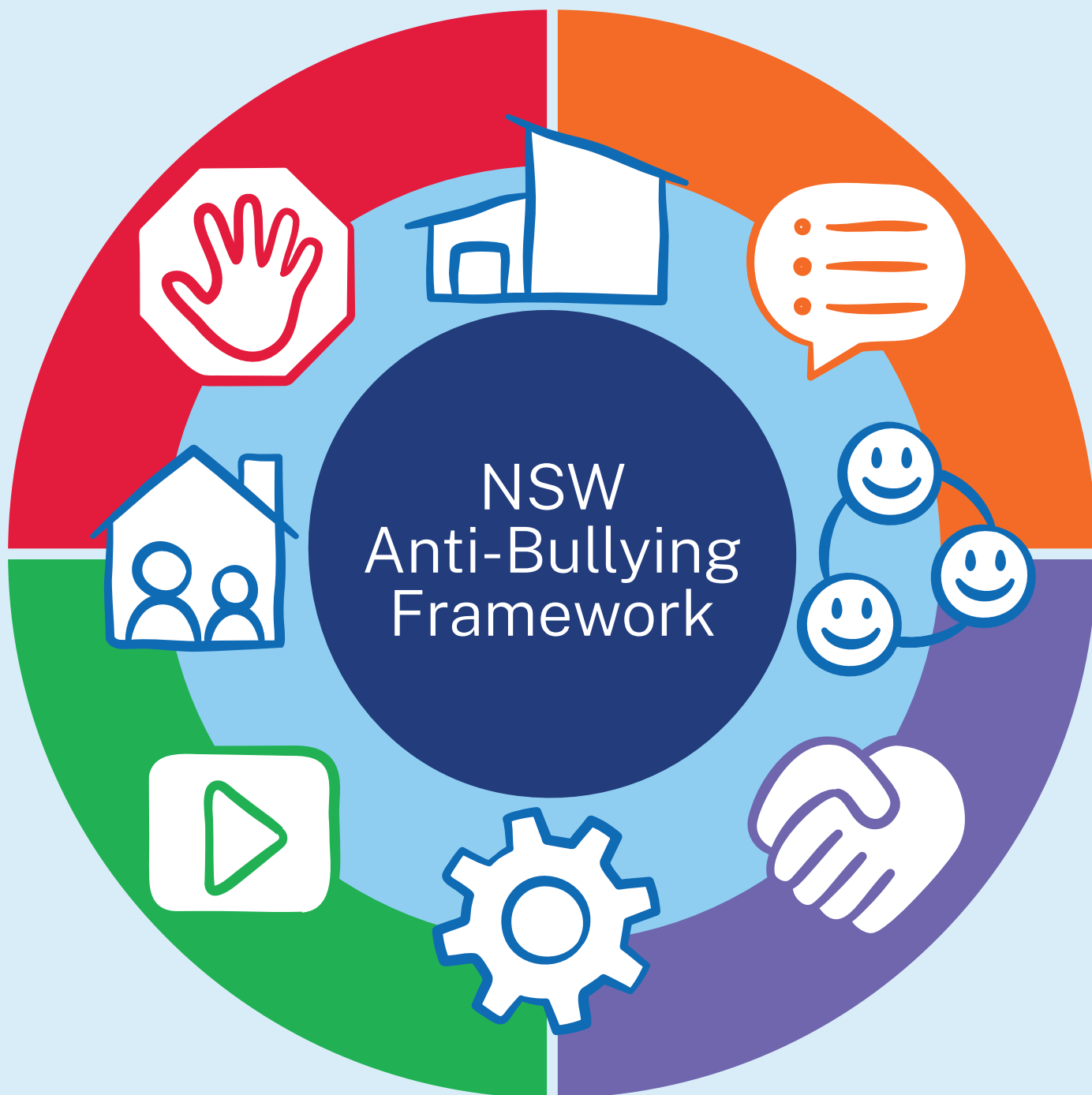
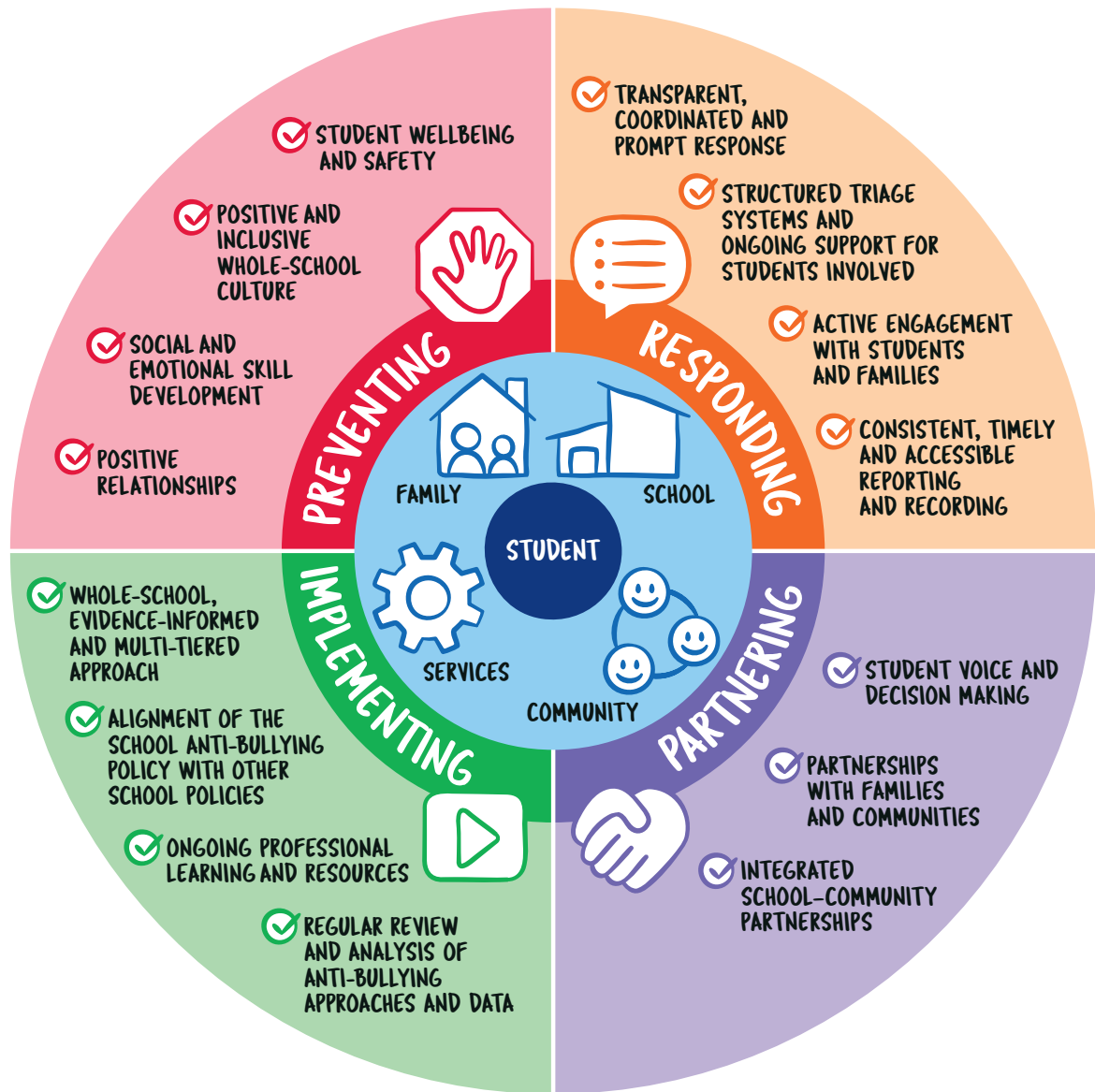




Promoting children's and adolescents' wellbeing and preventing and addressing bullying in NSW schools



Preventing

Building a whole-school culture promoting positive relationships, inclusion, safety and kindness, creates school environments where every student feels valued, connected, and supported. When these values and social and emotional skills are consistently modelled and reinforced across the school, the school community is more likely to treat each other with respect, resolve conflicts peacefully, and contribute to an environment where bullying is less likely to occur or persist.



Responding

Responding effectively and reducing harm from bullying demands a whole-school approach where every incident is consistently reported, recorded and responded to with urgency and care. When school staff effectively manage bullying incidents and support students who experience bullying in a coordinated and timely way, it builds trust, ensures accountability, and helps prevent further harm.



Partnering

Active partnerships with the school sector, within the school and with families and community services that build a strong network of support around students, are essential to reducing the harm caused by bullying. When the education sector and whole-school community work together in a coordinated and caring way, students feel safer, more connected, and confident that bullying will be taken seriously and addressed effectively.



Implementing

Effective implementation of whole-school, evidence-informed multi-tiered systems of support provides a coordinated, consistent approach to preventing and responding to bullying across all levels of the school community. When supported by aligned policies, ongoing teacher professional learning, and regular monitoring, these systems create safer environments where student wellbeing is actively protected, and harm is significantly reduced.

NSW Anti-Bullying Framework

Further information regarding the NSW Anti-Bullying Framework can be found at:
nsw.gov.au/education-and-training/nesa/school-regulation/nsw-anti-bullying-framework



The NSW Anti-Bullying Framework (the Framework) comprises four evidence-based components that underpin a successful whole-school approach to addressing bullying. The Framework reflects a shared commitment from the NSW school sectors to support schools to strengthen the prevention, identification of and responses to student bullying, including cyberbullying.

Components

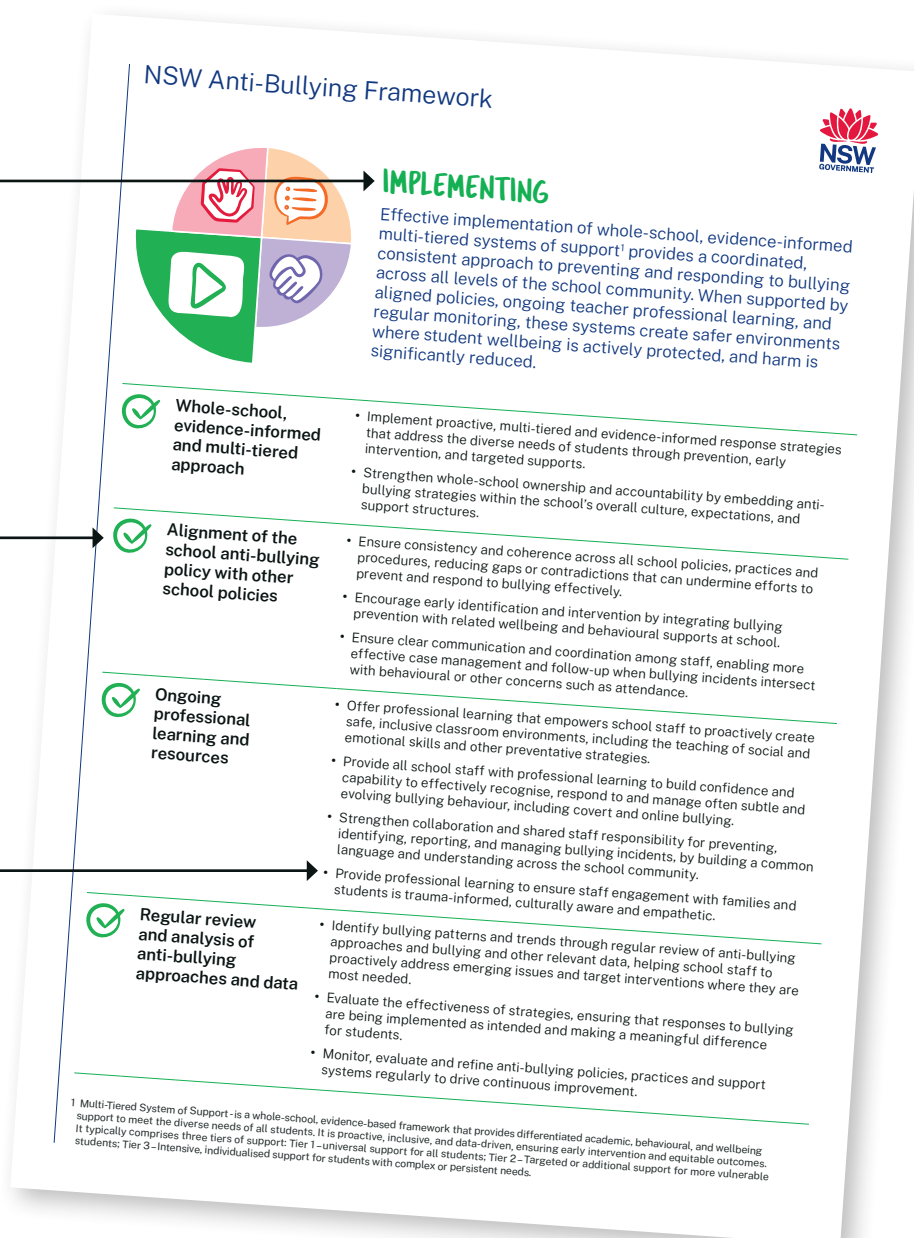
The four components present the key elements of an effective whole-school anti-bullying approach. Together, the four components represent a best-practice and evidence-informed approach to preventing and addressing student bullying in schools.

Sub-components

Each of the components comprises several sub-components. The 15 sub-components identify aspects to consider when implementing the component to effectively address bullying in schools.

Elaborations

Elaborations expand on each of the sub-components. They are designed to guide school staff in reviewing and, where appropriate, suggesting ways to build on existing anti-bullying policies and processes to ensure each component is thoroughly addressed.



What is bullying?

The following definition distinguishes bullying from other forms of aggressive or unkind behaviour.

Bullying behaviour is typically:

- ongoing and deliberate
- a misuse of power in relationships
- repeated covert/overt verbal, physical and/or social
- online and/or offline
- individual or group-based
- intended to cause physical, social and/or psychological harm
- difficult for the target to stop it from happening to them
- a violation of the right to dignity, safety, and education.



PREVENTING

Building a whole-school culture promoting positive relationships, inclusion, and safety, creates school environments where every student feels valued, connected, and supported. When these values and social and emotional skills are consistently modelled and reinforced across the school, the school community is more likely to treat each other with respect, resolve conflicts peacefully, and contribute to an environment where bullying is less likely to occur or persist.



Student wellbeing and safety

- Actively encourage respectful behaviour and by setting and reinforcing clear behavioural expectations, and modelling positive relationships.
- Ensure students feel safe, allowing them to focus on learning and building healthy relationships rather than worrying about potential harm.



Positive and inclusive whole-school culture

- Build a strong sense of belonging for students by helping them to be kind, inclusive and empathetic with each other, so they feel less isolated or targeted and more likely to support one another.
- Ensure that policies, teaching practices and physical environments are inclusive, signalling that every student is valued and diversity is celebrated.
- Foster trust and maintain regular open communication with the whole school community, so students and families feel confident any concerns they raise will be heard and taken seriously.



Social and emotional skill development

- Explicitly teach and model appropriate social and emotional skills to all students, including developing respectful relationships, regulating emotions, treating others with kindness, recognising emotions in others, and handling interpersonal conflict.
- Support students to manage negative emotions and resolve conflicts peacefully, reducing the likelihood of aggressive or bullying behaviour.
- Support students to strengthen their skills in communication and seeking help, encouraging students to speak up, support others, and seek assistance when bullying occurs.



Positive relationships

- Build strong, safe, and mutually respectful relationships between school staff and students to recognise early signs of student distress or conflict.
- Create a connected school community that enables inclusive peer interactions and encourages students to stand up for one another.



RESPONDING

Responding effectively and reducing harm from bullying demands a whole-school approach where every incident is consistently reported, recorded and responded to with urgency and care. When school staff effectively manage bullying incidents and support students who experience bullying in a coordinated and timely way, it builds trust, ensures accountability, and helps prevent further harm.



Transparent, coordinated and prompt response

- Respond to bullying in a transparent, fair, and consistent manner, using appropriate privacy and safety procedures to build trust and accountability and show students and families that bullying incidents are taken seriously.
- Include explicit, proportionate consequences for perpetration of bullying in school policies and procedures.
- Ensure timely, coordinated, non-stigmatising and trauma-informed responses to:
 - help targeted students to feel safe and supported immediately after a bullying incident and during follow-up, to prevent further harm.
 - help students who engage in bullying to understand the impact of their behaviour, learn alternative ways to behave and be accountable for their actions.
- Implement effective follow-up and care protocols, ensuring that students involved in bullying incidents receive the emotional, social, and practical support they need to stop the bullying and feel safe.



Structured triage systems and ongoing support for students involved

- Use triage systems to ensure every incident is assessed appropriately, enabling staff to prevent further harm by responding in trauma-informed ways to the severity and urgency of the situation.
- Provide personalised care to students to ensure that all students involved receive appropriate support and follow-up including counselling, relationship support, and monitoring for their safety and recovery.
- Make reasonable efforts in a timely manner (typically within two school days of becoming aware of an incident) to ensure affected students are being supported, in line with the school's published policy and procedures.
- Respond to students who bully by addressing the underlying motivation of their bullying (such as seeking control, attention, or coping with personal challenges), to promote behaviour change



Active engagement with students and families

- Actively encourage students and families to report bullying and seek help early, reinforcing trust, open communication and shared responsibility for responding to bullying.
- Engage with students and families to tailor support to individual contexts, allowing school staff to respond more effectively and compassionately to each student's experience.



Consistent, timely and accessible reporting and recording

- Consistently record and retain accurate documentation to maintain transparent processes, help track patterns, monitor progress, and inform effective interventions.
- Encourage evidence-informed decision making, by collecting and analysing bullying incident data to understand patterns and evaluate the effectiveness of actions taken.



PARTNERING

Active partnerships with the school sector or networks, within the school and with families and community services that build a strong network of support around students, are essential to reducing the harm caused by bullying. When the education sector and whole-school community work together in a coordinated and caring way, students feel safer, more connected, and confident that bullying will be taken seriously and addressed effectively.



Student voice and decision making

- Strengthen students' sense of belonging and inclusion by helping them feel listened to, valued, and connected to their school community.
- Enable students to contribute to actions to preventing and responding to bullying.
- Ensure that approaches to address bullying reflect real student experiences, so that actions taken to prevent and reduce student harm from bullying are trusted, relevant, and impactful.



Partnerships with families and communities

- Partner with families and local communities to strengthen trust and understand diverse perspectives and experiences, ensuring that bullying prevention and response strategies are culturally safe, responsive and inclusive.
- Extend the reach of anti-bullying efforts beyond the school, reinforcing respectful relationships, behaviours and values.



Integrated school-community partnerships

- Facilitate coordinated care across community settings, ensuring students receive appropriate and holistic care, especially for students whose needs exceed what can reasonably be provided by the school.
- Partner with community agencies to provide specialised community services, expertise and resources, to more comprehensively protect vulnerable students and respond to students affected by bullying.
- Partner with family and community agencies to strengthen early intervention and recovery in complex cases and reduce the long-term impact of bullying on students' physical, mental and social wellbeing.



IMPLEMENTING

Effective implementation of whole-school, evidence-informed multi-tiered systems of support¹ provides a coordinated, consistent approach to preventing and responding to bullying across all levels of the school community. When supported by aligned policies, ongoing teacher professional learning, and regular monitoring, these systems create safer environments where student wellbeing is actively protected, and harm is significantly reduced.



Whole-school, evidence-informed and multi-tiered approach

- Implement proactive, multi-tiered and evidence-informed response strategies that address the diverse needs of students through prevention, early intervention, and targeted supports.
- Strengthen whole-school ownership and accountability by embedding anti-bullying strategies within the school's overall culture, expectations, and support structures.



Alignment of the school anti-bullying policy with other school policies

- Ensure consistency and coherence across all school policies, practices and procedures, reducing gaps or contradictions that can undermine efforts to prevent and respond to bullying effectively.
- Encourage early identification and intervention by integrating bullying prevention with related wellbeing and behavioural supports at school.
- Ensure clear communication and coordination among staff, enabling more effective case management and follow-up when bullying incidents intersect with behavioural or other concerns such as attendance.



Ongoing professional learning and resources

- Offer professional learning that empowers school staff to proactively create safe, inclusive classroom environments, including the teaching of social and emotional skills and other preventative strategies.
- Provide all school staff with professional learning to build confidence and capability to effectively recognise, respond to and manage often subtle and evolving bullying behaviour, including covert and online bullying.
- Strengthen collaboration and shared staff responsibility for preventing, identifying, reporting, and managing bullying incidents, by building a common language and understanding across the school community.
- Provide professional learning to ensure staff engagement with families and students is trauma-informed, culturally aware and empathetic.



Regular review and analysis of anti-bullying approaches and data

- Identify bullying patterns and trends through regular review of anti-bullying approaches and bullying and other relevant data, helping school staff to proactively address emerging issues and target interventions where they are most needed.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of strategies, ensuring that responses to bullying are being implemented as intended and making a meaningful difference for students.
- Monitor, evaluate and refine anti-bullying policies, practices and support systems regularly to drive continuous improvement.

¹ Multi-Tiered System of Support - is a whole-school, evidence-based framework that provides differentiated academic, behavioural, and wellbeing support to meet the diverse needs of all students. It is proactive, inclusive, and data-driven, ensuring early intervention and equitable outcomes. It typically comprises three tiers of support: Tier 1 – universal support for all students; Tier 2 – Targeted or additional support for more vulnerable students; Tier 3 – Intensive, individualised support for students with complex or persistent needs.