PBS for Aspect Education

aspect
Autism Spectrum Australia

Positive Behaviour Support (PBS)

Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) is a person-centred framework that aims to improve an individual's quality of life by providing support in situations where there is, or there is a risk of, behaviour of concern.

PBS recognises that behaviours of concern occur for a reason, and is communicating important information about what the individual needs, wants and how to support them. When there are behaviours of concern, it is likely that there is a mismatch between what a person needs and what is being provided.

Aspect Education's PBS framework consists of multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS). The goal of MTSS is to identify students' needs early and provide the right level of support at the right time, so they have the best chance of succeeding academically and socially.

At all tier levels of support, it is important schools consider ways to actively involve and include, in a meaningful way, both students and their parents/carers, in planning and decision making about their goals and support plans and programs
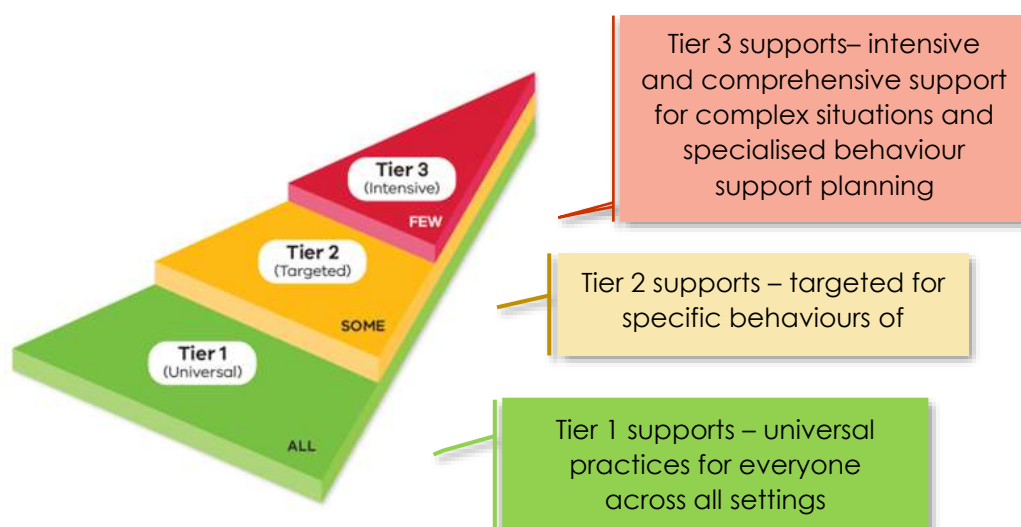

Figure 1: Aspect PBS Framework

About this guide

This guide outlines school-wide PBS, including providing academic and behavioural supports at all three tiers for all students based on their individual needs. This guide also provides information on what Aspect school staff can do to address specific behaviours of concern – this includes environmental modifications, understanding underlying causes of behaviour and working with students, their families and support networks, to identify additional skills or strategies for supporting behaviour change.

Tier 1 support

Tier 1 supports are universal supports that are in place across the school for all students. These supports are designed to create a strong foundation for learning, focusing on high-quality, evidence-based practices that help prevent struggles before they arise. Consistent implementation of Tier 1 supports across the school will result in positive, inclusive, and supportive environment where students can thrive academically and socially.

High-quality, evidence-based instruction

Tier 1 support is primarily about high-quality teaching practices for every student, such as clear instruction, engaging lessons which are informed by data, differentiated learning, environmental modifications and structured supports. It is important staff know and understand their students, so that they can set their students up for success by embedding a strengths and interest-based approach into their teaching and learning programs.

[Tier 1 support practices are outlined in the PBS section of the Aspect approach website](#).

School-wide values and expectations

Tier 1 support also involves setting clear expectations for behaviour and creating a positive school culture. Tier 1 support ensures all students understand what is expected of them and helps them develop positive social-emotional skills. To do this, schools develop three to four positively stated, neuro-affirming school-wide [values](#) (e.g. *We are Respectful, We are Kind, We are Safe)*. School values support all staff to focus on and demonstrate positive behaviours, enable everyone to have a shared language across all areas of the school and are embedded into teaching and learning programs. School values are taught to students through positive behaviour expectations.

Values and behaviour expectations should be helpful for all students and allow for individuals to express individuality and diversity of behaviour, especially where behaviours are not harmful or purposeful, for example, stimming is accepted as something that brings joy or supports regulation and Autistic social skills and Autistic communication is acknowledged and accepted. Staff avoid normalising and insisting on compliance with expectations around social interactions and communication, e.g. avoiding eye contact and/or displaying emotions differently is acknowledged and accepted. Instead, staff share expectations of participating in lessons.

Implementation of Tier 1 behavioural supports are strengthened when the following steps are followed.

1. DEFINE: school values and behavioural expectations.
2. TEACH: the behaviour system of values and expectations to all students.
3. NOTICE AND REINFORCE: behaviour in action during the school day.
4. REVIEW: what is in place to see if changes need to be made.

1. DEFINE
   Values are developed with key stakeholders within the school community, such as students, their families, staff and others involved in the school. Satellite classes may follow their host school values.

School values

Figure 2: Aspect Hunter School Star values

2. TEACH
   Just as time is scheduled for teaching key learning areas, time should also be set aside to teach students the school values and expectations in specific contexts within the school and community. Behaviour expectations are captured in a *School Behaviour Expectations Matrix,* in a format that is easily understood by students, and are placed on display in the different spaces around the school – for some students this can help organise their understanding of behaviour in their different learning environments.

   Staff can use the *School Behaviour Matrix* to guide skills to be taught and embed these into their teaching and learning programs. New behaviour expectations can be added to the matrix and linked to the relevant value as they are identified by staff, students and families.

Figure 3: Vern Barnett School Behaviour Expectations Matrix links expectations to school values

3. NOTICE AND REINFORCE
   Having visual supports in different school locations (in a variety of formats) enables staff to use these supports to show students their behaviour has been noticed, and reinforce students in the moment who meet behaviour expectations. It is also important that staff links the behaviour observed to the relevant school value. Students may also be acknowledged as part of an individual, class or whole school system of recognition or rewards. Consideration needs to be given to what is meaningful reinforcement for each student, and the process might need to be adapted to be autism-specific and include visual and Augmentative and Alternate Communication (ACC) systems.

Figure 4: Aspect South Coast class reward system

4. REVIEW
Implementation of school values and behaviour expectations across the school should be reviewed at least annually, however, this can be done more often if students are not understanding these or if more important values/expectations arise. The review should check:
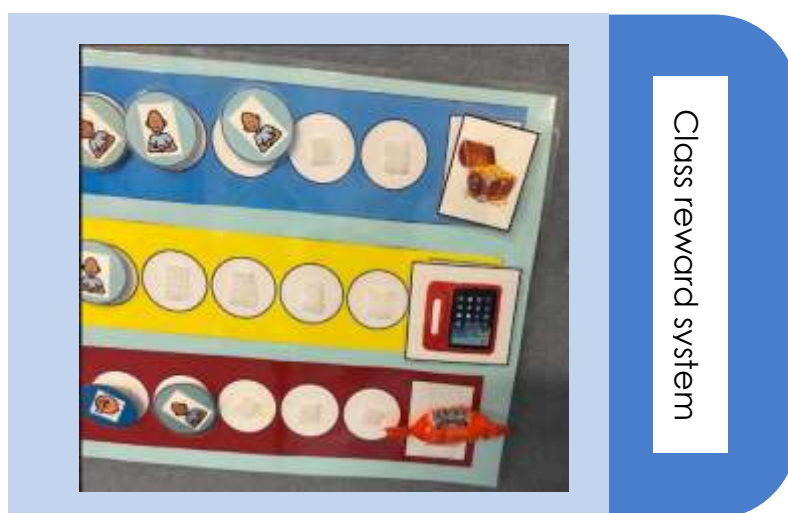
- if staff and students understand the school values
- if values need to be taught in a different way
- if the values are a good fit or need to be changed – this should be done with the students and their families.

For students not engaging in school values and behaviour expectations, staff use a structured approach to correct and reteach.

Ways to review implementation

- ❖ The *PBS Classroom Checklist* is a great resource for self or peer-review of classroom practice and demonstrate quality supports. This checklist can be adapted to suit different classroom contexts.
- ❖ Review if and where behaviour expectations are taught, and whether they are listed in the *School Behavioural Expectation Matrix*.
- ❖ Check if Tier 1 supports are a standing item on the LST agenda.
- ❖ Review values annually with stakeholders (students, families and staff) – it would be unlikely they would be changed unless not working.
- ❖ Complete the Autism-Specific Tiered Fidelity Inventory annually.

The key to Tier 1 implementation and sustainability is staff consistency. Students will sustain positive behaviour when there are regular strategies for continuous re-teaching and rewarding students demonstrating behaviour expectations.

When behaviours of concern occur despite Tier 1 supports being in place, Tiers 2 and 3 level supports can be used. This guide outlines the use of Tier 2 and Tier 3 supports to address specific behaviours of concern. It covers modifying the environment, understanding the underlying causes of behaviour and working with the person and their support network to identify additional skills or strategies for motivating behaviour change.

Tier 2 support

Some students may temporarily need more individualised and intensive supports and programs to meet their needs – this is Tier 2 support. Tier 2 support could be in the form of a small group targeted support program or a PBS Plan. Tier 2 supports and programs are more effective when linked with school-wide Tier 1 supports and generalised in teaching and learning programs. The PBS Process guide clarifies criteria and process for Tier 2 support.

Targeted small group-based programs

Targeted support programs aim to teach a specific skill that helps a student succeed. This might be a communication or social interaction skill, anxiety management or self-/co-regulation regulation skills.

Group-based programs might be generic or branded (for example, the *Westmead Feelings Program*). It is important that branded programs are delivered as closely as intended by the developers, data is used to show progress, and the program does not aim to teach Autistic students to be more typical (e.g. teaching eye contact). Schools can use the *Emotional Regulation Guide to* guide decision-making around engagement in branded programs.

Interim strategies

As soon as an incident occurs or there is a disclosure of behaviour of concern, the goal is to de-escalate the situation as quickly and safely as possible and to use the *Five Point Star* framework to help understand the situation from the person's perspective.

> It is essential to understand that it is OK to give the person what they want or need in this situation, even if this feels like 'giving in', on the understanding that we can change behaviour by making a longer-term plan.

Aspect staff use the *PBS Interim Strategies* form to plan for the immediate short-term support after an incident has occurred. This may include adapting or avoiding whatever might be causing stress to the student, temporarily reducing workload and/or increasing breaks and preferred activities. Staff also might reteach behaviour expectations or add more reinforcement to encourage positive behaviours.

Whilst it is understandable that difficulties do sometimes arise, it is important that staff work to prevent this from happening again. PBS often uses the phrase – *If we can predict it, we can prevent it.*

Positive Behaviour Support Plans

One key part of Tier 2 supports is how Aspect schools respond when behaviour of concern emerges. The goal is to respond as quickly as possible, using whatever knowledge and information staff have to try to prevent

further escalation or difficulty, reduce any stress or overwhelm before developing a *PBS plan*.

Aspect schools develop PBS plans to meet students' needs. Aspect's PBS Plan has been developed to meet evidence-based criteria:

- behaviour being defined in observable terms
- descriptions of what happens before (antecedent) and after a behaviour that leads to understanding of function
- a hypothesis statement about the function of the behaviour
- a plan with matched support strategies, a clear goal for a replacement behaviour and skill development
- a plan for supporting positive change in the behaviour.

The *Positive Behaviour Support Plan (Orange Form) guide* has a step-by-step guide to completing the behaviour planning template.

Plans developed in collaboration with key stakeholders, are based on assessment and involve monitoring and review. PBS Plans maintain links with Tier 1 supports, and there is a focus on quality of life, input from students (within their capacity to contribute) and their family, and a focus on implementation. Training should be provided to all staff for the implementation of a student's PBS Plan.

PBS Plans are reviewed and updated with staff with expertise in this area, to ensure high quality plans (see *Positive Behaviour Support Provision in Aspect Schools* procedure). Once a PBS Plan has been drafted, it is helpful to review the plan to make sure it meets good practice criteria. See *Positive Behaviour Support Plan Review Tool* as a way to review the Positive Behaviour Support Plan (Orange Form).

Contextual fit is the match between a written PBS plan, the person and their family goals, values and strengths. The PBS plan should use key stakeholders' experience, knowledge, skills, resources and supports. Research suggests that the better contextual fit, the more effective the plan and strategies will be.

There is a range of checklists that help measure contextual fit including the student and their family, school and disability service provider checklists, for example, *PBS Contextual Fit for families and schools*.

Implementation data

A key step in the review of PBS Plans is reviewing both incident and implementation data. Implementation data should be collected at least monthly to be used to inform if a PBS Plan needs alterations. Implementation data can be captured on Aspect's *Implementation Checklist*.

Safety Assessment

When students require a PBS Plan, Aspect school staff complete a *Safety Assessment* for students requiring a Tier 2 plan. The purpose of this plan is to identify risk factors and risk management supports and strategies.

Tier 3 supports

A student may require temporarily more intensive Tier 3 supports (as well as Tier 1 and 2 supports), when they have been involved in incidents where Tier 1 and 2 supports are not effective and crisis management strategies (which may include restrictive practice) are required.

Behaviour Response Plan (Red Form)

If behaviour of concern arises, Aspect staff develop a *Behaviour Response Plan (Red Form)* to guide the actions of others to respond consistently and calmly, to reduce the distress of the student and to keep everybody safe. Aspect's Behaviour Response Plan (BRP) is a document written collaboratively with the student (within their capacity to contribute) and their parents/carer and support team.

The BRP is divided into three columns and five rows. The first column is a description of how the student may present at different levels of escalation, whilst the second column summarises what to do at each level of escalation to keep everyone safe and prevent behaviour from escalating. The third column is dedicated to support strategies for staff or others who may be supporting the student, helping them to stay calm and safe during escalation patterns. Each colour-coded row represents a stage of escalation in behaviour:

- When the person is calm (green level).
- Early behavioural warning signs of upset (yellow level).
- Low level behaviour of concern, when the student is more in control (orange level).
- Severe loss of control (red level).
- Recovery (blue level).

A step-by-step guide to completing the BRP is available to assist in completion of this form – see *Behaviour Response Plan (Red Form) Guide*. Once a draft is completed, it is helpful to review the plan to make sure it meets good practice criteria using the *Evaluation Guide for Behaviour Response Plans*.

Incidents of behaviour of concern are logged in RiskMan. This is important data for tracking and analysing a situation around a student (see *Incident response and reporting* procedure).

Responding to behaviour of concern

When behaviour of concern occurs, the following steps can be followed. [Note if the student has a BRP, that plan should be followed.]

Table 1: Responding to behaviour of concern

Step 1	**Pause**	Take a moment to calm yourself so you respond appropriately.
Step 2	**Indirect interaction (whole group)**	Give a simple whole group reminder of the expected behaviour.
Step 3	**Indirect interaction (individual)**	If possible, look for someone demonstrating appropriate behaviour and reinforce so that others notice.
Step 4	**Assessment**	Take time to work out what the problem might be. You can use the Five Point Star framework.
Step 5	**Direct interaction**	Interact with the student directly using their preferred communication method. Talk calmly, on their level and as privately as possible. Start by building a positive connection. Ask if you can help – never shame or scold.
Step 6	**Direct support**	Try to problem solve as much as you can (using the Five Point Star framework). Listen to the student, explain the expectations, support the student to do a skill, be flexible, offer choice, compromise, adjust the task, use a *First-Then* visual sequence and try to finish on a positive note.
Step 7	**Environmental change**	Consider any change that might help de-escalate the situation. Remind the student that they can use a calm space, have them sit somewhere different, ask others to leave the space, change staff roles or give the student a job to do.
Step 8	**Crisis**	Take steps necessary to ensure your safety and the safety of the student and those around them. Use de-escalation and safety strategies as per Safety Intervention training if required. Note: All crisis situations should be logged in RiskMan.
Last step	**Routine**	Try to return to the planned schedule as soon as possible but you may need a to be flexible with reduced demands and/or stressors.
Follow up	**Continual improvement**	It's OK for things to go wrong (especially if they are unforeseen or outside of support plans), but it is important to use this information to make our support better in the future. Develop response plans, share information with stakeholders, find a teachable moment and review with the student as appropriate.

Complex situations

Aspect schools have an additional support structure for students who are experiencing complex behaviours of concern and require more intensive support and monitoring across multiple settings of their life. These situations can include:

- individuals with multiple support needs, including medical, mental health, trauma or multiple disabilities
- individuals with significantly poor quality of life, high stress and low self-esteem
- individuals with persistent high levels of complex behaviour and low resilience
- families/representatives experiencing stress, complex challenges and difficulties supporting the student
- frequent use of restrictive practices
- conflict between key stakeholders resulting in limited collaboration
- negative perceptions, emotions or behaviours with the student by those who support them
- previous attempts at support that have not produced positive change
- failure to implement strategies to meet the student's needs
- a lack of good quality coordinated support available.

There may also be a range of unknown factors.

Aspect's PBS uses a 'wraparound' approach for complex situations. This includes a more intensive and comprehensive PBS cycle, which requires all areas of the student's life to work together. Coordination of such supports often sits with key school leadership team members but in some instances, support may be facilitated by an external case manager, PBS practitioner or coordinator of supports.

For the Complex Situation Review process to be successful, schools need to work in partnership with the student and their parents/carer, family members and professionals who are supporting with the student. An ideal situation is where the Aspect school is part of a:

- PBS team that, involves the student (within their capacity to contribute) and those who support the student contributing and meeting (at least once per month) to develop a shared understanding and approach to support and positive collaboration – this is called a Complex Situation Review (CSR).
- PBS Team who review existing plans and develop a more comprehensive positive support plan that includes:
  - a detailed assessment
  - formulation
  - multi-discipline support, such as relevant medical, speech, occupational therapy and psychological strategies
  - agreed upon goals
  - protocols for specific restrictive practices
  - a focus on practical utility and implementation

- clear step-by-step BRP that provides guidance to staff in how to manage crisis situations as safely as possible – this includes prevention strategies, redirection, de-escalation and support.
- PBS Team who monitor and review incident and implementation data and report on progress in CSR meetings.
- process that works to build additional supports for the student, their family and others, and keeps track of goals, strategies and progress.
- PBS Team who share information with relevant school staff and external stakeholders – this could be through follow up email and phone calls. The student and their parents/carer may not always be involved in these exchanges, however, follow-up is provided.

In the absence of external services, the school will work with parents to try to develop links to services and support good practice 'wraparound' support.

The aim of the CSR is to develop an action plan that integrates information and support plans from the school and other stakeholders involved in support, to improve the student's quality of life. It is important that the CSR:

- is positive and person-centred
- considers the student's and their family's capacity to access and understand information shared and is respectful of decisions
- respects the student's and their family's disability, culture, gender and/or sexual orientation
- focuses on an empathetic understanding of the student, their quality of life and support needs which may include using the *Basic Needs Checklist* and the Five Point Star framework
- includes contributions from all stakeholders (as much as they are able)
- involves careful planning around risk, safety and restrictive practices.

A focus on training, coaching and monitoring those who offer direct support to the student will promote consistent implementation of support strategies across all settings.

Documentation which is available to school for the CSR process includes:

- Complex Situation Review Letter to Families
- Complex Situation Review Agenda
- Complex Situation Review Meeting Summary
- Complex Situation Action Schedule
- Complex Situation Review Team Support Plan

Restrictive practices

Sometimes Aspect staff need to use additional crisis strategies to keep a student safe. This might be holding a student so they do not run out on a road or moving them away from an area to somewhere calm and safe, so they do not injure themselves or others. These are known as restrictive practices (see *Restrictive and*

Prohibited Practices Reference Guide). Aspect staff have a duty of care to protect all individuals who attend Aspect schools or use Aspect services, uphold their human rights, and always work within a culture of safety to protect students and staff.

When required in response to a significant safety concern, a restrictive practice may be used as a last resort and least restrictive crisis management strategy. It would be implemented for the least amount of time needed. Restrictive practice should not be used as an ongoing management strategy and Aspect is committed to reducing the use of restrictive practice by supporting students to build skills, problem solve and self-advocate.

Unfortunately, restrictive practices have the potential to be misused by:

- being used as an immediate quick fix rather than only as the last resort in a crisis
- becoming overused and relied on
- being used as a substitute for PBS strategies
- becoming a permanent part of a person's support, even when they might not be needed.

When strategies are misused, there are often profoundly negative consequences for the student these strategies are meant to help.

Restrictive practices include (but are not limited to):

- chemical restraint
- physical restraint
- mechanical restraint
- environmental restraint – restricted access
- environmental restraint – exclusionary time out

Table 2: Restrictive practices definitions

RESTRICTIVE PRACTICE	DESCRIPTION
Chemical restraint	The planned use of PRN psychotropic medication for the primary purpose of influencing a person's behaviour. PRN is an abbreviation of the Latin term *pro re nata* meaning *given as needed.* It does not include any medication prescribed for ADHD or a diagnosed mental or physical illness, for example depression or epilepsy or over the counter medication for headaches.
Physical restraint	Where movement of any part of the student's body is prevented, restricted or subdued, including physically escorting a student to go somewhere against their will.
Mechanical restraint	The use of a device (such as a travel harnesses, seat belt buckle covers, specific clothing such as body suits, onesies, gloves or helmets) to prevent, restrict or subdue a student's movement.
Environmental restraint	Restricted access Restricts a student's free access to all parts of their environment, including services or school (sending home from school or reduced hours), and includes locking doors (for an individual or group of students), cupboards or removing access to specific items and activities (such as food or drink). Exclusionary time out Where a student is solely contained in an area with a staff member and is unable to leave for a fixed or open amount of time.
Seclusion	Where a person is solely contained in an area and is unable to leave for a fixed or open amount of time. Seclusion is only used in an emergency or crisis situation where all other strategies have been ineffective and there is significant risk to the safety and wellbeing of the student, other students or staff. Seclusion is only to be used a last resort and for as short a time as possible. As per Aspect policy documentation, seclusion should be included in the RP consent form and discussed with parents, however, it is not able to be included in student support plans – it is an emergency response that would be documented in the incident report when used.

Certain practices are restrictive in their use and can only be implemented in an unplanned emergency situation or with prior approval from the school Principal and any other state or national compliance requirements. An example of this could be where a student in crisis has acted physically towards another student and for safety

reasons needs to be escorted to a calm space. For more information on restrictive practices see:

- *Restrictive & Prohibited Practices Reference Guide*
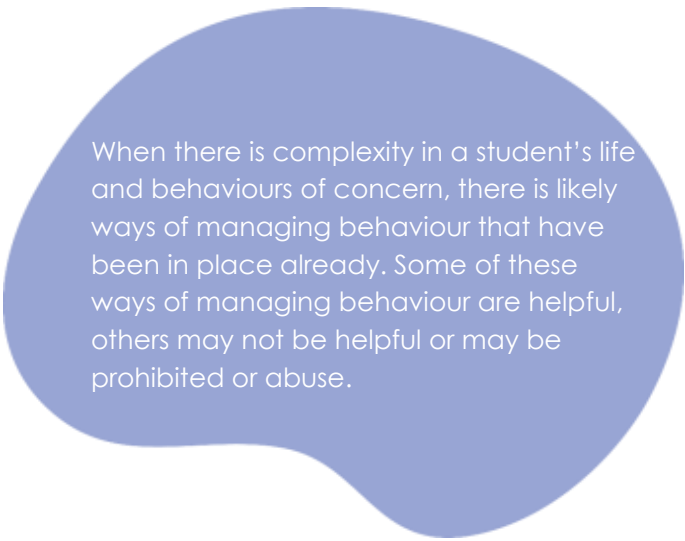- *Restrictive & Prohibited Practices at an Aspect School* procedure

Where staff can predict that a safety strategy might need to be used, Aspect schools adhere to Government Restrictive Practice guidelines. For students requiring inclusion of a restrictive practice in a PBS plan, Aspect requires that school staff adhere to a four-part process:

1. Consent from the student and/or their parents/carer for a restrictive practice to be included in their PBS Plan.
2. Application to the school Principal for the use of restrictive practice/s in a PBS plan.
3. Authorisation from the school Principal.
4. Monitoring of the restrictive practice use.

Restrictive practices can only be authorised for a maximum of six months before they are reviewed again. The goal is to remove the use of restrictive practices over time with improved support and increased positive behaviours and skills for the student.

Prohibited practices

Prohibited practices are practices which are forbidden. These practices are unethical, though they may not be unlawful. Prohibited practices include causing pain, distress or humiliation to a person as well as using response cost or over-correction strategies. For more information see *Restrictive & Prohibited Practices Reference Guide*

When there is complexity in a student's life and behaviours of concern, there is likely ways of managing behaviour that have been in place already. Some of these ways of managing behaviour are helpful, others may not be helpful or may be prohibited or abuse.

Measuring school-wide PBS

It is important that Aspect schools demonstrate and continually improve implementation of PBS to maintain quality of life and improved outcomes for all students. The *Tiered Fidelity Inventory (TFI)* is an evidence-based measure that is used mainstream schools across the world. Aspect Research Centre for Autism Practice (ARCAP), Aspect Practice and Aspect Education have co-produced an autism-specific measure to be used in Australia and in Aspect schools, with Autistic students.

The purpose of the AS-TFI is to provide a valid, reliable, and efficient measure of the extent to which a school is implementing core features of school-wide Positive

Behavioural Support (SWPBS). Annual use of the Aspect AS-TFI demonstrates that Aspect schools are implementing good PBS practice school-wide. It is recommended the Aspect AS-TFI:

1. is used as a baseline measure the first time it is used. This assessment will result in an action plan for the next year to guide schools, leadership and Learning Support Teams (LST). The aim is for the school to be able to demonstrate 70% or more implementation fidelity overall in each tier of the PBS framework.
2. is used annually to review progress and to plan for the subsequent year.

The information from the AS-TFI, and from other sources is used to inform school improvement plans. The plan outlines professional development and training needs for staff, it builds on strengths and supports needs, and is shared with the whole school as well as with other stakeholders, specifically students and their families.

Glossary

Behaviour of concern	Any behaviour that causes difficulties and limits a person's ability to have a good life. Behaviour of concern is understood as part of an interaction between: • an individual, their current and past experiences, • what they have been taught, • the other people in their lives, • the environments, communities and cultures they live in. Behaviour of concern happens for a reason and indicates there is a mismatch between what a person needs and what is being provided.
Multi-tiered System of Support (MTSS)	MTSS is a framework that that guides the selection and implementation of best practices for improving student outcomes.
Neuro-affirming	Recognises that different ways of thinking and processing are valuable. It honours people's differences, provides support where needed, and helps people thrive in a way that works for them, not forcing them to fit into a one-size-fits-all mould. Environments are created where people of all neurotypes feel seen, supported, and capable.
School values	Broad categories of behaviour expressed positively as a short sentence
Behaviour Expectations Matrix	Tool to guide skills to be taught and embed in class programs. New behaviour expectations identified are added to the matrix as they are identified by staff, students and families.
Restrictive practice	Any practice or intervention that has the effect of restricting the rights or freedom of movement of a person with disability.
Prohibited practice	Practices which are forbidden. These practices are unethical, though they may not be unlawful. Prohibited practices include causing pain, distress or humiliation to a person as well as using response cost or over-correction strategies.

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