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Chapter 1

Building Capacity

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Evidence for building capacity

Building capacity

Schools that assess and improve capacity support, to implement strategies to improve student wellbeing and reduce bullying, help to ensure the actions are effective, sustainable and system-wide. Sufficient leadership, organisational support, resources, staff professional learning and strategy compatibility with school needs are crucial to optimise impact.

The success of any reform, whether it is a new literacy or pastoral care strategy, is dependent not only on the strategies or practices but how well they are implemented. Even if the practices are evidence-based and found to be effective, it is not sufficient to ensure positive outcomes for students in every school. The ‘what’ (program activities) plus strategies that support ‘how’ these activities will be implemented increases the chance of positive and sustainable outcomes for students.\(^\text{[128]}\)
For educators, the math is simple: Effective Intervention (the ‘What’) × Effective Implementation (the ‘How’) = Positive Outcomes for Students

Because schools are complex systems, positive change to support effective implementation of a program usually requires a whole-school approach that is delivered in sufficient quantity to students, staff and parents. A leading expert on educational change, Michael Fullan, states the three basics of school priority and educational change should be numeracy, literacy and wellbeing. While it is well known that healthy students learn better, student wellbeing is seldom given the same priority as other educational areas. When schools take on programs such as Friendly Schools Plus, they are not only achieving objectives that aim to enhance student wellbeing but also student learning for numeracy and literacy. Whereas classroom learning activities specifically target student social and emotional skills which in turn reduce student bullying behaviours, whole-school prevention strategies usually involve broad activities that enhance wellbeing, safety, pastoral care and build a supportive school culture. Secondly, Fullan states that successful educational change is based on the improvements of relationships. Bullying is a relationship issue and ways to reduce these behaviours are through improving relationships and social skills, creating a positive culture of support and respect and engaging students, staff and parents so they are connected to their school as a community. Building positive relationships between students, between staff and students, and between staff members is crucial not only in achieving change that is supported by everyone, but a school culture that is positive, inclusive and does not tolerate bullying behaviours.

Lastly, Fullan argues that the way to successfully engage and motivate the school community to participate in change is through capacity building. Fullan describes capacity building as a powerful, actionable concept that includes a ‘policy, strategy, or action taken that increases the collective efficacy of a group to improve student learning through new knowledge, enhanced resources, and greater motivation on the part of the people working individually and together’. He suggests that the balance between assessment and capacity building has not been achieved, indicating too much emphasis has been placed on standards and assessments and less on action in real contexts. While schools are aware of the need to adopt evidence-based practices that prevent and manage bullying, many are faced with insufficient capacity in terms of resources, teacher training and systematic support, to ensure they are implemented successfully. Even when a school chooses an evidence-based program like Friendly Schools Plus, they are often not implemented with sufficient fidelity to ensure success and furthermore, not sufficiently sustained to positively influence student and parent outcomes. Hence recommendations to improve the effectiveness of bullying interventions in schools are largely focused on implementation and sustainability issues.

As discussed in the introduction to this book, the Friendly Schools research project demonstrated promising results in terms of reducing student bullying behaviours. Process evaluation, however, showed that the intervention was under-implemented with only 30 per cent of the recommended whole-school activities implemented, 67 per cent of the curriculum activities and less than a third of parents completing home activities. Further, a review of the policy implementation process indicated that many schools found it was difficult to fast track their policy review/development and move next to its implementation and promotion. Lack of time, energy and capacity support for school staff was noted as a major barrier to the schools’ ability to implement the intervention effectively. The subsequent Friendly Schools and Families research project, similar to the Friendly Schools project, aimed to reduce student bullying behaviours but
unlike the Friendly Schools project it provided schools with mechanisms to build sufficient implementation capacity to increase program effectiveness and promote sustainability.\textsuperscript{[142]} Findings from the Friendly Schools, Friendly Families study showed that over time schools that focus on capacity building strategies as part of overall program delivery, demonstrate improved implementation outcomes. In the study, those schools that received high capacity support demonstrated higher whole-school implementation capacity, higher program implementation levels and higher levels of parent engagement, a primary outcome of this study, compared to schools receiving no capacity support.\textsuperscript{[143]} Parent engagement with the school was significantly higher in those schools that implemented, over a three-year period, a whole-school intervention that included specific strategies that assessed and built their capacity to engage parents.

Whether it is practices that aim to reduce student bullying or practices that aim to increase student numeracy skills, it is important to understand the process of implementing change across the school. Implementation is defined as 'a specified set of activities designed to put into practice an activity or program of known dimensions'.\textsuperscript{[144]} The known dimensions of a bullying program may be new curriculum, new policy or changes to classroom management. Activities that aim to build the capacity of staff to implement these activities might be professional learning for staff, additional resources such as time for staff to plan for the new activities, and assessment of how compatible the new practices are working within existing structures.

There are many factors that can influence the effectiveness of the implementation process, in fact over 300 variables have been identified.\textsuperscript{[145]} Alongside the implementation process itself there are another four domains described by Damschroder et al. (2009)\textsuperscript{[146]} which play an influential role the implementation of a program.

• **Intervention characteristics**

  Intervention source, evidence of strength and quality, relative advantage over what was done before, adaptability, trialability, complexity, design, quality, and packaging and cost of the intervention.

• **Outer setting**

  Extent to which school needs, as well as the barriers and facilitators in meeting those needs, are known and prioritised within the school, degree to which school is networked to external organisations, competitive pressure to implement an intervention and external policies and incentives.

• **Inner setting**

  Structural characteristics such as size, maturity and social architecture of a school, quality of formal and informal communications within the school, school culture, norms and values, and implementation climate such as the shared receptivity of involved individuals to an intervention.

• **Characteristics of individuals involved**

  Knowledge and beliefs about the intervention, self-efficacy to believe they can execute the course of action to achieve implementation goals, individual stage of change in progressing skills and use of the intervention, individual identification and commitment to their school, and other personal attributes such as values, motivation, capacity and competence.
School interventions that aim to reduce bullying behaviours require not only successful implementation to be effective, but also sufficient capacity to enable this implementation. To build school capacity to implement bullying prevention programs the following elements are considered key:

- a committed and engaged principal and leadership team
- key staff and students who act as 'knowledge brokers'
- allocated resources such as staff time and evidence-based tools
- system support in terms of policies, procedures and structures
- regular staff professional learning
- compatibility with school community needs
- collaborative partnerships with parents, agencies and wider community

![Figure 3: Building school implementation capacity](image)

**Planning for system support and resources**

When describing the Norwegian school campaigns against bullying behaviour, Midthassel and Roland state the real challenge is not designing an intervention based on research and producing useable resources, but instead determining how the intervention interacts with the school system and teachers as the implementers. They highlight the importance of each school's unique context and system such as its priorities, planning and structures and school community involvement. As with individual or community capacity building, capacity building in schools to improve the implementation of programs to reduce bullying behaviours must consider the context in which they are being implemented and how this can affect program outcomes.

1. Chapter 4, Key Understandings and Competencies and Chapter 6, School-Family-Community Partnerships also discuss strategies for staff professional learning and partnering with families and communities to reduce bullying behaviour.
A meta-analysis on the effects of intervention programs on aggressive behaviours found poorly implemented programs produced smaller effects. In particular, programs that were implemented by teachers and were relatively intense were more effective. In a review of promising programs to reduce violence in schools, effective and ineffective program components were identified. Adding a violence prevention program to an already overloaded school system where it is not a priority was ineffective. In addition, insufficient organisational and staff capacity to implement strategies presented additional stress for school staff and reduced their motivation and commitment to the intervention. In his assessment of the relationship between program outcomes and factors that determine success, Smith noted two important criteria, although acknowledged that no ‘magic’ ingredient has been found to date. Firstly, the extent to which the school took ownership of the intervention and pushed it forward across the whole-school community; and secondly, the length of the study to allow initial strategies to be maintained to address the ongoing nature of bullying. Program duration and intensity for students and teachers is one of the main factors associated with a significant decrease in rates of bullying others and being bullied.

**Actions for building capacity**

**Committed and engaged leadership**

To increase staff commitment to implement a new reform, strong leadership and a coordinating team of staff is often necessary. A principal who is actively engaged and places a high priority on pastoral care and reducing bullying is more likely to increase the commitment of the staff to the new initiative and increase the quality of implementation and intervention adherence. Teachers’ confidence to address bullying issues is highly dependent upon the demonstrated level of practical support from the principal. The school team needs to include representatives from across the school community. It is important the roles of students, teachers, administration staff, parents and community members in the change process are recognised and consulted if not represented on this team. The school team acts as ‘knowledge brokers’ whose responsibility lies in communicating knowledge throughout the school community and facilitating change in a coordinated way.

When responding to bullying incidents an additional structure to the ‘implementation team’ may be necessary, such as a team involving teachers who know the students, the school nurse and school counsellors. This additional structure may be more effective than relying only on the classroom teacher to liaise and provide support to parents. Redefining roles means that practical ways to intervene when there is an issue is more likely and the school’s prevention and response to bullying behaviour is standardised. This team can also identify relevant research findings, at-risk students, liaise between school and parents and progress policy and procedures necessary to decrease bullying.
**Strategies for good practice: Committed and engaged leadership**

1. The principal and the leadership team communicate to the whole-school community, a clear vision for increasing social skills and reducing bullying as a priority commitment.

2. The principal and the leadership team are actively engaged in leading school action to reduce bullying.

3. The principal and the leadership team enable and encourage all members of the whole-school community (staff, students, families) to actively participate in planning and decision-making about school action to reduce bullying through regular, planned monitoring and feedback.

4. The principal and the leadership team develop and promote an effective and clear whole-school policy outlining strategies, structures and systems to reduce bullying.

5. Key staff interested in pastoral care, led by a coordinator, take responsibility for helping other staff to implement school strategies to reduce bullying.

6. The principal and the leadership team engage the support of wider systems to provide leadership, mentoring and support to the school in their actions to reduce bullying.

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1. **The principal and the leadership team communicate to the whole-school community a clear vision for increasing social skills and reducing bullying as a priority commitment**

As with any priority integrated into a school system, its success is directly related to the clear commitment and support demonstrated by the principal and the leadership team. This includes creating a vision for a safe and supportive school environment that encourages social behaviour that does not accept bullying behaviours. To achieve this outcome the school vision needs to be developed collaboratively with students, staff and parents in a way that provides a common understanding of what behavioural expectations are within the school community and what is not acceptable behaviour. This vision must be clearly and consistently communicated by the principal and the leadership team through a number of mediums such as the school website/portal, newsletters (see **Supportive School Culture Toolkit 2.1** for examples), assemblies (see **Supportive School Culture Toolkit 2.2** for examples), staff meetings and school planning processes (see Chapter 3, **Proactive Policies and Practices** for more information) to ensure this vision and values are recognised as a priority in the school.

2. **The principal and the leadership team are actively engaged in leading school action to reduce bullying**

The principal’s and the leadership team’s involvement is pivotal to the success of the policy development and implementation process and in particular, implementation of whole-school activities. School leaders who are proactive in the development and promotion of the whole-school policy outlining strategies, structures and systems for the prevention and response to bullying provide a whole-school perspective necessary to ensure effective implementation across the school community. Seeing leaders in the school ‘walk-the-talk’ demonstrates to the school community that the principal and the leadership team are highly committed to making the school a safer and more supportive environment for students.
The principal and the leadership team enable and encourage all members of the whole-school community (staff, students, families) to actively participate in planning and decision-making about school action to reduce bullying through regular, planned monitoring and feedback.

As well as being involved in the policy development process, staff, students and families need to be given the opportunity to provide feedback about its implementation and ideas for improvement. Consultation with whole-school community members ensures fairness of participation and embraces the principles of equal opportunity and social justice. To encourage and facilitate this level of participation in school planning and decision-making, clear mechanisms are required. Surveys, for example with students and staff, can inform how, where and what types of bullying incidents may be occurring in the school. *Key Understandings and Competencies Toolkit 4.2* provides information about whole-school surveys related to bullying behaviour and the schools’ strategies to prevent and reduce this behaviour. Surveys can also provide feedback on the effectiveness of current strategies and suggestions for change. Additionally, a student suggestion box and allocated time at staff meetings can be used to obtain feedback and monitor actions being implemented in the school.

### 4 The principal and the leadership team develop and promote an effective and clear whole-school policy to reduce bullying

A policy that addresses bullying is crucial to providing the school with a framework for action. It clearly identifies how the school feels about bullying behaviours and student wellbeing, and outlines strategies, structures and systems for reducing these behaviours and increasing student support. It is important that the principal and leadership team invest in a process that ensures the policy is implemented well. This may involve training key staff with the skills and knowledge required for policy development and implementation, and allocating time for staff to collect information to determine school needs. Commitment by the principal and the leadership team at this stage can determine how well the staff receive and implement the policy.

### 5 Key staff interested in promoting pastoral care, led by a coordinator, take responsibility for helping other staff to implement school strategies to reduce bullying

In addition to the school principal and leadership team demonstrating their support, a school team that involves other key pastoral care staff and champions is crucial. These staff act as knowledge brokers to establish common understandings within the school community of what bullying is and the agreed actions to address this issue in the school. See Chapter 4, *Key Understandings and Competencies* for more detailed information about key understandings relating to social skill development and bullying prevention. Success is more likely when this team has a coordinator to provide leadership and facilitate consistent action. The coordinator is most effective when given formal recognition of and specific time to work in this role. The team typically comprises teacher representatives from across the year levels, at least one administrator (principal or deputy principal), parent representatives whose children represent different year levels, and other key members from pastoral care and student services. Some schools involved in *Friendly Schools, Friendly Families* research reported they found it easier to have a smaller core team that met regularly, supplemented by advisers who were called upon when required (for example, parent groups, student services team, school psychologist, school nurse) as well as a student reference committee.
The school team is most successful when it is: [159]

- provided with information to establish common and consistent understandings about bullying
- provided with background information about their school and students’ needs
- provided with information about the content and process of developing/reviewing, implementing and promoting the policy
- committed to the safety and wellbeing of students, staff and parents, and acts on behalf of the whole-school community.

**Actions for the school team:**

- Identify the team coordinator.
- Define the structure and roles of the team.
- Hold informal discussions with key staff (e.g. administrators, teachers, support staff) to establish interest and support.
- Provide potential members with the key information they need to make an informed decision about their participation and role on the team.
- Establish the team and give it a title and focus, for example, ‘Pastoral Care’, ‘Student Wellbeing’ or ‘Safe and Supportive’ team.
- Identify the skills and knowledge required by the team to establish common and consistent understandings about social skill development and bullying behaviours.
- Introduce the team to the whole staff and define its role, which may include:
  - working with the school community to establish common understandings and consistent school responses to incidents of bullying
  - facilitating the development/review of the policies that promote positive social relations and safe and supportive learning environments for all members of the school community
  - reflecting upon and reviewing school actions to reduce bullying.

**6 The principal and the leadership team engage the support of the wider system to provide leadership, mentoring and support to the school in their actions to reduce bullying**

Creating a safe and supportive school environment that does not accept bullying behaviours requires support from wider systems such as regional and State based education supports, health and community sectors. School leaders that seek supporting policies, professional learning opportunities and mentors, will empower their staff and students to initiate and take responsibility for safe school initiatives as they feel supported and see the need for their efforts. Presenting the school’s policy within current State or national policy, for example the National Safe Schools Framework in Australia, gives it relevance and justification for its importance. Identifying external supports, for instance professional learning provided by local education authorities and mentors within external agencies such as psychology services or from other schools, can encourage staff to try new ideas and build confidence to overcome sustainability issues.
Planning for system support and resources

School processes, such as providing adequate time for the team coordinator to plan and provide leadership, adequate planning time for team staff, accessible intervention materials to all staff, intervention plans that are incorporated into school planning processes, adequate training support for schools, technical assistance and coaching and quality monitoring, feedback and communication channels between team members, are highlighted as important in facilitating successful program implementation. Facilitation processes within schools such as these have shown to predict the quantity of school implementation activity.

The provision of adequate resources, including materials, staffing, facilities, funding, daily planning time, training and longer time frames to trial the strategies in the school, were linked to successful program outcomes where greater efforts were achieved when sufficient resources were available. A study conducted with school principals identified that having adequate resources was directly linked to successful program outcomes where the program ‘dose’ was completely determined by sufficiency of resources. One of the key resource barriers identified by staff in the Friendly Schools, Friendly Families research was the competing demands on teacher time. Insufficient time for the school team to plan, teaching staff to teach and school leaders to facilitate a whole-school approach meant actions were being implemented in small doses.

The following are some strategies suggested by schools to help address this issue:

- A Friendly Schools’ notice board was placed in the staff room for team members to communicate with each other and the whole-school staff, and for staff to provide feedback on policy issues.
- Activities were monitored through teacher logs and in-staff performance management plans to formally acknowledge their work and the time allocated to working on the implementation process.
- Teaching staff were given a half day relief from teaching for training and planning time to program the recommended learning activities into their classes.
- The policy was integrated with other priority programs in the school with similar goals to make planning and implementation easier. The policy implementation was then less likely to be seen by staff as another thing to ‘do’.

Strategies for good practice: Planning for system and resource support

1. School actions to reduce bullying and resources identified to implement them are integrated into school strategic planning.
2. Strategies to reduce bullying are integrated into existing structures, programs, partnerships and accountability processes where possible.
3. Adequate time to plan, implement and sustain school action to reduce bullying is allowed (three to five years to initiate, five to seven years to sustain).
4. Adequate numbers of staff are part of the pastoral care/student wellbeing team to ensure the workload is shared and the impact on staff is minimised.
5. The team and the coordinator have adequate time to meet regularly, plan and facilitate school action.
6. The principal and leadership team ensure teaching staff have allocated time in the curriculum to develop students’ key student understandings and competencies to encourage positive social behaviour.
School actions to reduce bullying and resources identified to implement them are integrated into school strategic planning

Strategies to prevent and respond to bullying and build positive relationships must be included in school behaviour management planning and priority processes. Identification of current education state and system level polices and guidelines that are consistent with the schools' proposed objectives, can help to justify and support this issue as a high priority. Planning for the provision of funding to support implementation of these school activities is also essential to enable them to proceed. Identification of the potential funds and additional resources required for each stage of policy development and implementation and subsequent strategies was important in turning the school vision into practice for those schools involved in CHPRC research. Staff time to facilitate change in promoting a positive school culture was listed by schools involved in CHPRC research as the most important resource support. If financial resources are required then processes to evaluate the impact of this expenditure would also be necessary.

Strategies to reduce bullying are integrated into existing structures, programs, partnerships and accountability processes where possible

When a new strategy or initiative is proposed in a school, the benefit of integrating its activities within existing structures and priorities is clear. Pooling of resources and staff time to achieve similar objectives can mean less time and energy by staff is needed and the likelihood of sustainability increased. Many schools involved in CHPRC research had existing committees who were responsible for student health and wellbeing, pastoral care, or values education within the school. Using these teams to also include bullying prevention and management strategies as part of their role meant they were ready to implement change much faster with partnerships with key staff and outside agencies and accountability processes already in place. School leaders can review their school development plan to assess current priorities and possible links between the bullying prevention and management and other relevant policies (for example, behaviour management policy, social justice and equity policy, mobile phone and technology policy, excursion policy) to evaluate opportunities of best fit.

Adequate time to plan, implement and sustain school action to reduce bullying is allowed (three to five years to initiate, five to seven years to sustain)

The benefits of the bullying prevention and management policy and its implementation depend largely upon the stage at which the school started. Previous CHPRC research suggests that at least three years is a realistic timeline to see positive change. Feedback from these schools suggests that the first year is mostly spent in reviewing and developing the policy with some planning while the second and third year tends to focus on the implementation and promotion of the policy. The following years are focused on sustaining the strategies, monitoring and adjusting the policy according to the success or otherwise of the strategies and response from the school community. In subsequent years the policy should not need the intensive time required at the start of the process, however, a review of social skill building and bullying prevention and response strategies within the school needs to be carried out at the start of each year. After five years it is thought that the new strategy is sufficiently diffused into the school organisation and can take up to seven years to be sustained to a point where the impact on student outcomes is realised. Small objectives and steps that are set yearly will ensure that successes are celebrated along the way and that it is a manageable process for schools to build on over time.
Adequate number of staff are part of the pastoral care/student wellbeing team to ensure the workload is shared and the impact on staff is minimised.

As the effectiveness of a program is related to the length of time it is implemented in the school, strategies that address shared staff workload and turnover are important. Ensuring the team has representatives across the school community by positions or roles can help to select new staff to replace those who leave. For example, having head/coordinator of year group positions connected to the team means that all year groups are represented and staff in these positions are automatically nominated. It also creates an opportunity for staff who may not initially be interested in the team's objectives, such as improving pastoral care practices, to be engaged by being part of the process. Once positions are designated to the team, responsibilities and activities should be discussed and shared between the members to prevent burden on a small number of staff. Where possible, these responsibilities need to be written into staff performance management plans so that this work is recognised and rewarded, expectations are clear and potential support needs are identified. It is useful to have an induction and mentoring process for new staff who may be interested in taking up positions on the team in the future.

The team and the coordinator have adequate time to meet regularly, plan and facilitate school action.

A key part of successful implementation is having a team that functions effectively and is adequately resourced. Adequate planning time allocated to the coordinator and team members to meet and facilitate the school action plan was one of the main reasons CHPRC research schools stated as a barrier to implementation success. This was particularly necessary at the initial planning and policy development stages in the exploring and engaging parts of the implementation process. The coordinator requires additional time to provide leadership and support to other team members with a half day per week (0.1 FTE) recommended by these schools as sufficient time. First tasks for the team would be to prepare a timeline of action for the policy development and its implementation so it is clear what invested time is required, and when tasks would need to be completed. While set times for the team to meet regularly are essential, identifying numerous channels of communication between team members means that actions can be moving along without needing to meet face-to-face as often. For example, school IT communications such as emails are an obvious way to facilitate discussions allowing face-to-face meetings to be reserved for decision-making. In addition to team meetings, mechanisms for regular monitoring and feedback from all staff to the team are important. CHPRC research schools used staff room notice boards to post and keep other staff informed and had a feedback box for staff to add suggestions for how things were working. A brief time slot in staff meetings was allocated to the initiative for staff to provide feedback.
The principal and leadership team ensure teaching staff have allocated time in the curriculum to develop students' key understandings and competencies to encourage positive social behaviour.

Developing a school culture that is supportive and does not tolerate bullying requires common understandings about bullying behaviours to be clearly communicated to the whole-school community. Plans to increase student competencies to put these understandings into practice is then essential to support the school's vision and culture. Lessons that build student social skills, positive bystander actions and skills such as how to stop and report bullying behaviours are key to reducing bullying prevalence. Curriculum time dedicated to these understandings and competencies is the primary way to achieve this, however, competing demands in the curriculum timetable is a challenge for most schools. Students need a minimum of five hours formal classroom teaching per year (one hour per focus area). If a school is serious about making a difference then dedicated teaching time allocated by school management remains critical.

**Ensuring compatibility with school community needs**

A school initiative is more likely to succeed if it is perceived by staff to be simple and easy to implement, is better than what they were doing before, and is compatible with school priorities, student needs and school ethos. Schools should conduct an assessment of their capacity to implement strategies to reduce and manage bullying and develop additional strategies that build structures, processes and skills across the whole-school community. The Bridge-It Model suggests implementation success is more likely when school staff are prepared for their role, committed, skilled and experienced, willing, have compatible job expectations and belief in the relative advantage of the innovation over current practice. The presence of a policy that addresses health education and promotion leads to higher perceptions from school staff that health is important within their school environment and this in turn leads to a higher commitment to student health. However, support for staff is needed to practice and enforce the policy. Training for staff is an important factor in achieving long-term sustainability or institutionalisation of school-based programs.

**Strategies for good practice:**
**Ensuring compatibility with school and community**

1. Assessment of the school's capacity for implementing actions to reduce bullying is conducted to identify strengths, barriers and new opportunities.
2. Pre-existing capacities and successful practices within the school to reduce bullying are valued and promoted to encourage a sense of collective self-efficacy in the school community.
3. Surveys of staff, students and families are conducted regularly to evaluate and inform school action to reduce bullying.
4. Strategies chosen to reduce bullying are easy for the whole-school community to implement.
5. Any 'disruptions' occurring inside and outside the school environment that will influence the success of school actions to reduce bullying are acknowledged and ways to overcome these are discussed.
Assessment of the school’s capacity for implementing actions to reduce bullying is conducted to identify strengths, barriers and new opportunities

Research in schooling and capacity building suggests that each school’s context and capacities are unique and, therefore, no blueprint for action can be proposed for all schools. In addition, defining what capacities need be strengthened requires a specific program or strategy in mind. Once results from the student, staff and parent surveys create a picture of what is happening in the school and strategies are chosen to target areas of need, a capacity assessment can help to identify areas requiring capacity development. Key implementation drivers such as leadership support and structures, competencies and organisational supports are critical to review. Building Capacity Toolkit 1.3 includes a school capacity assessment (based on the Bridge-It Tool) that assesses eight factors identified as essential to achieve effective implementation. These include: facilitation processes; resources; school-based leadership; implementer characteristics; external environment; external leadership, program compatibility and program characteristics. Objectives for building staff capacity are necessary alongside of program objectives to ensure staff are well supported to implement the strategies that target students and parents. Strategies to build capacity may include prioritising the program in school planning documents, allocating resources such as staff time to plan or program strategies, increasing knowledge and competencies through staff professional learning, student curriculum and workshops for families, as well as leadership structures to mentor and provide support to other staff. A description of the curriculum materials that form part of this program is provided in Key Understandings and Competencies Toolkit 4.1. Capacity building is a long-term process which takes time to deliver change. It is vitally important for schools to realise that the school system will slip back into old patterns if the process of capacity building is not intentionally maintained and annual objectives set.

Pre-existing capacities and successful practices within the school to reduce bullying are valued and promoted to encourage a collective self-efficacy in the school community

Most schools are already implementing many activities to address school culture and student pastoral care that aim to improve student learning and reduce time spent on behaviour management. As well as surveys with the different groups in the school community, a review of past and current school practices is helpful to identify strategies that are working well and ones that have not worked well in the past. This may be a task for the school executive or selected key staff as part of discussions around the survey findings. Many CHPRC research schools were surprised by how many whole-school activities they were already implementing. Acknowledging this effort is important and provides a useful starting point to review these practices to determine their effectiveness relative to alternative and additional strategies. This review also allows opportunities for the new policy or program to be integrated into existing structures, partnerships and accountability processes so that efforts are not duplicated and limited resources are maximised. Acknowledgement at staff meetings, newsletters (see Supportive School Culture Toolkit 2.1 for examples), assemblies (see Supportive School Culture Toolkit 2.2 for examples), via the school website, parent nights or part of celebrations on a special day (such as ‘Harmony Day’; described in School-Family-Community Partnerships Toolkit 6.5) for example, can help to build the collective self-efficacy of the school community to believe they can make a difference.
Surveys of staff, students and families are conducted regularly to evaluate and inform school action to reduce bullying

Online or paper-based self-report surveys are a reliable way to determine the extent of an issue in the school and perceptions of staff, students and parents to inform school planning and enable targeting of resources. Key Understandings and Competencies Toolkit 4.2 provides an overview of the information that can be collected in whole-school surveys. An understanding of students’ bullying experiences in terms of prevalence, types of behaviours, location, duration and help with seeking and reporting outcomes for those students being bullied and those engaging in bullying, is important to identify specific areas of need. If the sample of students surveyed is large enough, differences between year level groups can also be detected and highlight which year groups may need extra support. Staff and parent surveys can determine their observations of bullying behaviours, perceptions of their knowledge and skills to deal with incidents and what is currently working within the school. Staff professional learning can then be tailored to meet identified needs such as specifically preventing and responding to cyberbullying behaviours. Surveys can also be used to evaluate the effectiveness of pastoral care systems, peer support and bystanders’ actions, school climate and student connectedness to their school and teachers, to determine protective or mediating factors against bullying behaviours and pointers for intervention. A review of the school bullying ethos, the perceptions of students, staff and families of school policy, practices and vision regarding bullying behaviours also provides a mechanism to evaluate if changes made within the school are making a difference. Ensuring the strategies implemented are compatible with school priorities, student needs, school ethos and school structure, and evidence that school community efforts are a significant improvement on what the school was previously doing, will increase the likelihood of program sustainability.

Strategies chosen to reduce bullying are easy for the whole-school community to implement

Once research can demonstrate the need for and severity of the issue within the school community, staff, as primary implementers, need to be convinced that the proposed strategies are the most effective way to address the issues identified. Achieving staff ‘buy-in’ is important and can be influenced by the perceived complexity and length of the intervention, staff perceptions of how it will fit with their current role, their perceptions that it will be better than what they were doing before, and their competency and understanding of the program’s underlying principles to fulfil their part in implementation. Interventions for CHPRC research schools were always presented as a more effective and easier way to achieve necessary student outcomes, while not adding to their already significant workloads. By streamlining ways the school prevents and responds to bullying incidents, staff time spent dealing with bullying issues should be reduced.

Any ‘disruptions’ occurring inside and outside the school environment that will influence the success of school actions to reduce bullying are acknowledged and ways to overcome these are discussed

As schools are busy places, there will always be disruptions occurring in the school environment that will affect how well a new initiative is implemented. CHPRC research schools found the process of identifying those disruptions occurring inside and outside the school was useful to help explain why some strategies may have not worked as well as expected. It is important to acknowledge that the strategy itself may be effective when implemented at another time or in different circumstances and can assist with future planning. CHPRC research schools noted that in identifying these potential disruptions, solutions were often found to overcome these obstacles which reduced their impact on school operations.
Summary

The development of positive social skills and the prevention of bullying behaviours is a whole-school issue. However, little change will occur unless staff, students and families have an understanding of what has happened previously in the school to reduce bullying, and how successful this has been. Based on this knowledge, school leaders can engage the whole-school community to set actions and assemble resources to achieve change. Establishing timelines and implementing activities needs committed leadership support, adequate resource planning and ensuring compatibility with school needs. Finally, evaluating school action is important not only to identify benefits relating to student behavioural outcomes, but also staff, student and family efficacy and perceptions of improvement over previous action.

Several toolkits included in this chapter and across this book will assist schools to build the capacity of their whole-school community to improve their ability to enhance student wellbeing and reduce bullying.

- **Building Capacity Toolkit 1.1** enables schools to conduct a quick assessment of areas in which they are already taking action, and areas in which further energy could be directed. This toolkit is available electronically for ease of completion.

- **Building Capacity Toolkit 1.2** This tool enables the collection of more detailed information about schools' progress and achievements. The Capacity Building section is included here as an example, and the whole tool is available electronically in the CD included with this book.
Toolkits for action

Building Capacity Toolkit 1.1
Map the Gap Screening Tool

Whole-School Indicators to improve students' social skills and reduce bullying

This online Screening Tool provides schools with a snapshot of their current activities to build positive social skills and reduce bullying and other forms of aggression among students. It will also help schools to map the gaps in their current policy and practices. Together these whole-school indicators provide a systematic overview of the most important evidence-based actions a school can take to improve the social and emotional health of its students.

Sample pages of the Map the Gap Online Screening Tool
### My Results

**Screening Result from: Helen Monks**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Activity Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Building Capacity for Support</td>
<td>Moderate Activity (2.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving School Culture</td>
<td>Moderate Activity (2.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoting Social and Emotional Health</td>
<td>Moderate Activity (2.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Communities Key Understandings and Competencies</td>
<td>Moderate Activity (2.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent-Associated Unions</td>
<td>Moderate Activity (2.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School-wide Cultural Values</td>
<td>Moderate Activity (2.0)</td>
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### Whole-school Component

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Activity Level</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative School-Family-Community Partnerships</td>
<td>Low Activity (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supportive School Culture</td>
<td>Moderate Activity (1.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proactive Policies, Procedures and Practices</td>
<td>Moderate Activity (1.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building Capacity for Action</td>
<td>Moderate Activity (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protective Physical Environment</td>
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### My School Report 2012

Your school report details the average of all staff responses for each of the six Whole-school Components. The key statement of evidence and the rated level of each activity by your school are presented in order from least activity to most activity. Three ideas for action for each Whole-school Component are also suggested.

#### 1. Building Capacity for Action

Schools that assess and improve capacity support for implementation of strategies to prevent and manage bullying behaviours will help ensure school action is effective, sustainable and system-wide. Unless there is supportive leadership, allocated resources, planned system support and compatibility with school needs, the efforts of staff are likely to be ineffective.

**Very Active (2.5)**

*Sample pages of the Map the Gap Online Screening Tool*
# Planning and Action Tool

## 1.0 Building Capacity

### Building Capacity Planning and Action Tool

**1.0 BUILDING CAPACITY**

Having completed the Map the Gap online screening tool, it is recommended that schools use relevant section(s) of the Planning and Action Tool to assist with planning in areas identified as requiring further action.

**Evidence for Practice**

- A summary of evidence-based strategies to support decision-making and improve student learning and reduce bullying is given. The tool provides a section on building capacity to support schools.

### Planning and Action Tool

**1.0 Building Capacity - Action Plan**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional Support Library</th>
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<th>What do you think?</th>
<th>What do you need?</th>
<th>Continuous Improvement</th>
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### Evidence for Practice

- A summary of evidence-based strategies to support decision-making and improve student learning and reduce bullying is given. The tool provides a section on building capacity to support schools.

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**Implementation Key**

- The implementation key provides a summary of the key actions required for successful implementation.

**Building Capacity Support Library**

- A summary of evidence-based strategies to support decision-making and improve student learning and reduce bullying is given. The tool provides a section on building capacity to support schools.

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**Building Capacity Support Library**

- A summary of evidence-based strategies to support decision-making and improve student learning and reduce bullying is given. The tool provides a section on building capacity to support schools.
Planning and Action Tool
2.0 Supportive School Culture

Note: If this area has been identified as a priority area, further information for school actions can be found in Chapter 2.
3.0 PROACTIVE POLICIES AND PRACTICES

**Evidence for Practice**

**Note:** If this area has been identified as a priority area, further information for school actions can be found in Chapter 3.

### 3.0 PROACTIVE POLICIES

**Policies, Plans and Implementation:**

- **Evidence:**
  - What needs to be done?
  - What is going to be done?
  - Timeline:
  - What do you need?

**Implementation:**

- What needs to be done:
  - Evidence for Practice
  - Plan implemented
  - Tools for implementation

### 3.0 PROACTIVE POLICIES AND PRACTICES

**Evidence for Practice:**

- Evidence for Practice
  - Plan implemented
  - Tools for implementation
  - Evidence for Practice

### 3.0 PROACTIVE POLICIES AND PRACTICES

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- Evidence for Practice
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### 3.0 PROACTIVE POLICIES AND PRACTICES

**Evidence for Practice:**

- Evidence for Practice
  - Plan implemented
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  - Evidence for Practice
Planning and Action Tool
4.0 Key Understandings and Competencies

Note: If this area has been identified as a priority area, further information for school actions can be found in Chapter 4.
Planning and Action Tool
5.0 Protective Physical Environment

Note: If this area has been identified as a priority area, further information for school actions can be found in Chapter 5.

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5.0 PROTECTIVE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

### Evidence for Practice

#### 5.0 PROTECTIVE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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### Protective Physical Environment Planning and Action Tool

**5.0 PROTECTIVE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT**

- **What needs to be done?**
- **What is going to be done?**
- **Timeline**
- **Outcome**
- **What do you need?**
- **Comments / reflections**

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Planning and Action Tool
6.0 School-Family-Community Partnership

Note: If this area has been identified as a priority area, further information for school actions can be found in Chapter 6.