



NSW Department of Education



Parent and Carer Engagement Guide

education.nsw.gov.au

Parent and Carer Engagement Guide

How to use this resource

This guide will show you how the principles from the related document, the [Parent and Carer Engagement Framework](#), can make a difference for your school community. This resource is best used as a collaborative reflective exercise to note existing ways that your school engages parents and carers, and create a roadmap for future engagement practices.

Who this resource is for

This guide is for schools that:

- have identified parent and carer engagement as a priority area in their strategic planning, or
- are responding to community feedback on parent and carer engagement by reviewing existing processes.

This guide is available to all staff. It has been designed to encourage solution-focused discussion among staff and potentially conversation with the community.

Research base

This guide was developed by Student and Parent Experience (SPX) based on the [School Excellence Framework](#), [What Works Best in Practice \(nsw.gov.au\)](#) and [Parent and Carer Engagement Framework](#). See reference page at the end of the document for more information.

Contact

Email SchoolExcellenceUnit@det.nsw.edu.au about the 'Parent and Carer Engagement Framework.'

Alignment to system priorities and/or needs: [Our Plan for NSW Public Education](#), is built on the power of public education to provide opportunities for all and transform lives through learning. [NSW Government Customer Commitments](#) to deliver a positive experience for parents and carers.

Alignment to School Excellence Framework (v3): Themes that may correlate to parent and carer engagement activities include **Learning Domain:** Learning culture (High expectations, Transitions and continuity of learning, Attendance), Wellbeing (A planned approach to inclusion and wellbeing, Individual learning needs, Behaviour), Curriculum (Differentiation, Literacy and numeracy focus), Reporting (Parent engagement); **Teaching Domain:** Effective classroom practice (Classroom management); **Leading Domain:** Educational leadership (Community engagement), School planning, implementation and reporting (Strategic Improvement Plan), Management practices and processes (Service delivery, Community satisfaction)

Consulted with: Staff through Voice of Schools, various teams from Education support

Reviewed by: Quality Assurance Panel for Universal Support and Executive Director, Student and Parent Experience

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Welcome to this guide

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Introduction to the Parent and Carer Engagement Guide

This guide is particularly relevant when parent and carer engagement has been identified as a priority for the school and its Strategic Improvement Plan, or when responding to community feedback. The guide will show you how to implement the Parent and Carer Engagement Framework to make.

The guide starts with an introduction to the evidence base and the framework, and then provides instructions on how to get the most out of this guide.





The Power of Partnership: Why engaging well with parents and carers matters for schools

Engagement is more than involvement

When parents and carers are **involved** in education, they may participate in school-related activities and events, such as volunteering at the school canteen. Involvement encourages a positive school culture and provides a platform to begin establishing relationships and trust that lead to engagement.

When parents and carers are **engaged** in education, they are equipped to partner with schools to achieve shared goals for student learning and wellbeing. This partnership recognises the role that both community and school staff play in encouraging positive attitudes to learning (Barker, B., & Harris, D., 2020). The goal of engagement is not to serve clients but to gain partners (Ferland, 2011).

Parent and carer engagement has a positive impact on student learning and wellbeing

Parental engagement in their child's education means that students are more likely to:

- enjoy learning and be motivated to do well
- have good social outcomes including better relationships, improved behaviour and greater confidence, as well as reduced risk of drug and alcohol abuse, suspension and leaving school early
- do better at school and be more likely to graduate, go on to university, TAFE, college or work
- have better school attendance (ACT, 2014; Evidence for Learning, 2021; Education Endowment Foundation, 2021; Dearing, E., et al., 2006).

Parents and carers in NSW have told us how they would like to be engaged

Parents and carers from many walks of life were consulted in the development of the Parent and Carer Engagement Framework. We heard from 71 parents and carers, including those from specific language groups, and got 451 survey responses (NSW DoE, 2022).

The department is committed to supporting parent and carer engagement

The [Parent and Carer Engagement Framework](#) aligns with many elements of the [School Excellence Framework](#), and guidance provided in [What Works Best in Practice](#).

"We met our child's teacher and enjoyed a tour of the school, meeting other staff and students..."

(NSW Parent)

"I'm working with the teachers to help make [my daughter] more comfortable at school."

(NSW Parent)



Introduction to the Parent and Carer Engagement Framework

The Parent and Carer Engagement Framework brings together findings from a comprehensive secondary research review and primary research undertaken with parents and carers. The following five principles have been developed from this research.



See further examples of what other schools are doing on pages 23 to 28 of this guide.

1. Enable access

Engagement relies on easy access, and an accepting environment where parents and carers feel welcome and safe. To enable effective engagement, diverse interaction approaches and channels need to be supported.

To do this, some schools:

- display cultural artwork and landmarks on the school grounds
- ensure school staff are at the school gate morning and afternoon to have informal conversations with parents and carers
- personalise tours for families
- provide the school community with access to a school-wide calendar of events.

2. Communicate openly

Transparent communication builds trust between parents and carers and educators and staff. The right communication type, frequency, format, language and channel varies for different parents. Building flexibility into communication practices is key.

To do this, some schools:

- use simple English writing practices

- provide ongoing customer service training and principles for all administrative staff, and training in effective complaints management
- respond to parent and carer communication within an identified timeframe
- automate email response via the school email, i.e. “Thank you for your email, we will get back to you shortly”.

3. Partner together

Schools can work with parents and carers, while being aware that parents and carers may take cues from their own experience, beliefs and values.

To do this, some schools:

- schedule one-on-one parent or carer meetings for early invention, and develop personalised learning, and Individualised Education Plans for identified students
- encourage student-led interviews with parents, carers and teachers
- provide guided instruction on how parents and carers can support classroom learning
- offer appropriate training for staff on how to engage with parents and carers.

4. Understand context

Parents and carers want to feel confident their child is understood and supported to achieve their potential. This confidence comes with communication, connection, and responsiveness.

To do this, some schools:

- schedule one-on-one introductory meetings with new families at transition points and throughout the year to better understand the home context
- have bilingual staff available in 'high traffic' locations such as the office
- survey community needs and availability of resources
- collect, analyse, and communicate actions from the Tell Them From Me survey.

5. Guide choices

Many decisions parents and carers make through their children's education have long-term impact. This means, parents and carers often want to be included in decision-making because they are uniquely positioned to present their child's situation and understand broad impacts on their life.

To do this, some schools:

- communicate decision-making processes and any outcomes with parents and carers
- include parents and carers in the school planning cycle
- encourage parents and carers to be part of discussions around learning and student pathway decisions.





How to use this guide



This guide has been developed to allow both you and your school community to reflect on:

- the ways you already engage with parents and carers
- how you might adapt existing, or introduce new engagement practices, as part of your school planning.

There are two key exercises included in this guide: [Reflecting on your school's engagement](#) (page 12), and [Building your roadmap](#) (pages 13-14). The Reflecting on engagement exercise works best when completed collaboratively with key staff members. The Roadmap provides an opportunity to further reflect and identify new ways forward.

You can complete both exercises individually or collaboratively. The time necessary to complete each exercise will vary, depending on the group size and the length of conversations. You can complete the activities in roughly 20-minute “bites” by addressing one principle from the framework at a time.



At the end of this guide, there is a [link to further information](#), which includes templates, case studies, additional resources and how this guide aligns with the [School Excellence Framework](#).

You may wish to familiarise yourself with the [Parent and Carer Engagement Framework](#), introduced in the previous section.

The guide has been designed to apply to any school context, with the exercises encouraging reflection and planning relevant to your specific community. Aboriginal Outcomes and Partnerships, Multicultural Education and experienced Community Engagement Leads have helped shape this guide to meet this goal.



Maximise the exercises in this guide by considering your school context

You are the experts in your school community. You may wish to use supporting documentation for your reflection on your community engagement. Consider using some or all of the following references:

- Strategic Improvement Plan
- previous Annual Reports
- Tell Them From Me parent survey
- SCOUT data, e.g. School Dashboard with demographics
- review of how your social media page/s are used and the sentiments expressed (if applicable)
- review of your school's website (using Google analytics)
- complaints data
- anecdotal conversations, feedback and compliments from or to school executive, co-workers, parents, carers and students.

Executive staff are encouraged to share these resources, where applicable.



What do your supporting documents tell you about your school's engagement?

If you would like to take this concept further, consider how various pieces of feedback and survey results show you insights about what is currently working well or could be a focus for future engagement.

Exercises

When school staff come together and map their existing engagement activities, they often find value in recognising the great work already taking place.

This is the goal of the [Reflecting on your school's engagement exercise](#).

As an optional extension to this exercise, whole-of-school teams or executive teams can use these recognised activities to inform a strategic roadmap, that may be used as an Implementation and Progress Monitoring activity in your [Strategic Improvement Plan](#).





Parent and carer engagement happens everyday



Now that we have introduced the Parent and Carer Engagement Framework, let's think about how your school already engages parents with this **optional** exercise.

Before you begin

1. Print out the A4 template and have a pen ready (page 16).
2. Consider nominating a scribe and facilitator if completing this as a group activity.
3. Use supporting documents for inspiration if you wish (see page 9).

Answer the following questions, based on group discussion or individual reflection

Question 1.

How well do you know your school community?

Write or discuss the main demographics of students, parents and carers in your school and how this contributes to your school culture (see page 9 if you'd like to take this further).

Question 2.

What are some examples of positive interactions that you have personally experienced with parents or carers in your school community?





Reflecting on your school's engagement



Many schools find that they are already engaging parents and carers. Reflecting on activities you already do, allows you to celebrate achievements and consider opportunities for change.

Before you begin

1. Print out the A4 reflection template and have a pen ready (pages 17-19).
2. Consider nominating a scribe and facilitator if completing this as a group activity.
3. Use supporting documents for inspiration if you wish (see page 9).

Complete the steps for one principle at a time, based on group discussion or individual reflection

Step 1: What does your school already do?

- a. Set aside 10 minutes of reading time to refer to your inspiration material, such as your school's supporting resources, the Parent and Carer Engagement Framework (pages 6-7) or the extra prompts (pages 23-28).
- b. Consider the first principle, 'Enable access.' Use the statements in the table (page 17) to generate a conversation or individual reflection. For example, discuss how your school already provides a welcoming environment.
- c. Write down some activities that your school does under the relevant principle.

Step 2: What would you like to continue?

Tick or highlight the activities that you have written that you wish to continue. Underline the ones to improve.

Step 3: What would you consider stopping?

Circle the activities that you have written that you might consider stopping, after consulting with the community. Reflect on what has brought you to this decision.

Step 4: What new ideas could you trial?

Write down options for new ideas in the last column of the table. You may also wish to refer to the extra prompts (pages 23-28).



Building your roadmap



Now that you have reflected on how your school is already engaging parents and carers, you have the **option** to forward plan a strategic approach to engagement. Identified activities can be included as part of your Strategic Improvement Plan.

Before you begin

1. Print out the template on pages 20-22 of this document in A4 and have a pen ready.
2. Consider nominating a scribe and a facilitator if completing as a group exercise.
3. Refer to your notes from the previous exercise: Reflecting on your school's engagement.

Complete the steps for each activity, one at a time

Step 1: Which activities will you build out a roadmap for?

- a. Identify the relevant Strategic Direction from your School Improvement Plan to be the focus of this exercise
- b. Write two activities in the headings of the table that align with the selected Strategic Direction and that you would like to adapt, improve or adopt from the 'Reflecting on your school's engagement' exercise (page 12)
- c. Consider only using two activities as this roadmap is quite comprehensive.

Step 2: How do these activities align to your school's strategic planning?

- a. Complete the next four rows in the template for each activity, to ensure that the activities are strategically aligned.

Step 3: How will you complete these activities?

- a. Complete the last four rows in the template for each activity to create a practical plan. Use relevant departmental resources for guidance on how to implement best practice.



Need help creating measures of success?

Check out the Leading Evaluation, Evidence and Data resource '[Reflect and reset: thinking about evidence.](#)'

Thank you for using the Parent and Carer Engagement Guide.

We hope you can see how engagement already takes place at your school and how you might strategically plan for engagement in the future.

If you have further questions about parent and carer engagement or would like to see some more resources, head to <https://resources.education.nsw.gov.au/detail/SEA-WD230719114543>.



Do you have feedback on this resource? Please email SchoolExcellenceUnit@det.nsw.edu.au or use the QR code to start your message.



Appendix

Templates and prompts are included here, to support you in completing the exercises in this guide. They are designed to be used on their own, with the instructions in previous sections providing additional guidance as needed.



3



Parent and carer engagement happens everyday (template)

Now that we have introduced the Parent and Carer Engagement Framework, let's think about how your school already engages parents with this **optional** exercise.

Question 1. How well do you know your school community? Write or discuss the main demographics of students, parents and carers in your school and how this contributes to your school culture (see page 8 if you'd like to take this further).

Question 2. What are some examples of positive interactions that you have personally experienced with parents or carers in your school community?



Reflecting on your school's engagement (template)

- This template has been designed to help schools reflect on how they already engage with parents and carers, and what approaches they may wish to use in the future.
- To complete the template, follow the steps for existing activities and new ideas. You may choose to complete the steps for one principle at a time, such as “enable access”.
- For more detailed instructions, see page 12 of this guide.



For examples of what other schools are doing, please refer to the [Parent and Carer Engagement Guide](#) pages 6 to 7, or [Extra Prompts](#) on pages 21 to 26.

<p>Principles/Activities</p> <p>Consider and discuss the statements under the principles as you complete the table. You do not need to answer each dot point under the principles separately.</p>	<p>Existing activities <i>(Looking inside the school gates and out)</i></p> <p>Step 1. What activities do you already do which relates to this principle? Example: Your school website calendar is up-to-date; parents and carers have access to different methods of communication.</p> <p>Step 2. Tick or highlight which activities you would continue. Underline which activities you would improve.</p> <p>Step 3. Circle which activities you might stop, after consultation with the community.</p>	<p>New ideas <i>(Looking forward)</i></p> <p>Step 4. What new activities could you trial? Example: The school website could be reviewed each term to ensure staff details are up-to-date, with clear instructions on how to best contact school staff.</p>
<p>Enable access</p> <p>Reflect on how your school...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provides a welcoming environment • makes it easy for parents and carers to participate • supports parents and carers to understand the school environment. 	<p>Examples on page 21</p>	
<p>Communicate openly</p> <p>Reflect on how your school...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • keeps parents and carers informed and makes it easy for them to understand key messages • make it easy for parents and carers to communicate with the school • provides a timely response. 	<p>Examples on page 23</p>	

<p>Principles/Activities</p> <p>Consider and discuss the statements under the principles as you complete the table. You do not need to answer each dot point under the principles separately.</p>	<p>Existing activities (<i>Looking inside the school gates and out</i>)</p> <p>Step 1. What activities do you already do which relates to this principle? Example: Your school website calendar is up-to-date; parents and carers have access to different methods of communication.</p> <p>Step 2. Tick or highlight which activities you would continue. Underline which activities you would improve.</p> <p>Step 3. Circle which activities you might stop, after consultation with the community.</p>	<p>New ideas (<i>Looking forward</i>)</p> <p>Step 4. What new activities could you trial? Example: The school website could be reviewed each term to ensure staff details are up-to-date, with clear instructions on how to best contact school staff.</p>
<p>Partner together</p> <p>Reflect on how your school...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • informs parents and carers of what to expect and what is expected of them • partners with parents and carers to achieve shared goals • follows up on discussions. 	<p>Examples on page 24</p>	
<p>Understand the context</p> <p>Reflect on how your school...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • hears the parent and carer voice • invites parent and carers perspective • shows parents and carers that we understand their individual circumstances. 	<p>Examples on page 25</p>	
<p>Guide choices</p> <p>Reflect on how your school...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • informs parents and carers of their choices • informs parents and carers of the decisions that have been made and the possible outcomes • includes parents and carers in the decision-making process. 	<p>Examples on page 26</p>	



Building your roadmap (template)

- This template has been designed to guide future planning by linking the identified activities to your [Strategic Improvement Plan](#), including [Implementation and Progress Monitoring](#).
- Identify two activities from the previous ‘[Reflecting on your school’s engagement](#)’ exercise that are strategic priorities for your school.
- Use the questions in each row to complete the table below. You may wish to complete the rows for Activity 1 first, then for Activity 2.
- For more detailed instructions, [see page 13](#) of this guide.

Alignment to School Excellence Framework (v3): Themes that may correlate to parent and carer engagement activities include **Learning Domain:** Learning culture (High expectations, Transitions and continuity of learning, Attendance), Wellbeing (A planned approach to inclusion and wellbeing, Individual learning needs, Behaviour), Curriculum (Differentiation, Literacy and numeracy focus), Reporting (Parent engagement); **Teaching Domain:** Effective classroom practice (Classroom management); **Leading Domain:** Educational leadership (Community engagement), School planning, implementation and reporting (Strategic Improvement Plan), Management practices and processes (Service delivery, Community satisfaction)

<p>Questions What are two engagement practices you wish to strategically plan for? Example: Executive staff are at the school gate each morning and afternoon (create a timetable)</p>	<p>Activity 1: _____</p>	<p>Activity 2: _____</p>
<p>Strategic Directions What strategic direction does your proposed activity align to? (Only if applicable) Example: Strategic Direction 3: Wellbeing</p>		
<p>Improvement measures What improvement measures could this plan align to? Example: Attendance, Wellbeing, Literacy, Numeracy</p>		

Questions	Activity 1: _____	Activity 2: _____
<p>Initiative</p> <p>What is the broader initiative that the activity falls under?</p> <p>Example: Positive Relationships, Healthy Community</p>		
<p><u>School Excellence Framework</u></p> <p>Which SEF element does this activity align to?</p> <p>Example: See red box above</p>		
<p>Time to complete</p> <p>When will you complete the activity?</p> <p>Example: Term 1, 2023</p>		
<p>Person/s responsible</p> <p>Who will be responsible for implementing the activity?</p> <p>Example: School Exec: Name 1 / Role, Name 2 / Role</p>		
<p>Resources required</p> <p>What resources are required to implement your chosen activity?</p> <p>Example: Funding for staff release</p>		
<p>Evaluation and evidence of impact</p> <p>How will you demonstrate evidence of impact?</p> <p>Examples: Photos, feedback from parents and carers, Tell Them From Me (TTFM) data for parent engagement to improve by 10% (i.e. percentage of parents who 'are informed', 'feel welcome' and 'would recommend the school')</p>		



Need a prompt for discussion?

See the below examples of the Parent and Carer Engagement Framework principles in action. The examples are not applicable to all schools. They are a collection of strategies demonstrated in schools across NSW to support your reflection. They are sourced from a variety of schools, frameworks and departmental resources.

For more information and resources around these prompts, see:

education.nsw.gov.au/inside-the-department/directory-a-z/student-and-parent-experience/parent-and-carer-engagement

1 Here are some ideas that some schools are implementing, regarding **Enable Access**

Provide a safe and welcoming environment

- ✓ Review TTFM results on whether parents feel welcome. Then ask parents for additional feedback on what makes them feel welcome.
- ✓ Represent cultural artwork and landmarks on the school grounds – talk with Aboriginal staff and local communities about what is appropriate.
- ✓ Display photos of staff, roles and how to best contact them on the school website and in the office area.
- ✓ Display an Acknowledgement of Country sign at the front of the school.
- ✓ Showcase student artwork in the office and around the school.
- ✓ Have a community engagement team (consisting of teachers, administrative staff, Student Learning Support Officer (SLSO), Aboriginal Education Officer (AEO), Community Liaison Officer (CLO), school executive member) and advise parents of community engagement team members.
- ✓ Attend the school gate in the morning and afternoon and encourage informal conversations between school staff, parents and carers.
- ✓ Use clear and inclusive signage around the school, e.g. include different languages, and visual prompts.
- ✓ Recognise and celebrate diversity within the school community.
- ✓ Use a range of opportunities such as school events, meet and greet, coffee chats and barbeques for staff, parents and carers to build relationships.
- ✓ Conduct a “welcome environment checklist” once a year.
- ✓ Actively interact with parents and carers at open school events.
- ✓ Provide inclusive forms of communications, e.g. translation of documents.
- ✓ Allocate a parent or community room on the school grounds, and advertise this to all.

1 Here are some ideas that other schools are implementing, regarding **Enable Access** (continued)

Make it easy for parents and carers to participate

- ✓ Ensure that enrolment processes are easy and smooth and provide a variety of assistance channels for parents requiring help.
- ✓ Share videos and information on how to enrol online on social media and the school website.
- ✓ Provide personalised tours for families. Use interpreters if necessary.
- ✓ Provide information packs online and in paper copies.
- ✓ Hold one-on-one introductory meetings with new families at transition and throughout the year, so parents and carers can ask questions and the school can get to know them.
- ✓ Host onsite early childhood programs, i.e., playgroups, rhyme time, sport, playgroup.*
- ✓ Ensure bilingual staff are in the office and other areas of the school.
- ✓ Ensure an Aboriginal Education Officer (AEO) or support person is located in the front office as first point of contact for parents and carers.
- ✓ Provide digital access to permission notes, payments and registrations, e.g. through Admin Marketplace.

Support them to understand the school environment

- ✓ Provide parents with opportunities to learn more about school life during transition programs by providing access to relevant information, hands on learning sessions, shop fronts, and translators where required.
- ✓ Ensure timetables and assessment dates and tasks are accessible and up to date.
- ✓ Ensure a school-wide calendar of events is accessible and current. Translate to key community languages if necessary.
- ✓ Create and maintain community databases to easily link families and teachers to local organisations that provide training and support.
- ✓ Encourage and support parents and carers to assist with school programs, e.g. breakfast clubs, classroom, events, gardening or school beautification, etc.
- ✓ Invite parents to open classroom sessions throughout the year, e.g. “sticky beak tours”.
- ✓ Clarify and promote expectations of behavior for all members of the school community.
- ✓ Clarify and promote ways of interacting with the school (how, when, who and why).
- ✓ Provide an interactive digital school handbook.
- ✓ Make and promote videos of a ‘typical school day’.

* Primary School only

** Secondary School only

2 Here are some ideas that other schools are implementing, regarding **Communicate Openly**

Keep parents and carers informed and make it easy for them to understand

- ✓ Collaboratively build and advertise school communication protocols with parents and carers
- ✓ Provide different ways to access information, i.e. school website, Facebook, DoE Parent app, other school based apps, SMS, email, etc.
- ✓ Use plain English writing practices and easy-to-understand visuals where possible. Translate key documents to key community languages, if necessary.
- ✓ Provide how-to instructions for school procedures and processes.
- ✓ Provide an accessible and up-to-date website and school calendar which identifies key dates that school events are on and estimated cost.
- ✓ Conduct regular phone check-ins and follow-ups with parents and carers.
- ✓ Communicate to parents and carers what their child(ren) are learning about in school and how they can engage with child's learning at home
- ✓ Establish a school communication/promotions team or role, or ensure communication responsibilities are clearly delegated to an existing role.
- ✓ Talk with teachers about the best way for them to let parents know what is happening in their classroom, e.g. regular newsletters.
- ✓ Have up-to-date website and school yearly calendar which identifies key dates that school events are on and their estimated cost.

Make it easy for parents and carers to communicate with you

- ✓ Provide clear instructions for parents and carers on how, who and when to communicate with school staff.
- ✓ Appoint a community/promotion/communication person, i.e. Community Liaison Officer, Community Engagement Officer, and/or Aboriginal Education Officer, and ensure that parents know who this is.
- ✓ Provide ongoing customer service and complaints resolution training for all administrative staff and school leaders.
- ✓ Ensure bilingual staff are in the front office and other high traffic areas of the school.
- ✓ Translate key school or departmental documents for the community.
- ✓ Survey parents and carers on their preferred ways to communicate.
- ✓ Hold information sessions that build capacity and empower parents and carers in areas based on community needs. Use interpreters if necessary.

Provide a timely response

- ✓ Respond to parent and carer communication within an identified timeframe.
- ✓ Provide an automated email response via the school email, e.g. "Thank you for your email, we will get back to you by dd/mm/yyyy".

3 Here are some ideas that other schools are implementing, regarding **Partner Together**

Be clear about what parents and carers can expect and what is expected from them

- ✓ Communicate with parents at the beginning of the year and throughout the year to remind them of what they can expect and what is expected from them.
- ✓ Schedule one-on-one parent or carer meetings to advise on early intervention, Personalised Learning Plans, and Individual Education Plans.
- ✓ Schedule one-on-one introductory meetings with new families at transition points and throughout the year. Use interpreters if necessary.
- ✓ Promote interviews with parents, teachers and students and encourage students to lead where possible.
- ✓ Include parent and carer engagement in the school vision and planning development.
- ✓ Share learning practices and outcomes using communication channels.
- ✓ Promote “Parent as Teacher Classroom Helper” programs or equivalent.
- ✓ Train staff to understand the purpose of engagement and school expectations of engaging with families.

Partner with parents and carers to achieve shared goals

- ✓ Provide guided instructions on how parents and carers can support classroom learning.
- ✓ Provide interpreters and translation of key documents to assist parents and carers where necessary.
- ✓ Hold regular information sessions, online and/or in-person, that include information provision and hands-on activities.
- ✓ Run a homework club for parents to help them understand how to support their children with their learning.
- ✓ Organise training for school staff on different cultural groups, cultural sensitivities, and barriers. Invite community leaders into your school.
- ✓ Create and maintain community databases which easily link the school community with local organisations that provide training and support for families.

Follow up on our discussion

- ✓ Offer appropriate training and mentoring for staff on how to communicate and engage with parents and carers, especially on the topic of dealing with challenging conversations such as the 3Cs training (see MyPL).
- ✓ Follow up in a reasonable timeframe with parents and carers via multiple mediums, e.g., phone calls, emails, letters and social media.
- ✓ Analyse and provide a feedback loop to families on all survey results and actions.

4 Here are some ideas that other schools are implementing, regarding **Understand the Context**

Hear their voice

- ✓ Use drop-off and pick-up opportunities to connect and communicate.
- ✓ Create parent forums for consultation, i.e. Parents and Citizens' Associations, Wellbeing forums or other parent forums.
- ✓ Look at Tell Them From Me results and invite parents to discuss key areas.
- ✓ Regularly seek additional feedback on key issues using a range of tools and strategies, e.g. run forums for specific issue, surveys, regular after-school events to hear feedback.
- ✓ Schedule one-on-one introductory meetings with new families at transition points and throughout the year to better understand the home context. Use interpreters as needed.

Invite their perspective

- ✓ Collaborate on the delivery of cultural and language and programs, i.e. Aboriginal languages and cultures.
- ✓ Provide cultural training to staff to build up their cultural competence in building partnership with parents and carers.
- ✓ Have bilingual staff represented in the office or other areas in the school and/or bring in interpreters for key events.
- ✓ Ensure an inclusive environment for parents of all backgrounds, being aware of language barriers, etc.
- ✓ Invite feedback from all and value different opinions.
- ✓ Look at Tell Them From Me results and invite parents to discuss key areas for improvement.

Show you understand their individual circumstances

- ✓ Provide opportunity for one-on-one meetings with parents and/or students to discuss issues and concerns when necessary, e.g. if there is a behaviour issue or a student is not doing well with their learning, to demonstrate that students are known, valued and cared for.
- ✓ Work collaboratively to identify suitable meeting times or event dates so they do not conflict with availability or community events, e.g. cultural celebrations.
- ✓ Work with parents and carers to identify the most efficient means of communicating with different groups e.g. via surveys, anecdotal conversations, or through a local third party.
- ✓ Identify social, cultural and common needs of families, e.g. via surveys, anecdotal conversations.

5 Here are some ideas that other schools are implementing, regarding **Guide Choices**

Clearly explain the choices / Be clear about how decisions are made / Include parents and carers in the decision-making process

- ✓ Publish and communicate transparent decision-making process and outcomes with parents and carers.
- ✓ At key decision points for all students, e.g. subject selection, hold parent information events – use interpreters if needed, and translate key information.
- ✓ At key decision points for individual students such as responding to behaviour concerns or learning difficulties, contact parents early to discuss a collaborative approach to the issue.
- ✓ At key decision points such as responding to a community concern, identify strategies to consult the community on their perspectives.
- ✓ Promote study and career opportunities via agreed on communication channels.**
- ✓ Include parents and carers in the school planning cycle.
- ✓ Encourage parents and carers to be part of discussions around learning and pathway decisions for their children.
- ✓ Involve parents and carers in transitional opportunities, e.g., study and career pathway decisions.**
- ✓ Schedule meetings with parents and carers to review progress and follow up.

* Primary School only

** Secondary School only



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