FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

QUEENSLAND CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

Qld Parents & Friends
STRONG VOICE FOR FAMILIES IN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

www.pandf.org.au
PARENT ENGAGEMENT – WHAT IS IT?

Parent engagement is developing relationships with the primary caregivers of students to empower them as active partners in their child’s learning.
VALUES, VISION AND MISSION STATEMENT ON PARENT ENGAGEMENT

Values

Engagement with all families in Catholic Schools in Queensland is based on gospel values of respect, integrity, hope, equity, transparency, justice, love, community, human dignity and service.

Vision

All in Catholic Education welcome and recognize the value and right of families to engage with their child’s learning and will work in partnership to enhance the faith development and social and emotional wellbeing of students and increase opportunities for academic success for all students.
Mission
The Federation will work with Catholic School Authorities to build capacity of school staff and families and create tools to assist in building stronger partnerships in each school community that foster engagement and result in shared responsibilities for student learning and for student and school success.
PRINCIPLES WHICH UNDERPIN EFFECTIVE ENGAGEMENT IN STUDENT LEARNING

1. All families and schools want the best for their children

2. All children have the right to the opportunity to reach their full potential

3. Families are the first and continuing educators of their children

4. Effective schools provide a nurturing and supportive learning environment

5. Families and schools value quality teaching and respect teachers' professional expertise
6. Families and schools value the diversity of families and use this as a resource for building partnerships and communities.

7. Family-school partnerships are based on mutual responsibility, respect and trust.

8. Leadership is critical to building, maintaining and renewing partnerships.


10. Family-school partnerships strengthen the connections between schools and their communities.

11. Partnerships can involve all organisations that support families and schools.
CONDITIONS FOR EFFECTIVE PRACTICE

FOR EFFECTIVE ENGAGEMENT PRACTICES TO BE DEVELOPED AND SUSTAINED – SUPPORTING STRUCTURES NEED TO BE IN PLACE

• Leadership commitment
• Respectful relationships
• Supportive and connected school culture
• A team, reflecting the diversity of stakeholders, responsible for planning, organising, implementing and evaluating activities.
• School Policies and procedures which explicitly state and clearly integrate the principles and dimensions of effective partnerships
• Resources (personnel and funds) allocated for the implementation of family and community engagement activities
• Support networks, to enable school communities to share ideas, issues and best practice
• Ongoing professional learning for all staff about cultural awareness and communicating with families from diverse backgrounds
• Skills building for families to build their capacity to support their children’s learning at school and at home
PARENT ENGAGEMENT IN STUDENT LEARNING

- Communicate
- Collaborate
- Build
- Connect

- Families
- Staff
- Community
- Recognise roles
- Two Way
- Multi-dimensional
- Appropriate
- Regular
- Aims and Objectives

- Participation
- Community
- Faith
- Identity
- Trust
- Confidence
- Life Long Learners

- Within School
- Beyond School
- Decisions
- Consult
- Share
- Students
- Families
- Parish
- Planning

- Learning at home and School
- Staff & Families
- Parish & Families
- Research
- Review & Improvement Plan
There are simple steps that parents can take at home as first and continuing steps on this journey –

**Have high expectations for your children** – Let your children know that you think it is important that they do well in school. High, but realistic, parental expectations have the greatest impact on student achievement. When parents consistently express belief in their children’s potential and tell them that they expect them to succeed academically, students do better.

**Talk about School** – Talk with your children about what’s happening at school – activities, programs and what they are learning. Surprisingly, this has a greater impact on academic achievement than monitoring homework, being at home after school for your kids, or limiting the time they are allowed to watch TV or go out during the week.
Help your children develop a positive attitude toward learning and good work habits – Research shows that the greatest influence you can have on your children’s chances for success in school lie in how you influence their attitudes, their sense of personal competence, and their work habits, including persistence, seeking help and planning.
Read together – Reading is one of the foundations of all education, and you can make a big difference by reading and talking about books and stories with your children. Reading with children is the best way to turn them on to reading. This doesn’t mean that you should be forcing them to sound out words – instead of focussing on teaching your children the mechanics of reading, teach them to love reading. Make reading fun and enjoyable.
HOW DO WE CHANGE PARENTS’ AND STAFF THINKING ABOUT ENGAGEMENT

Leadership and reflection are critical to being strategic with activities. There is always somewhere to start, and always somewhere to improve.

No single strategy fits all school contexts – but questions and ideas will help you adapt widely published strategies to your needs.

Broadening understandings of learning beyond the school, to include ‘learning at home’. include ‘the language of schooling/learning’ as this has been identified as a possible barrier for families to engage in learning both at school and at home.

Cultural considerations - Indigenous, migrant and refugee families - Work on improving communication strategies’ with these families. Create opportunities to strengthen connectedness and engaging families in schooling and their child’s learning through events which will involve them in the school e.g. International food events, Cooking classes, Cultural dance events etc. where they can share their knowledge.
LISTENING IS CRUCIAL
Start with a conversation with parents and ask questions that build relationships. Collectively as a school try to reach every parent and staff member to enhance the relationships and their understandings.
PARENT ENGAGEMENT
GROWTH AND
RENEWAL CYCLE

- Assess and Audit
- Review & Research
- Plan & Renew
- Reflect

Parent Engagement in Student Learning
STEPS TO STRENGTHEN ENGAGEMENT

The whole school community should be involved in all steps. When all are included there is more likely that all groups will take ownership and be more committed to action.

Step 1 – assess and audit
Analyse current practice –
• What do you need to know? e.g. Backgrounds, languages, stories, protocols/culture, needs, is there a sense of community for all, what works already
• What data collection methods do you use to capture all views? e.g. online, paper, interviews, P & F, Car Park chats, Surveys, Focus groups etc.
• Who do you collect from?
• How much is enough?

There are a number of survey/audit tools available which each school can adapt to their needs.
Step 2  review and research
Determine Priorities for Action

- What have we learned from the information collected
- What are the most important items
- What can we do immediately
- What do we need to plan for long term
- Research strategies, case studies and resources used by others and adapt if necessary

Step 3 - Plan and renew
Implement the planned actions

- Develop a plan
- Set targets
- Plan is agreed by all
- Embed these in the school plan
- Set up groups to implement particular actions – includes staff and parents etc
- Set up regular reports/meetings to ensure plan is being implemented
- Review if actions aren’t successful
Step 4  Reflect
Evaluate progress
- Analyse current situation through data collection – various methods
- Review plan
- Develop new plan which builds on current work and sets new directions and targets
This Framework will be available on our website

www.pandf.org.au

This resource will provide many resources for school communities including

• Proformas for policies, planning, audits, letter to parents etc
• Websites to get further information
• Documents that cover many areas of schooling e.g. early years, secondary, indigenous, migrant and refugee etc.
• Videos
• Books
• Posters

• We will build this resource as more information becomes available.
• We have also developed some other materials including Webinars
Webinars to assist with P & F’s understanding their role and the role they play in a Catholic School and in parent engagement

There are four so far

**Webinar 1**

Characteristics of Leaders in a Faith Community

- What identifies your school as distinctly Catholic
- How can the school and parents work in partnership
- Awareness of Objectives of P & F
- General Role of the Executive
Webinar 2

- Decision Making – including consensus building skills
- Meeting Skills
- Agenda building skills

Webinar 3

- Roles of the Executive
Webinar 4

To prepare parents for the role of P&F Treasurer
This change in culture won’t happen over night but if there is commitment from all stakeholders at the school then it will work to enhance the chances of success for all students.