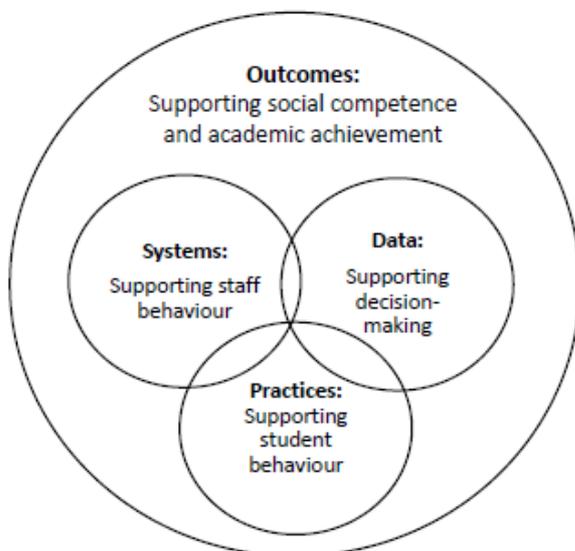


# SCHOOL-WIDE POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR SUPPORT

An introduction for school Principals

## WHAT IS SCHOOL-WIDE POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR SUPPORT (SWPBS)?

SWPBS is a broad range of systemic and individualised strategies for achieving important social and learning outcomes in schools while preventing problem behaviour. The key attributes of SWPBS include preventive activities, data-based decision making, and a problem solving orientation. SWPBS is a technology with four core, defining features:



## WHY SHOULD YOU IMPLEMENT SWPBS?

SWPBS has demonstrated:

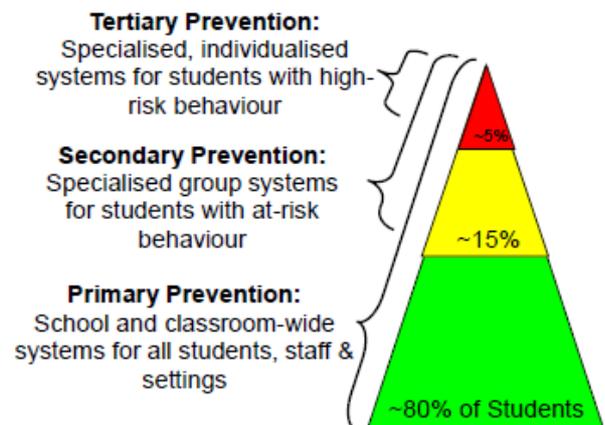
- Reduced problem behaviour
- Increased academic performance
- Improved perception of safety
- Reduced bullying behaviours
- Increased time for instructional leadership
- Reduced staff turnover
- Improved social-emotional competence
- Increased positive school climate and culture

“...there’s data entries, and monthly meetings to review the data, then I knew, it must be better than any of the other programs”.

Principal<sup>1</sup>

## SWPBS IS A TIERED INTERVENTION FRAMEWORK

SWPBS uses a tiered intervention framework which invests in prevention (tier I), identifies and provides targeted supports for individual students at risk for developing challenging behaviour (tier II), and provides individualised and intensive interventions for students with significant support needs (tier III).



SWPBS counteracts the “wait-to-fail” model of other frameworks and moves schools to a prevention-based approach.

## THE ROLE OF SCHOOL PRINCIPALS IN SWPBS

School principals play a pivotal role in adopting, implementing, and sustaining SWPBS. Principal support such as agreeing with SWPBS principles, allowing teacher release time for training and team meetings, and allocating resources for implementation are significant factors related to the sustainability of SWPBS.

“...a system that’s out there is already being researched and it’s already being implemented”.

Principal<sup>1</sup>

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## MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT SWPBS<sup>2,3</sup>

### **SWPBS is just another program**

No. SWPBS is a framework, a prevention oriented process that supports the needs and culture of the school by assisting school personnel in adopting and organising evidence-based behavioural interventions into an integrated continuum that enhances academic and social behaviour outcomes for all students.

### **SWPBS is just a reward system that reduces intrinsic motivation.**

SWPBS includes practices that provide students with feedback on the accuracy and use of their social skills and behaviours, in the same manner that feedback is provided for successful and accurate academic performance. Little evidence exists to suggest that the use of positive reinforcement, acknowledgements, and recognition has negative effects on academic and social behaviour achievement.

### **SWPBS is something new that was designed for students with disabilities.**

The practices, principles, and systems that characterise SWPBS have been described since the early 1960s. SWPBS is a marriage of behavioural theory, behaviour analysis, positive behaviour supports, and prevention and implementation science that has been developed to improve how schools select, organise, implement, and evaluate behavioural practices in meeting the needs of *all* students.

### **SWPBS is for behaviour, and RtI is for academics.**

RtI is best conceptualised as a framework for developing and implementing multi-tiered systems of academic and behaviour support, and is comprised of (a) universal screening, (b) continuous progress monitoring, (c) continuum of evidence-based practices, (d) team driven data-based decision making, and (e) implementation fidelity evaluation. The SWPBS framework is the application of RtI principles to the improvement of social behaviour outcomes for all students. PBIS is often described as the “behaviour side” of the RtI multi-tiered continuum; however, this description misrepresents the actual integrated implementation of behavior and academic supports.

#### References:

<sup>1</sup> McIntosh et al. (2016). In search of how Principals change: A qualitative study of events that help and hinder administrator support for school-wide PBIS. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, 18(2), 100-110.

<sup>2</sup> Sugai & Simonsen. (2012). *Positive behaviour interventions and supports: History, defining features and misconceptions*. [https://www.occde.us/PBIS/Documents/Getting%20Started/PBIS\\_revisited\\_June19r\\_2012.pdf](https://www.occde.us/PBIS/Documents/Getting%20Started/PBIS_revisited_June19r_2012.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Ohio PBIS Network. (2013). *PBIS Frequently asked questions*. <http://education.ohio.gov/getattachment/Topics/Other-Resources/School-Safety/Building-Better-Learning-Environments/PBIS-Resources/Ohio-Positive-Behavior-Interventions-Network-2/PBIS-FAQs-and-Myths.pdf.aspx>

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## COMMON QUESTIONS ABOUT STARTING SWPBS<sup>2,3</sup>

### **How do we start?**

All staff must decide if SWPBS is a good fit for their school. Once the school obtains an 80% approval rate from all staff (must include leadership), the core team begins work on the critical components of SWPBS. Staff and students provide input/feedback on all components and to contribute to the overall SWPBS plan.

### **How long will it take to implement SWPBS?**

Since SWPBS is a process, not a program, the length of time it takes to get started varies by school. Schools typically take between 3 months to 1 year to fully implement all the critical components of PBIS. The process is ongoing and constantly adapted to meet the changing needs of the school and to address current concerns.

### **Do we have to eliminate other initiatives if we begin SWPBS?**

No. Effective practices currently in place in the school can become part of the school-wide system. SWPBS will allow for consistency of these practices.

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## SWPBS IN VICTORIAN SCHOOLS

SWPBS is being reinvigorated in Victorian government schools. Processes and resources are being established to ensure that it can be sustained at the state level. If you are interested in knowing more about SWPBS, this website is a good resource: <http://www.pbis.org/school/swpbis-for-beginners>

If you want to begin SWPBS in your school, as Principal, you must publically support it. If you are willing to do this, check if other schools in your network have already begun and seek out their experience.

For schools that are already implementing SWPBS, you must use the *Tiered Fidelity Inventory* (TFI) to measure implementation. The TFI can be downloaded here: <http://www.pbis.org/evaluation/evaluation-tools>

Support from Brent Hayward, Manager, Schoolwide Positive Behaviour Support is available. He can be contacted on [hayward.brent.a@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:hayward.brent.a@edumail.vic.gov.au) and telephone 0418 519 779.