

# POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR TOOLKIT

## PARENTS AND CARERS

**The culture and practice of Positive Behaviour Support for Learning (PBS) has been increasingly integrated into school in New South Wales in the last few decades. Research shows that the philosophy of PBS is proven to be especially important for students with additional needs. Understanding the unique needs of students with Down syndrome is crucial for implementing positive behaviour strategies, to maximise the social and academic outcomes for these students.**

### WHAT IS POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR SUPPORT?

Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) is an evidence-based approach aimed at cultivating a constructive and inclusive environment by promoting **desirable behaviours** and **reducing challenging ones**. At its core, PBS seeks to **understand the underlying factors** contributing to a person's behaviour.

This approach encourages those interacting with the child to focus on:

- reinforcing positive actions
- teaching essential social skills
- providing individualised support based on the unique needs of each individual.

### Positive Behaviour Support in New South Wales Schools

PBS frameworks are so effective for encouraging appropriate student behaviour that it is mandated in departmental policy. Key points from this policy are listed below:

- 1.1** NSW Government schools embed **positive behaviour approaches**, safe practices and inclusive education. Schools implement inclusive and **positive student behaviour support** and management approaches aligned to the care continuum that establish support and maintain high expectations for student behaviour, in line with the behaviour code for students.
- 1.2** Schools develop behaviour support and management plans, including anti-bullying strategies, that prioritise continuity of learning and facilitate whole-school, prevention-focused and **positive approaches to behaviour support**, to meet the needs of all students.
- 1.3** Promoting **positive behaviour** requires schools to access support as early as possible and for system- level support to be proactive and responsive to schools' needs.

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## >>> THE PILLARS OF POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR SUPPORT

### Pillar #1 – Reinforcing Positive Actions

Reinforcing positive actions involves acknowledging and rewarding desirable behaviours to encourage their repetition.

This element of PBS emphasises the power of praise, rewards, and positive reinforcement to motivate and strengthen your child's desirable behaviours. By consistently praising and rewarding your child for their efforts, achievements, and positive behaviours, you can help them build confidence, self-esteem, and a sense of accomplishment.

Whether it's a smile, a hug, or verbal praise, reinforcing positive actions fosters a supportive and nurturing environment where your child can thrive.

### Pillar #2 – Teaching Essential Social Skills

This element of PBL focuses on equipping your child with the necessary skills to navigate social situations effectively and build meaningful relationships. It involves teaching your child essential social skills such as communication, sharing, taking turns, empathy, and problem-solving.

By providing opportunities for practice, modelling appropriate behaviours, and offering gentle guidance and feedback, you can help your child develop confidence and competence in social interactions.

### Pillar #3 – Providing Individualised Support Based on the Unique Needs of Each Individual

Providing individualised support based on the unique needs of each individual is a fundamental principle of PBS.

This component recognises that every child, including our loved ones with Down syndrome, is unique, with their own strengths, challenges, and preferences. By tailoring support strategies to meet the specific needs of each child, parents can maximise their child's potential and promote their overall well-being.

Individualised support involves identifying your child's strengths, areas for growth, and specific support needs. It also requires collaborating with professionals, such as teachers, therapists, and specialists, to develop personalised intervention plans that address your child's individual needs and goals.

## PARENT TOOLKIT: WHAT IS POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR SUPPORT?

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Whether it's adapting learning materials, modifying communication strategies, or providing additional support, individualised support ensures that your child receives the targeted assistance they need to succeed.

We encourage parents to explore additional resources available through Down Syndrome NSW. In particular, we have a series of fact sheets focusing on implementing these Positive Behaviour Support strategies for individuals with Down syndrome at home and in schools. We also have a range of printable resources, linked to research-based best practice, aimed specifically at supporting young people with Down syndrome. These include First/Then Boards, Routine Charts, Social Stories and more.

**Our organisation offers a wealth of information to further support parents in meeting their child's need. Visit our website or contact us directly to access additional resources and connect with our supportive community of parents, professionals and advocates.**

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### See our linked fact sheets:

[Understanding Common Behaviours in Children with Down Syndrome](#)

[Navigating Challenges and Implementing Positive Behavioural Strategies for Children with Down Syndrome](#)

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### References

NSW Department of Education. "Student Behaviour Policy." NSW Department of Education

<https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/policies/pd-2006-0316>

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