Parent and Community Engagement Framework

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Why is parent and community engagement important?

Parents and the broader community play a vital role in supporting successful learning outcomes for our children. Parent and community engagement that is effectively focused on student learning can deliver powerful outcomes.

2. What makes parent and community engagement effective?

The research and our experience tells us that parent and community engagement is most effective when it:

- focuses on student learning;
- encourages genuine dialogues and shared responsibility for student success;
- builds the capability, and the confidence, of staff, parents and community members to engage with each other; and
- enables widespread engagement and sustains it over time.

3. How can schools engage with parents who work long or unconventional hours?

A key part of successful parent and community engagement is catering for diverse needs and circumstances including timing and methods of communication and collaboration. Successful schools offer a variety of opportunities for parents and teachers to work together to support student learning. This can include flexible timing of face-to-face opportunities, various written mediums and the appropriate use of online tools and spaces.

4. What should Principals be doing to develop effective parent and community engagement?

As an educational leader in your school community, it is important that you engage with parents and carers, the P&C and/or school council, staff, students and community groups to review the way your school approached parent and community engagement. Use the Parent and Community Engagement Framework and supporting website to guide you.

5. What should teachers be doing to develop effective parent and community engagement?

As an educator in your school community, it is important that you engage with parents and carers of students in your class(es), the P&C and/or school council, colleagues, students and community groups to focus on student learning and have genuine dialogues about how you can all work together to support the learning of your students. Use the Parent and Community Engagement Framework and supporting website to guide you.

6. What should parents and carers be doing to engage effectively with schools?

As your child's first teacher and the person who arguably knows your child best, it is important to talk positively and constructively with the school about your child's needs, interests, goals and progress. Book a time to meet with the teacher(s) and get involved in the range of opportunities your school provides to engage. Use the Parent and Community Engagement Framework and supporting website to get some practical ideas about how you can work with the school.

7. Is the role of P&Cs, school councils and other groups changing with the Parent and Community Engagement Framework?

P&Cs and school councils (where a school has one) will continue to have a critical role in the life of schools. P&Cs advocate and represent for parents and families and help the school with a wide range of activities from fund raising to advice. School councils play a strategic role in the governance of a school.

As schools review and revise their approaches to parent and community engagement, it is expected that P&Cs and school councils will build and maintain a focus on student learning through genuine dialogues and shared responsibility for success. It is also expected that they will be part of — but not the only part of — a school wide effort to make effective engagement widespread and sustained over time.

8. How can schools, parents and the community use information and communications technology (ICT) to work together more effectively?

The rapid growth of online technologies has created many opportunities for schools to engage parents and the community. This includes online services and information on school websites; homework advice and materials that support learning, collaboration with guest experts, celebrating student achievements, conducting community consultation activities and promoting school activities through online social media.

However, schools must take care to choose the right online tool for the job and use it safely and effectively. In particular, schools need to maintain their duty of care to students, ensuring their safety online and preventing unauthorised access to student personal information.

The *Parent and Community Engagement Framework* website provides a comprehensive guide to help schools work with parents and the community to decide when and how to best utilise ICT to support engagement and student learning.