

# FAMILY ENGAGEMENT IN LEARNING



Parents and schools have an important role to play in a child's education.

Working together will improve a child's learning, health and wellbeing.

Relationships are key to working together.

The education of a child is a shared responsibility between family, the school, other students and the broader community.

When schools and parents engage in a child's learning, it encourages and supports them to enjoy their education.

Positive relationships and attitudes towards education give children confidence that the system is supporting them to achieve their best.

## MEANINGFUL PARTNERSHIPS

A meaningful parent-school partnership requires a joint effort and should be established as early as possible.

Schools and parents can both learn from each other to support the child.

Good partnerships are based on:

- open and honest communication
- trust and respect
- working together
- fair and reasonable expectations by all.

## CONNECTING LEARNING

Schools play an active role in formal studies, but learning starts before children attend school and goes beyond what happens at school.

Conversations and knowledge shared between parents and schools provide valuable understanding of what children need to develop a love of learning.

Schools and families are encouraged to take the time and to find opportunities to connect and work together on the child's progress

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Strong and positive relationships between schools and families demonstrate to the child that everyone is working together in their best interest.

This encompasses the desired values to accomplish mutual respect and treat each other fairly.

## WORKING TOGETHER

The best interests of the child are at the centre of both a school's and a family's decision-making.

To provide the best learning environment and experiences for students, we need to work together.

Feedback between schools and families helps to build and maintain relationships.

Providing a safe environment for families to discuss the student's learning or other concerns helps facilitate opportunities for reflection and learning.

Families and schools may have differing opinions and as long as we express our views respectfully and have reasonable expectations of each other, we can reach a positive outcome.

A school's Statement of Values will support respectful and productive collaboration between the school, students and families.

## MEETING WITH YOUR SCHOOL

As partners in education it is helpful for families to understand their child's learning plans and learning strengths.

Schools and parents sharing and discussing insights helps both parties to have a broad idea of the progress of the student, and then plan how to support their education and wellbeing.

Conversations and meetings can be scheduled as required.

The following steps may assist discussion:

- confirm the purpose and objective of the conversation/meeting
- define any current situation for your child
- confirm the aims your child has with their education
- identify and discuss your child's learning strengths and any challenges or barriers your child is facing
- discuss, suggest and seek what your child might need, i.e. learning support or adjustments
- take the opportunity to offer constructive and respectful feedback on any suggested improvements to support families and the school for the future.
- summarise the agreed actions/plans to ensure everyone has the same understanding and expectations.

## STUDENT VOICE

As a parent or carer, you are there as a guide. For the best results, your child should be included in making choices about their education. By empowering students, we enhance their engagement and participation in their education.

Together, we can help develop students' skills in the following areas:

- self-awareness
- communication
- critical thinking and reflection
- planning and organisational
- research and consultation
- group work
- accountability.

Student voice at home and at school is positive for learning, encourages parents and carers as partners, and supports good practice. It also helps us to work together.

## ADDITIONAL SUPPORTS

Schools requiring additional assistance and support can contact their local regional office: [www.education.vic.gov.au/about/contact/Pages/regions.aspx](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/contact/Pages/regions.aspx)

Parents or carers who would like support, or students requiring guidance, can contact:

**Independent Office for School Dispute Resolution:** for appropriate matters, if the Department's usual systems have been exhausted but a complaint remains unresolved, the Independent Office can be approached to facilitate a final attempt at consensual resolution. Visit: [www.schoolresolution.vic.gov.au](http://www.schoolresolution.vic.gov.au)

**Parents Victoria:** a statewide organisation representing parents of students in Victorian government schools. Visit: [www.parentsvictoria.asn.au](http://www.parentsvictoria.asn.au)

**Victorian Student Representative Council (VicSRC):** the peak body representing school-aged students in Victoria. Visit: [www.vicsrc.org.au](http://www.vicsrc.org.au)

For more information, see: [www.education.vic.gov.au/parents](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/parents)

For more information on how to provide feedback, including compliments, suggestions and complaints, visit: <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/contact/Pages/complaintslanding.aspx>