STEPS Framework
for selecting online safety programs

eSafety Toolkit for Schools

Creating safer online environments

The STEPS decision-making framework is designed to help you identify suitable online safety programs and approaches for your school community.

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S T E P S

Steps to examine programs and approaches for schools

DECISION-MAKING FRAMEWORK

Australian Government | eSafetyCommissioner

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the eSafety Commissioner
2020

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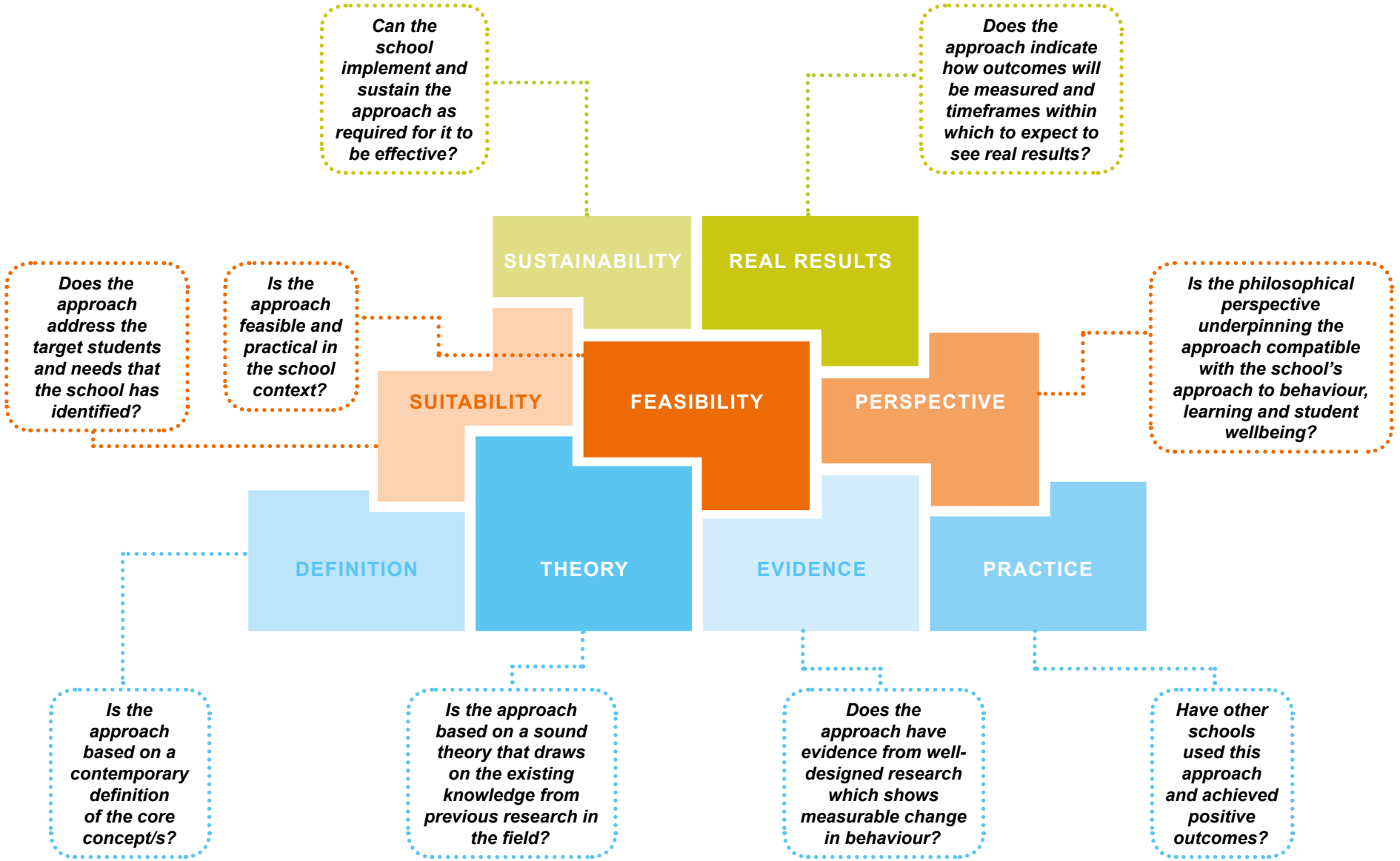

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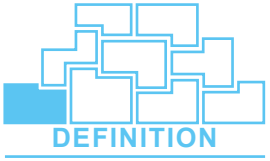
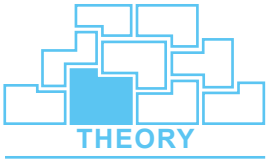
STEPS – Steps to examine programs and approaches for schools

Does it work? What is the evidence?

	Key Question	To ask about the approach	To ask about your school
 **Definition**	***Is the approach based on a contemporary definition of the core concept/s?***	• How does the program define online safety? • How does the program identify the factors involved in online safety?	• Is the definition in this program consistent with the school's understanding of online safety? • Do all members of our school community share this understanding of online safety? Is it included in our school policies?
 **Theory**	***Is the approach based on a sound theory that draws on the existing knowledge from previous research in the field?***	• What is the specific aim of the program? (i.e. does it impact on attitudes, skills, behaviours or knowledge) • What theory underpins the program and how has this been incorporated into its content, design and strategies? • What previous research in online safety and related areas does the program draw on? • How does the program promote a positive school climate and respectful online relationships? • How does the program align with the Australian Student Wellbeing Framework?	• Is the theoretical basis of this program consistent with our school's approach to behaviour, learning and student wellbeing? • Should we undertake some professional learning to understand more about staying safe online? • Does the program complement how we have implemented the Australian Student Wellbeing Framework?
Evidence	***Does the approach have evidence from well-designed research which shows measurable change in behaviour?***	• What is the evidence for the program and how has it been gathered? • Does the evidence consist of real change involving measurement of specific behaviours and outcomes? • How did the researchers ensure confidence that the research supports valid claims of effectiveness?	• Will the school be able to implement the program in a way similar to the way it was conducted in research studies? • Are we alert to the use of persuasion- or emotion-driven arguments rather than evidence to support this program? (e.g. is the information provided as 'evidence' actually opinion, promotion or advertising)? • If there is limited research evidence for the program, have we carefully considered the questions under Definition and Theory?
Practice	***Have other schools used this approach and achieved positive outcomes?***	• Is the research evidence complemented by information from schools that have implemented the program in real-world situations? • If the research evidence for the program is limited, what information (particularly student data) is available from other schools to suggest it is a 'promising practice'? • If there is no research evidence, are the definition and theory which underpin the program well explained and robust?	• Are the schools which have successfully implemented this program similar to our school? • Will the school be able to implement the program in a way similar to the way it was conducted in other schools that have achieved positive outcomes? • If there is limited research evidence for the program, have we carefully considered the questions under Definition and Theory?

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STEPS – Steps to examine programs and approaches for schools

Will it work to achieve our school's goals?

	Key Question	To ask about the approach	To ask about your school

Suitability	***Does the approach address the target students and needs that the school has identified?***	• What is the main purpose of the program: prevention or response (or response as prevention)?
		• Is the program whole-school, multifaceted or single issue focused?
		• Does the program reference the eSafety Commissioner and its reporting functions?
		• Which elements in the Australian Student Wellbeing Framework are addressed?
		• What does this program focus on and who does it target:
		  • Who are the direct participants (targets)?
		  • What student age range does the program address?
		  • Which online safety issues are directly addressed (if relevant)?
		  • What personal and social skills are addressed (if relevant)?
		  • What social understandings/social diversity issues are addressed (if relevant)?
			• Do we need to further clarify our school's needs and aims so that we can select an program to match?
			• Does this program target who we want to target and aim to achieve what we have identified as our goals?
			• Which of the school's identified goals and target areas does the program NOT address?
			• Can we integrate this program with existing approaches or programs in the school?

Feasibility	***Is the approach feasible and practical in the school context?***	• Are all requirements to implement the program detailed in the guidelines? • Is the program 'ready to go' or do schools have to do significant work as well in order to implement? • What are the initial and ongoing costs? • What training and support is provided? • What time and human resources are required from the school? • Does the program align with existing policies and with national educational frameworks and guidelines, and any other requirements with which schools need to comply? • Has this program been successfully used in schools with similar resources and constraints as our school?	• Do we have the time, human resources and funding for initial and ongoing costs? • Can we provide staff with the skills, knowledge and support to implement the program? • Is the program compatible with other activities and requirements with which we need to comply? • If this program is delivered through extra classes (i.e. not embedded into curriculum) what impact will that have on the curriculum, and on people and other activities? • Is the program a good fit with our school resources and constraints? • Can the school's existing resources and activities be harnessed or redirected for this program?
Perspective	***Is the philosophical perspective underpinning the approach compatible with the school's approach to behaviour, learning and student wellbeing?***	• What philosophical perspective underpins this program? • What learning theory/pedagogical approach is the program based on?	• What is our school's perspective on behaviour, online safety and student wellbeing (and where do we articulate this)? • Is this program's perspective compatible with our school's approach to promoting a positive school climate and respectful online relationships? • Is the pedagogical approach compatible with our school's approach to teaching and learning? • Before we implement an online safety program, do we need to invest in professional learning on our philosophical perspective to online safety?

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STEPS – Steps to examine programs and approaches for schools

How will we know it has worked?

	Key Question	To ask about the approach	To ask about your school
Sustainability	***Can the school implement and sustain the approach as required for it to be effective?***	• How long does the program take to fully implement and when should the school expect to see changes/outcomes? • Does the program provide specific guidelines on implementation? (e.g. time frames, milestones and step-by-step procedures) • Does the program provide information about possible adaptations that do not compromise fidelity? (i.e. the way the program is intended to be used) • Is staff training available initially and on an ongoing basis as needed? (e.g. for new staff, to ensure sustainable implementation) • What other support is available for implementation?	• How will the school sustain energy and momentum throughout implementation given the anticipation time before outcomes will be observable? • Will the school be able to implement the program as recommended in order to be effective (fidelity of implementation)? • Are adaptions needed to implement the program in our school context, and would these possibly compromise fidelity (and thus effectiveness)? • Have other schools made adaptations and has the program been successful with these adaptions? • How might we support ongoing implementation with fidelity, reduce any gaps, and ensure sustainability for long-term change?
Real results	***Does the approach indicate how outcomes will be measured and timeframes within which to expect to see real results?***	• How are outcomes measured and how do they link to the stated aim of the program? • Are resources (tools) or guidance provided for measuring progress and effectiveness of the program and informing a cycle of continuous improvement? • Does the program encourage student involvement in measuring outcomes? • What is the anticipated time frame before the school should be able to see measurable change? • How will the school be able to demonstrate to the wider community that the program has been successful?	• What existing school measures and data can we use to monitor progress and measure outcomes? • If additional measurement tools and methods are required, what impact could that have? • Can our school commit to this program for the anticipated timeframes (before seeing measurable and real results)? • How and where will the school report and celebrate successful progress and outcomes?

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