes from other schools (but see section 4 on Practice about useful information from other schools)
- advertising material.

As well as not really providing evidence that an approach 'works', this type of information does not indicate to schools any possible unintended harmful or negative consequences.

If the only information is the developer's advertising, schools should be cautious. Although an approach may seem compelling and have a convincing 'feel good' factor, it is not possible to determine if it will have a sustained impact on student behaviour and school culture without well-designed research and high-quality evidence.

MEASUREMENT OF CHANGE

Positive opinion of staff, students or parents and carers is not sufficient information to be confident about the effectiveness of an approach. Evidence that an approach has made a difference requires **measurement**, taken on multiple occasions and over a sufficient period.

Schools need to be alert when the 'evidence' for an approach is limited to satisfaction ratings or opinions gathered through surveys or interviews. Believing that things are getting better and feeling positive are notoriously poor indicators that real change has occurred.

To be considered as evidence-based, an approach needs to show specific measures of its effectiveness, and not just strong theory or related research that suggests it will work (see Theory). Therefore, approaches need to be described in specific detail so researchers can test it in the way it is intended to be used, known as 'implementation fidelity'. Approaches that can be implemented with great variability will vary in what can be measured, and are therefore difficult to research. This means it can be difficult to generate strong evidence, and any statements about effectiveness will be questionable.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE EVIDENCE BASE FOR THE APPROACH SHOULD BE READILY AVAILABLE

So the question for schools to ask when examining an approach is: 'What is the evidence and how strong is it?'

The evidence should be readily available for schools, along with information about how this evidence was gathered.

To assist schools, KidsMatter and CASEL provide reviews of various approaches and programs. These sites apply criteria to the research which indicates if it is well-designed, and include a rating of the strength of the evidence.

An approach needs to be described in specific detail so others can implement it in the way it is designed to be used, known as 'implementation fidelity'. Making major changes to an approach in your school can compromise its effectiveness.

PROMPT QUESTIONS (USE THE STEPS FORM FOR SCHOOLS)

Key question: Does the approach have evidence from well-designed research which shows measurable change in behaviour?

To ask about the approach

- What is the evidence for the approach and how has it been gathered?
- Does the evidence consist of real change involving measurement of specific behaviours and outcomes?
- How did the researchers ensure confidence that the research supports valid claims of effectiveness?
- If the research evidence is limited, what plans exist for well-designed research into this approach?

To ask about your school

- Will the school be able to implement the approach in a way similar to the way it was conducted in research studies?
- Are we alert to the use of persuasion- or emotion-driven arguments rather than evidence to support this approach (e.g. is the information provided as 'evidence' actually opinion, promotion or advertising)?
- If there is limited research evidence for the approach, have we carefully considered the questions under Definition and Theory?

4. PRACTICE

Practice information complements strong research evidence (see Evidence) to provide a high level of confidence in the effectiveness of an approach.

HAVE OTHER SCHOOLS USED THIS APPROACH AND ACHIEVED POSITIVE OUTCOMES?

The practical experience of schools using an approach in real-world conditions provides important information about an approach.

Information from schools' practice can either strengthen the research evidence or it can reveal challenges in real-world conditions and cast doubt on the effectiveness of an approach.

Ideally an anti-bullying approach has evidence from both research and real-world school practice.

In reality, the practice-based information about an approach may be all that is available to schools while research is underway.

PROMISING PRACTICES

The term 'promising practice' is used to describe approaches and programs that have shown positive outcomes, but which currently lack strong research evidence.

It is possible that many features in a school could have contributed to the positive outcomes, not just the anti-bullying approach. Only well-designed research can help unravel these many features and indicate that a specific approach is effective, and likely to be effective across school settings.

It is desirable that approaches that appear promising in schools are then subject to careful testing through well-designed research. The concept of 'promising practice' is not an alternative to research.

Promising practices have certain features:

- a contemporary understanding of bullying
- sound theory that draws from existing knowledge about bullying
- a description of the 'logic' behind the approach that includes a rationale for the specific aims, resources and activities that make up the approach, an explanation of how the approach leads to the expected outcome, and what specific measure/s will indicate this outcome
- data from school/s that have implemented the approach as designed
- positive outcomes from research using surveys and subjective measures
- positive early outcomes in research trials, but insufficient time for long-term outcomes to be assessed
- measured changes in student behaviour (or other appropriate outcomes) in a number of schools.

PROMPT QUESTIONS (USE THE STEPS FORM FOR SCHOOLS)

Key question: Have other schools used this approach and achieved positive outcomes?

To ask about the approach

- Is the research evidence complemented by information from schools that have implemented the approach in real-world situations?

- If the research evidence for the approach is limited, what information (particularly student data) is available to suggest it is a 'promising practice'?
- If there is no research evidence, are the definition and theory which underpin the approach well explained and robust?

To ask about your school

- Are the schools that have successfully implemented this approach similar to our school?
- Will the school be able to implement the approach in a way similar to the way it was conducted in other schools that have achieved positive outcomes?
- If there is limited research evidence for the approach, have we carefully considered the questions under Definition and Theory?

5. SUITABILITY

An approach must be suitable to your school in order to be effective. Schools need to start with their needs and aims in mind in order to select the most appropriate anti-bullying approach.

WHY IS SUITABILITY IMPORTANT?

No one approach will work for every school.

Equally as important as the evidence base, a match for your school's specific situation is essential.

The selection of an appropriate anti-bullying approach is one based on all the relevant information about your school, particularly your strengths, needs and aims.

YOUR SCHOOL'S STRENGTHS, NEEDS AND AIMS

Identifying your school's strengths and needs:

- raises the school community's awareness about bullying
- provides a benchmark for measuring progress
- helps you identify what you want to achieve in your school
- involves all stakeholders in discussion about the need for change
- allows you to select the most appropriate approach.

A comprehensive school audit to answer the following questions is necessary before you can select an appropriate anti-bullying approach:

- Do we have a comprehensive picture of the school's strengths and needs?
- What other approaches and programs are already in place in the school?
- What are the school's aims and specific goals related to bullying or related areas (e.g. student wellbeing, behaviour)?
- Do we need to investigate further or refine our goals so that we can select an approach to match?

Read more about school audits at Bullying. No Way!

DIMENSIONS AND ASPECTS COVERED BY DIFFERENT APPROACHES

With clearly stated, specific and agreed goals for your school, you will be well placed to consider the available approaches. You can then examine approaches with the various dimensions and aspects that will help you to achieve your aims, including whether the approach incorporates:

- preventing or responding to bullying, or both
- a whole-school focus or a specific topic/skills focus
- the participants you have identified
- the age range of students relevant to your aim
- the relevant types of bullying for your aim
- the relevant personal and social skills
- the relevant social understandings or issues related to social diversity.

PROMPT QUESTIONS (USE THE STEPS FORM FOR SCHOOLS)

Key question: Does the approach address the target students and needs that the school has identified?

To ask about the approach

- What is the main purpose of the approach: prevention or response (or response as prevention)?
- Is the approach whole-school, multifaceted or single issue focused?
- Which elements in the National Safe Schools Framework elements are addressed?
- What does this approach aim to achieve and who does it target:
  - Who are the direct participants (targets)?
  - What student age range does the approach address?
  - What types of bullying are directly addressed (if relevant)?
  - What personal and social skills are addressed (if relevant)?
  - What social understandings/social diversity issues are addressed (if relevant)?

To ask about your school

- Do we need to further clarify our school's needs and aims so that we can select an approach to match?
- Does this approach target who we want to target and aim to achieve what we have identified as our goals?

- Which of the school's identified goals and target areas does the approach NOT address?
- Can we integrate this approach with existing approaches in the school?

6. FEASIBILITY

Whether an approach is suitable (previous question) for the school's needs and aims is often the first question considered by schools when selecting an anti-bullying approach. Equally as important is considering if an approach will be feasible and practical in your school context.

WHY IS FEASIBILITY IMPORTANT?

If an approach is not feasible within the school context, staff and students may want to change it in ways that could compromise its effectiveness.

Feasibility underpins implementation, and implementation underpins effectiveness.

Considering feasibility **before** selecting an anti-bullying approach will help to avoid the need for major changes which may reduce effectiveness. Many schools make modifications or adaptations to approaches when they implement them. However, research has shown that such changes during implementation can reduce the effectiveness of an approach. Read more at Sustainability.

The feasibility of implementation impacts on the motivation and commitment of members of the school community. If an approach is extremely complex, if it requires extensive additional time to implement well, or if necessary resources or leadership support are not available, it may not be feasible or practical.

A FIT FOR YOUR SCHOOL

Only you, in consultation with your community, can decide whether an approach is feasible and practical, because only you can identify the resources, support and constraints in your school context.

Successful long-term implementation will depend on having considered all costs and human resource requirements for the approach from the outset.

Practical questions to ask about an approach include the time and human resources required, the initial and ongoing cost, and the compatibility with other activities and requirements in your school.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION SHOULD BE READILY AVAILABLE

Cost is usually a first, and important, question for schools, but feasibility includes much more than having the funds to purchase the approach. A wide range of important questions is considered below.

Information that schools need to determine whether an approach is feasible should be available in, for example, a manual for the approach. This includes:

- initial and ongoing costs
- the need for any additional costs (e.g. for training, travel or release time, online access fees)
- time required for implementation and monitoring
- who will deliver the approach (e.g. classroom teachers or other additional staff)
- skills needed by the person who delivers the approach; additional staff training needed prior to implementation and then to sustain the approach over time
- whether activities are 'added on' or integrated into the curriculum. If the approach is an 'add-on' to the curriculum, the anticipated additional time required (e.g. the number of sessions, time per session, number of weeks)
- the materials provided (e.g. teaching materials and student handouts) and the costs of materials
- any additional materials to be produced by the school
- adaptations required to content and materials to make them appropriate for diverse student learning needs
- human resources that will be required for administration, implementation, monitoring and reporting
- alignment with other policies, procedures and programs in the school
- alignment with the Australian Curriculum, General Capabilities and Cross-Curriculum Priorities.

PROMPT QUESTIONS (USE THE STEPS FORM FOR SCHOOLS)

Key question: Is the approach feasible and practical in the school context?

To ask about the approach

- Are all the requirements to implement the approach detailed in the guidelines?
- Is the approach 'ready to go' or do schools have to do significant work as well in order to implement?
- What are the initial and ongoing costs?
- What training and support is provided?
- What time and human resources are required from the school?
- Does the approach align with existing policies and with national educational frameworks and guidelines, and any other requirements with which schools need to comply?

- Has this approach been successfully used in schools with similar resources and constraints as our school?

To ask about your school

- Do we have the time, human resources and funding for initial and ongoing costs?
- Can we provide staff with the skills, knowledge and support to implement the approach?
- Is the approach compatible with other activities and requirements with which we need to comply?
- If this approach is delivered through extra classes (i.e. not embedded into curriculum) what impact will that have on the curriculum, and on people and other activities?
- Is the approach a good fit with our school resources and constraints?
- Can the school's existing resources and activities be harnessed or redirected for this approach?

7. PERSPECTIVE

Every approach is underpinned by a perspective on what bullying is, why it happens, and how to prevent it.

Likewise, every approach is based on underlying assumptions about how people learn and change. These assumptions can be referred to broadly as learning theory, and in schools is covered by pedagogy.

WHY IS THE PHILOSOPHICAL PERSPECTIVE IMPORTANT?

Whether stated or not, every approach is underpinned by a particular philosophical perspective on what bullying is, why it happens, and how to prevent it.

It is important to identify the philosophical perspective and pedagogical approach of an anti-bullying approach to ensure it is compatible with your school's philosophical perspective on student behaviour, learning and wellbeing. A mismatch could compromise the success of an approach in your school.

WHAT ARE THE PERSPECTIVES ON BULLYING?

Broadly speaking, there are three philosophical perspectives on bullying. Each of these focuses on different aspects of the bullying dynamic:

- individual perspective — bullying is seen as an individual, psychological and behavioural problem
- social-ecological perspective — bullying is seen as an interpersonal relationship dynamic problem, and the expression of the varying status and unequal power relations between individuals and groups in that context (ecology)
- systemic perspective — bullying is seen as a cultural and system-wide problem related to the power dynamics inherent in all institutions.

Read and overview and more detail at Bullying. No Way!

Being familiar with these perspectives will assist you to select an approach that is based on a perspective aligned with the beliefs and values held by you and your school community about bullying and about how to prevent it.

LEARNING THEORY AND PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH

Pedagogical approaches include 'transmission' approaches, where learning is seen as the passing of information from teacher to student, and 'constructivist' approaches (e.g. critical literacy), where learning is seen as a collaborative construction of knowledge between teacher and student.

Different pedagogical approaches are suitable for different goals. An anti-bullying approach based on the transmission model (or on a behavioural theory of learning) can be effective for teaching specific skills, (e.g. what to say in response to verbal bullying). Constructivist approaches engage students in investigating the nature of the issue and so are more likely to have an impact on the social and structural factors that contribute to bullying.

APPROACHES SHOULD STATE THEIR PHILOSOPHY

The success of an approach will depend on whether its aims are aligned with the philosophical perspective and the pedagogical approach. Both are critical to determining how well an approach will facilitate real change in your school.

Well-designed approaches will clearly state their philosophical perspective regarding bullying and their approach to teaching and learning. Schools need this information to select an approach that is compatible with their perspective.

Investigating this important aspect can minimise the risk of adopting time-consuming and demanding approaches that are poorly designed or not relevant for an educational context.

PROMPT QUESTIONS (USE THE STEPS FORM FOR SCHOOLS)

Key question: Is the philosophical perspective underpinning the approach compatible with the school's approach to behaviour, learning and student wellbeing?

To ask about the approach

- What philosophical perspective underpins this approach?
- What learning theory/pedagogical approach is the approach based on?

To ask about your school

- What is our school's perspective on behaviour, bullying and student wellbeing (and where do we articulate this)?
- Is this approach's perspective compatible with our school's approach to promoting a positive school climate and positive behaviour?
- Is the pedagogical approach compatible with our school's approach to teaching and learning?
- Before we implement an anti-bullying approach, do we need to invest in professional development on our philosophical perspective on bullying?

8. SUSTAINABILITY

The selection of an anti-bullying approach that is suitable and feasible for your school is critical to achieving outcomes, but it is only the beginning. The real work is implementing and sustaining the approach over time.

Changing a school's culture or the behaviour of students and staff takes time. Anti-bullying approaches must be sustainable over the necessary duration for this to happen.

Even a high-quality evidence-based approach can achieve little in your school unless it is implemented well and sustained over time.

WHY IS SUSTAINABILITY IMPORTANT?

Changing a school's culture or the behaviour of students and staff takes time. Even a high-quality evidence-based approach can achieve little in your school unless it is implemented well and sustained over time.

The school's capacity to sustain an approach for the necessary period is a critical factor in effectiveness.

REALISTIC TIMELINES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Implementing an approach aimed at creating a lasting positive impact on students' behaviour is likely to require a substantial duration. Influencing the school overall climate takes time — years rather than weeks.

A realistic appreciation of timeframes and expectations by all members of the school community will help everyone to sustain the energy and momentum to implement the approach. Concern about lack of progress within short timeframes can derail implementation.

FIDELITY OF IMPLEMENTATION

How closely a school adheres to the way an approach is designed to be implemented is known as fidelity of implementation (or program fidelity).

Fidelity covers all aspects of how an approach is implemented, such as the content, number of teaching sessions and their length, frequency of sessions, staff skilling, the way in which it is delivered, and the involvement of the participants.

Many schools make modifications or adaptations to approaches when they implement them. For example, a program may be intended to be implemented over four school terms, but a school may run it only in one term due to other important commitments in the other terms. This change during implementation can negatively impact on the effectiveness of the approach.

The key reason that approaches are less effective is that these changes have compromised the fidelity of implementation.

Considering Feasibility **before** selecting an anti-bullying approach will help to avoid the need for major changes that may reduce effectiveness.

Anti-bullying approaches for schools need to be designed around the realities of the school context, and provide information to assist schools to make modifications to suit their specific context. Support to the school community to ensure fidelity of implementation may also be necessary.

Well-designed approaches should provide information about fidelity of implementation, and also about how to make adaptations without compromising effectiveness.

SUPPORT FOR IMPLEMENTATION

The type of support the approach provides for implementation may be a factor influencing your selection. It is definitely worth examining, given the time and effort required from the school.

Schools can foster sustainability through organising additional support for staff and students during implementation.

Implementation teams provide a point of contact, advice and encouragement for other members of the school's community. Expert facilitators can play a valuable role in guiding implementation, providing professional development and assisting in ongoing monitoring.

The costs of support for implementation, particularly staff training initially and over time, should be considered when examining the overall cost of an approach.

PROMPT QUESTIONS (USE THE STEPS FORM FOR SCHOOLS)

Key question: Can the school implement and sustain the approach as required for it to be effective?

To ask about the approach

- How long does the approach take to fully implement and when should the school expect to see changes/ outcomes?

- Does the approach provide specific guidelines on implementation (e.g. timeframes, milestones, step-by-step procedures)?
- Does the approach provide information about possible adaptations that do not compromise fidelity (i.e. the way the program is intended to be used)?
- Is staff training available initially and on an ongoing basis as needed (e.g. for new staff) to ensure sustainable implementation?
- What other support is available for implementation?

To ask about your school

- How will the school sustain energy and momentum throughout implementation given the anticipated time before outcomes will be observable?
- Will the school be able to implement the approach as recommended in order to be effective (fidelity of implementation)?
- Are adaptations needed to implement the approach in our school context, and would these possibly compromise fidelity (and thus effectiveness)?
- Have other schools made adaptations, and has the approach been successful with these adaptations?
- How might we support ongoing implementation with fidelity, reduce any gaps, and ensure sustainability for long-term change?

9. REAL RESULTS

The effectiveness of an anti-bullying approach is indicated by taking measurements of observable behaviours before and after implementation

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO MEASURE REAL RESULTS?

The only way to be sure that an anti-bullying approach is producing real results is to measure outcomes that are specified and monitored from before implementation begins.

Although an approach may have a compelling 'feel good' factor, it may nevertheless have little sustained impact on student behaviour and school climate.

Believing that things are getting better and feeling positive are notoriously poor indicators that real change has occurred.

CHANGE HAS TO BE MEASURABLE

Appropriate anti-bullying approaches should state which specific behaviours will change or what outcomes will be observable, and also how schools can measure this.

For the purpose of providing evidence of real results, measures need to be observable behaviours (e.g. school attendance, class participation rates, number of reports).

MONITORING AND MEASURING OUTCOMES

High-quality anti-bullying approaches and programs guide schools in monitoring progress and evaluating outcomes. Approaches that do not provide information related to the measurement of outcomes should be viewed with caution.

Schools will also have a range of relevant existing measures. The measures which prompted the selection of the anti-bullying approach (e.g. number of disciplinary actions related to bullying) can be used to monitor progress and measure outcomes.

Ideally, effectiveness can be monitored by the school's existing tools and data.

Some approaches provide or suggest additional measurement tools for more fine-grained or precise data on the progress and outcomes. Schools need to consider the practical implications of any additional measurements or information gathering. Onerous monitoring may negatively impact on implementation.

SPECIFYING YOUR MEASURES

The information collected by the school before beginning to examine the available anti-bullying approaches will suggest the specific measures to plan to collect. Examples of the sorts of specific measurable outcomes to consider include, but are not limited to:

- reduction in the number of incidents of bullying or unexplained injury
- reduction in the number of reports of suspected bullying
- increased ratings of the perception of safety on student (and staff) surveys
- increased student (and staff) attendance (due to students feeling confident to attend school without fear of bullying)
- improved scores on tests of student knowledge and skills on how to deal with bullying
- student-determined outcomes
- specific learning outcomes if relevant (e.g. number of assignments completed, scores on general assessments).

The school may also be keen to see enhanced student engagement, or improved school climate. These are desirable outcomes, but they are not directly observable, 'specific' and 'measurable'. It is also difficult to attribute a change in 'student engagement' to an individual anti-bullying approach on its own.

Involving students in selecting the outcomes to measure is an excellent way to engage them in the process of change.

It's worth noting that some things that can be measured are not outcomes, but are part of the **process** of

implementation. For example, the number of students who participate in lessons on bullying, the number of staff who adopt strategies recommended by the approach, or the number of information brochures provided to parents and carers are not measures of real results. They are measures of actions you have taken toward getting real results and measurable change.

REALISTIC TIMEFRAMES FOR OBSERVING REAL RESULTS

The process of positively and sustainably impacting on school culture and the way individuals (students, staff and parents) behave in the school environment necessarily takes time. Having realistic expectations about this duration is essential.

Depending on your goals, the period over which to expect to see real results will vary. For example, a school might expect to see fewer reports of bullying within a few months, while improved learning outcomes may take two years to become evident. As measurable and real results may not be observed for some time, measurement of small steps or trends toward the overall outcomes may be useful to consider.

Realistic expectations about when to expect to see outcomes will help members of the school community to sustain the energy and momentum for the necessary duration.

PROMPT QUESTIONS (USE THE STEPS FORM FOR SCHOOLS)

Key question: Does the approach indicate how outcomes will be measured and timeframes within which to expect to see results?

To ask about the approach

- How are outcomes measured and how do they link to the stated aim of the approach?
- Are resources (tools) or guidance provided for measuring progress and effectiveness of the approach and informing a cycle of continuous improvement?
- Does the approach encourage student involvement in measuring outcomes?
- What is the anticipated timeframe before the school should be able to see measurable change?
- How will the school be able to demonstrate to the wider community that the approach has been successful?

To ask about your school

- What existing school measures and data can we use to monitor progress and measure outcomes?
- If additional measurement tools and methods are required, what impact could that have?
- Can our school commit to this approach for the anticipated timeframes before we will see measurable and real results?
- How and where will the school report and celebrate successful progress and outcomes?

APPENDIX 1: THE STEPS FRAMEWORK

S T E P S

Steps to examine programs and approaches for schools

DECISION-MAKING FRAMEWORK

BULLYING. NO WAY!®

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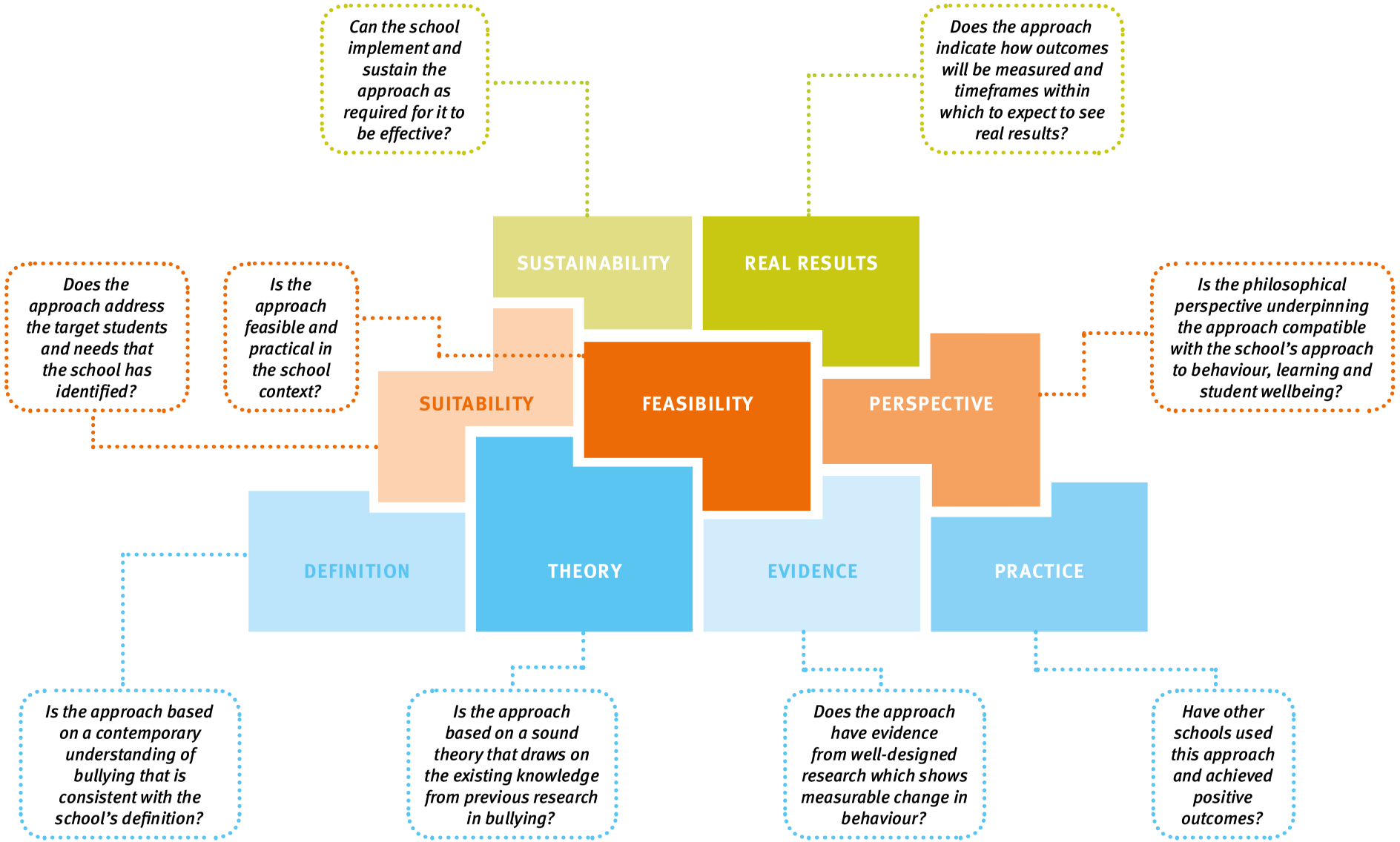
Bullying. No Way! bullyingnoway.gov.au

The Bullying. No Way! STEPS decision-making framework was developed by the Safe and Supportive School Communities (SSSC) Working Group, which is a national collaborative project focused on supporting Australian schools to implement workable solutions to bullying, harassment and violence. The SSSC Working Group includes representatives from all states and territories, including the Catholic and independent sectors. It reports to the Australian Education Senior Officials Committee.

The Queensland Department of Education and Training manages all aspects of the SSSC project on behalf of all Australian Education Authorities, including the Bullying. No Way! website, the annual National Day of Action against Bullying and Violence for Australian schools, and all related resources.

S T E P S
Steps to examine programs and approaches for schools
DECISION-MAKING
FRAMEWORK


Can the school implement and sustain the approach as required for it to be effective?
Does the approach indicate how outcomes will be measured and timeframes within which to expect to see real results?
SUSTAINABILITY
REAL RESULTS
Does the approach address the target students and needs that the school has identified?
Is the approach feasible and practical in the school context?
Is the philosophical perspective underpinning the approach compatible with the school's approach to behaviour, learning and student wellbeing?
SUITABILITY
FEASIBILITY
PERSPECTIVE
DEFINITION
THEORY
EVIDENCE
PRACTICE
Is the approach based on a contemporary understanding of bullying that is consistent with the school's definition?
Is the approach based on a sound theory that draws on the existing knowledge from previous research in bullying?
Does the approach have evidence from well-designed research which shows measurable change in behaviour?
Have other schools used this approach and achieved positive outcomes?

STEPS – Steps to examine programs and approaches for schools

Does it work? What is the evidence?

	Key Question	To ask about the approach	To ask about your school
Definition	*Is the approach based on a contemporary understanding of bullying that is consistent with the school's definition?*	• How does the approach define bullying? • Does it align with the national definition of bullying for Australian schools? • How does the approach identify the causes and factors involved in bullying?	• Is the definition in this approach consistent with the school's understanding of bullying? • Do all members of our school community share this definition of bullying? Is it included in our school policies?
Theory	*Is the approach based on a sound theory that draws on the existing knowledge from previous research in bullying?*	• What is the specific aim of the approach, i.e. does it impact on attitudes, skills, behaviours, or knowledge? • What theory underpins the approach and how has this been incorporated into the content, design and strategies of the approach? • What previous research in bullying and related areas does the approach draw on? • How does the approach promote a positive school climate and respectful relationships? • How does the approach align with the National Safe Schools Framework?	• Is the theoretical basis of this approach consistent with our school's approach to behaviour, learning and student wellbeing? • Should we undertake some professional development to learn more about the existing knowledge on countering bullying? • Does the approach complement how we have implemented the National Safe Schools Framework?
Evidence	*Does the approach have evidence from well-designed research which shows measurable change in behaviour?*	• What is the evidence for the approach and how has it been gathered? • Does the evidence consist of real change involving measurement of specific behaviours and outcomes? • How did the researchers ensure confidence that the research supports valid claims of effectiveness? • If the research evidence is limited, what plans exist for well-designed research into this approach?	• Will the school be able to implement the approach in a way similar to the way it was conducted in research studies? • Are we alert to the use of persuasion- or emotion-driven arguments rather than evidence to support this approach? (e.g. is the information provided as 'evidence' actually opinion, promotion or advertising)? • If there is limited research evidence for the approach, have we carefully considered the questions under Definition and Theory?
Practice	*Have other schools used this approach and achieved positive outcomes?*	• Is the research evidence complemented by information from schools that have implemented the approach in real-world situations? • If the research evidence for the approach is limited, what information (particularly student data) is available from other schools to suggest it is a 'promising practice'? • If there is no research evidence, are the definition and theory which underpin the approach well explained and robust?	• Are the schools which have successfully implemented this approach similar to our school? • Will the school be able to implement the approach in a way similar to the way it was conducted in other schools that have achieved positive outcomes? • If there is limited research evidence for the approach, have we carefully considered the questions under Definition and Theory?

STEPS – Steps to examine programs and approaches for schools

Will it work to achieve our school's goals?

	Key Question	To ask about the approach	To ask about your school
Suitability	***Does the approach address the target students and needs that the school has identified?***	• What is the main purpose of the approach: prevention or response (or response as prevention)? • Is the approach whole-school, multifaceted or single issue focused? • Which elements in the National Safe Schools Framework are addressed? • What does this approach focus on and who does it target: – Who are the direct participants (targets)? – What student age range does the approach address? – What types of bullying are directly addressed (if relevant)? – What personal and social skills are addressed (if relevant)? – What social understandings/social diversity issues are addressed (if relevant)?	• Do we need to further clarify our school's needs and aims so that we can select an approach to match? • Does this approach target who we want to target and aim to achieve what we have identified as our goals? • Which of the school's identified goals and target areas does the approach NOT address? • Can we integrate this approach with existing approaches in the school?
Feasibility	***Is the approach feasible and practical in the school context?***	• Are all requirements to implement the approach detailed in the guidelines? • Is the approach 'ready to go' or do schools have to do significant work as well in order to implement? • What are the initial and ongoing costs? • What training and support is provided? • What time and human resources are required from the school? • Does the approach align with existing policies and with national educational frameworks and guidelines, and any other requirements with which schools need to comply? • Has this approach been successfully used in schools with similar resources and constraints as our school?	• Do we have the time, human resources and funding for initial and ongoing costs? • Can we provide staff with the skills, knowledge and support to implement the approach? • Is the approach compatible with other activities and requirements with which we need to comply? • If this approach is delivered through extra classes (i.e. not embedded into curriculum) what impact will that have on the curriculum, and on people and other activities? • Is the approach a good fit with our school resources and constraints? • Can the school's existing resources and activities be harnessed or redirected for this approach?
Perspective	***Is the philosophical perspective underpinning the approach compatible with the school's approach to behaviour, learning and student wellbeing?***	• What philosophical perspective underpins this approach? • What learning theory/pedagogical approach is the approach based on?	• What is our school's perspective on behaviour, bullying and student wellbeing (and where do we articulate this)? • Is this approach's perspective compatible with our school's approach to promoting a positive school climate and positive behaviour? • Is the pedagogical approach compatible with our school's approach to teaching and learning? • Before we implement an anti-bullying approach, do we need to invest in professional development on our philosophical perspective on bullying?

STEPS – Steps to examine programs and approaches for schools

How will we know it has worked?

	Key Question	To ask about the approach	To ask about your school
Sustainability	***Can the school implement and sustain the approach as required for it to be effective?***	• How long does the approach take to fully implement and when should the school expect to see changes/outcomes? • Does the approach provide specific guidelines on implementation (e.g. time frames, milestones, step-by-step procedures)? • Does the approach provide information about possible adaptations that do not compromise fidelity (i.e. the way the program is intended to be used)? • Is staff training available initially and on an ongoing basis as needed (e.g. for new staff) to ensure sustainable implementation? • What other support is available for implementation?	• How will the school sustain energy and momentum throughout implementation given the anticipation time before outcomes will be observable? • Will the school be able to implement the approach as recommended in order to be effective (fidelity of implementation)? • Are adaptions needed to implement the approach in our school context, and would these possibly compromise fidelity (and thus effectiveness)? • Have other schools made adaptations and has the approach been successful with these adaptions? • How might we support ongoing implementation with fidelity, reduce any gaps, and ensure sustainability for long-term change?
Real results	***Does the approach indicate how outcomes will be measured and timeframes within which to expect to see real results?***	• How are outcomes measured and how do they link to the stated aim of the approach? • Are resources (tools) or guidance provided for measuring progress and effectiveness of the approach and informing a cycle of continuous improvement? • Does the approach encourage student involvement in measuring outcomes? • What is the anticipated time frame before the school should be able to see measurable change? • How will the school be able to demonstrate to the wider community that the approach has been successful?	• What existing school measures and data can we use to monitor progress and measure outcomes? • If additional measurement tools and methods are required, what impact could that have? • Can our school commit to this approach for the anticipated timeframes before we will see measurable and real results? • How and where will the school report and celebrate successful progress and outcomes?

APPENDIX 2:
FIRST PAGE OF THE STEPS FORM FOR SCHOOLS

Download the form at Bullying. No Way!

FORM FOR SCHOOLS

STEPS decision-making framework helps schools to select appropriate evidence-based anti-bullying approaches and programs for their school

For instructions on how to complete this form, refer to How to use STEPS.

Name of approach/es:
(This may be a single program or approach or a combination)

Name/s of staff completing this form:

Answers to STEPS Key Questions
(Do not write in this box; it will auto-populate from the detailed pages of the form).

Does it work? What is the evidence?	Yes	No
DEFINITION: *Is the approach based on a contemporary understanding of bullying that is consistent with the school's definition?*		
THEORY: *Is the approach based on a sound theory that draws on the existing knowledge from previous research in bullying?*		
EVIDENCE: *Does the approach have evidence from well-designed research which shows measurable change in behaviour?*		
PRACTICE: *Have other schools used this approach and achieved positive outcomes?*		
Will it work to achieve our school's goals?		
SUITABILITY: *Does the approach address the target students and needs that the school has identified?*		
FEASIBILITY: *Is the approach feasible and practical in the school context?*		
PERSPECTIVE: *Is the philosophical perspective underpinning the approach compatible with the school's approach to behaviour, learning and student wellbeing?*		
How will we know it has worked?		
SUSTAINABILITY: *Can the school implement and sustain the approach as required for it to be effective?*		
REAL RESULTS: *Does the approach indicate how outcomes will be measured and timeframes within which to expect to see real results?*		

Record of decision

Based on the information we have gathered with STEPS, our school's decision is

Finalised on date:

BULLYING. NO WAY!

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