

# Positive Behaviour for Learning: myths and misconceptions

## Myth:

### Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL) is about rewards

**Misconception:** PBL is about giving students prizes or tangible rewards.

**Reality:** While recognition is a part of PBL, the system is grounded in clear expectations, active supervision, skill-building and feedback. Providing prizes such as treats and items is not a requirement of the PBL framework and should not be the focus. Best practice is to periodically check how many students regularly receive positive specific feedback. It is also important to work with students to ensure that the feedback they receive is provided in a way that is meaningful and reinforcing to them.



## Myth:

### PBL schools must hold celebration events and provide certificates

**Misconception:** PBL schools should have celebration events such as end of term fun days and hand out PBL certificates on assembly.

**Reality:** One-off celebration events may be a useful strategy in specific circumstances. This includes where a school is seeking to build relationships across student groups and the community, or where data shows students need to practise social skills outside the classroom setting. These events welcome everyone and are designed to supportively teach skills – they are not prizes for behaviour.

Similarly, certificates may strengthen communication with parents and caregivers; however, are generally not effective in changing behaviour. Consider if parade or other forms of communication with parents best achieves this purpose.



## Myth:

### PBL lets students get away with poor behaviour

**Misconception:** PBL does not address misbehaviour.

**Reality:** PBL is designed to prevent and address behaviours of concern. Consequences are provided as needed that are instructional, relational and proportionate.



## Myth:

### PBL is for “good” students

**Misconception:** PBL only benefits students who are already well-behaved.

**Reality:** PBL is for all students. It ensures every student is recognised and supported. Using data to identify need, staff can provide consistent, high-quality supports for every student as well as tailored, small group and individual supports for some students.

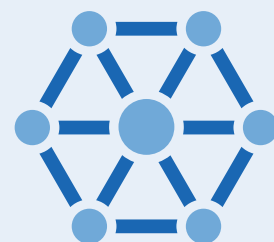


## Myth:

### PBL is a curriculum or a program

**Misconception:** PBL is a packaged curriculum you receive and implement as is.

**Reality:** PBL is a framework, not a curriculum. It helps schools organise evidence-based practices and interventions, as well as understand how well these practices are being used. Schools are supported to adapt the evidenced-based practices and interventions to fit their own culture and needs, using data to guide implementation.



## Myth:

### PBL is a one-time training

**Misconception:** Attending PBL training sessions or meetings is enough to expect the proven results of PBL.

**Reality:** PBL results are expected when most of your school staff are consistently and accurately implementing PBL. Effective PBL implementation is ongoing, and requires consistent data review, staff collaboration, and professional development. It is a long-term, whole-school commitment to ongoing improvement. Actively playing your part in implementing PBL can also inspire your colleagues to take part too.

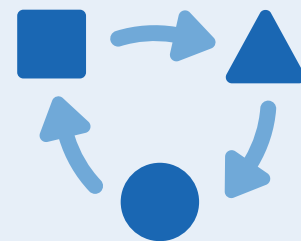


## Myth:

### PBL removes teacher autonomy

**Misconception:** PBL dictates how teachers manage their classrooms.

**Reality:** PBL provides a consistent school-wide approach, but still allows flexibility. Teachers are encouraged to develop their own strategies within the framework, ensuring alignment with school policies and department procedures while supporting individuality.

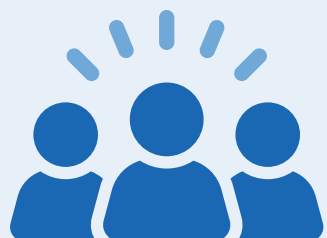


## Myth:

### PBL is only for primary schools

**Misconception:** PBL is not for high schools or special education settings.

**Reality:** PBL has been successfully implemented in all grade levels and educational settings, including all population demographics. Success depends on the accuracy of implementation and participation of staff – not school type.



## Myth:

### PBL adds to workload

**Misconception:** PBL just means looking at more data and adding more strategies.

**Reality:** PBL teams ensure school strategies are working efficiently in achieving their desired outcome. Where strategies are not successful, PBL teams use evidence-based research to improve or remove ineffective strategies. This ensures staff efforts are saved for strategies that are needed and likely to be effective.

