



Lee Street
State Special School

Parent and Community Engagement Policy

**Learn
Enrich
Empower**



Parent and Community Engagement at Lee Street State Special School

The [parent and community engagement framework](#) helps schools to engage and partner with parents to improve student outcomes and support their wellbeing. Parent engagement is developing **relationships** with the primary caregivers of students to empower them as active partners in their child's **learning**. The quality of these relationships will determine the quality of the learning of students. Where this works well, **leadership** and **reflection** are essential supports and are critical to being strategic. There is always somewhere to start, and always somewhere to improve.



How does the PACE framework inform the practices of the kind of teachers and teacher aides we want to be at Lee Street State Special School?

We recognise that:

Engaging parents as active partners in their child's learning is one of the most effective strategies to improve student learning and wellbeing outcomes.

- Children spend the majority of their time outside of the classroom. Parents are the primary educators. Parents can become partners with us to achieve student learning goals.
- The key is to build respectful relationships with parents, and focus the relationship on their child's learning.
- Effective strategies are important for all teachers, but are particularly important when trying to overcome educational disadvantage.

We strive to:

Work out the needs of each student and their parents. Different strategies will work for different parents and in different contexts. We plan for it and try different strategies.

- We invite parents along to the classroom and encourage parents to be partners in teaching and learning.
- We celebrate student achievements with parents.
- We welcome parents into our classrooms.
- We focus on learning at home strategies, and how to link family activities with what the students need to learn. Ask parents how these strategies could be even better.
- We seek to know and understand the community. With colleagues we explore some of the learning opportunities in the local community (e.g. libraries, community centres).

We are:

- Careful about 'education speak'. We take care to ensure understanding when we are explaining student learning goals and teaching strategies.
- Open to trying new things. The evidence about the importance of parent engagement is growing all the time. It is now accepted as an essential part of effective teaching.



Lee Street

State Special School

Parent and Community Engagement Framework

Decision Making

Parents and community members are invited to provide feedback in regards to school performance via the annual School Opinion Survey and School Reviews. Annual planning is developed in collaboration with school staff and the Parents and Citizens Association. Our School priorities are published and visible throughout the school.



Communication

We value and encourage sharing of information and communication with parents to include them in conversations about improving outcomes for their student. Along with regular parent - teacher meetings, reporting and case conferences we use a variety of tools to contact and communicate with parents and the community.

SMS & SCHOOLS



Word on the Street
School Newsletter



"More learning occurs in a joyous classroom where children feel safe, secure and accepted, and where they feel the teacher sees them for who they really are."
Diamond, 2010

"Parents need to hold high expectations for their children and schools need to work in partnership with parents to make their expectation appropriately high and challenging"
Hattie 2009



Partnerships with Parents

We recognise parents as students first teachers. We encourage parent partnership to ensure learning for each student.

We acknowledge that our students are complex learners and welcome interagency support to wrap around students and families.

School Culture

Learning and wellbeing are a focus for students and staff. We welcome referrals to our wellbeing team which meets regularly to provide support for individuals.

We partner with our P & C to build a respectful school culture with a focus on high expectations for all. All parents and carers are welcome to attend.



Respect our staff,
respect our school



Community Collaboration

Our community partnerships are developed to enhance rich learning experiences at school and vocational and lifestyle opportunities in post school life.



SPECIAL EDUCATION
Training Alliance



Learn Enrich Empower

Why focus on parents?

'Parent' refers to the primary caregiver and is often used interchangeably with 'family'. While engagement of the broader family unit has a significant and positive impact on the development of children and young people, this resource focuses on parents or primary caregivers as the first point of contact (where possible) for targeted engagement strategies. This is not to exclude other members of the family (e.g. grandparents, siblings, etc), but recognises the fundamental role that parents or primary caregivers play in maximising learning and development outcomes for children and young people

Communication



Focus: Effective two-way communication between families and schools uses a range of strategies to regularly seek and share information about students' achievements and learning needs, school policies, practices and community initiatives.

Drivers

- Use a variety of communication methods to seek and share information.
- Report student achievements in culturally sensitive and respectful ways.
- Consult with all families and community members to identify issues and concerns within in the school.
- Ensure that all families and community members have access to school leaders.

Actions

- Use a range of communication tools and channels, including newsletters, websites, e-mails, Facebook, assemblies, school noticeboard, parent/teacher interviews and workshops, P&C meetings, PBL postcards, communication diaries, web conferencing and text messages
- Develop a parent engagement calendar outlining key points in the school year where engagement of parents and the community is vital and the specific activities to be used to engage them
- Share consistent and ongoing messages of high expectations for all students and their learning.
- Positive phone calls from the school leadership team and teachers to families about students' achievements as well as promotion of student achievements in school newsletters/Facebook.
- Professional learning activities for staff on ways to communicate with families.
- The placement of 'welcome' signs around the school.
- Review current school practices on inviting families and community members to participate and consider how this could be improved.
- Work with P&C to review the parent handbook. Ensure the handbook is published on the school website.
- Set in place alternative methods of parent-teacher interviews when personal circumstances prevent parents from attending a face-to-face meeting, including options for telephone and email contact.

Success Criteria

1. Families, the community and school staff communicate in numerous interactive ways, both formally and informally.
2. Schools, in collaboration with the P&C, offer information to families to assist them to participate collaboratively in parent teacher conversations.
3. SOS parent survey results are reflected in the school plans and situational analyses.
4. The school has formal and informal structures in place to support families and community members to have conversations with school leaders.

“At the end of the day, the most overwhelming key to a child's success is the positive involvement of parents.”
- Jane D. Hull

Partnerships with Parents

Actions

Success Criteria



Focus: Families and school share responsibility for student learning and wellbeing. They work together to create positive attitudes to learning, develop shared understandings of how children learn and learning programs build on families' capacity to support learning at home.

Drivers

- Provide multiple opportunities for all families and teachers to discuss students' social and academic progress.
- Support families to participate in their child's learning.
- Develop families' understanding of learning programs and expected learning outcomes.
- Ensure smooth transitions for students and families at key points in the education continuum.

- Provide parent/teacher workshops targeting areas of need or interest such as communication, literacy and numeracy
- Embed the practice of involving parents in goal setting and post school planning discussions with their children (PATH and SET meetings)
- Connect culture and learning by partnering with Elders in educational experiences
- Involve families in setting goals for their children's learning (personalised learning plans- ICPs).
- Examine different ways in which families and community members can encourage, motivate and reinforce children's learning.
- Encourage literacy/numeracy opportunities in the home.
- Provide information for families on the skills required for students use of PODD
- Provide information and referral services to support parents in their role as parents.
- Provide cultural awareness training for school staff, students, families and community members.
- Canvas families for suggestions on how the school can support them in helping their children learn.
- Hold workshops on parenting related topics to assist families to support their children's learning.
- Develop and distribute a written policy, in consultation with the school community on family-school partnerships.
- [parent and community engagement fact sheet \(PDF, 17MB\)](#)

1. Teachers and families discuss students' individual learning styles, family cultural experiences, strengths and academic and personal needs to support learning goals to school and at home.
2. Teachers and P&C plan regular family and community learning events at school.
3. Teachers and families have regular, scheduled discussions about how each school program or activity links to student learning.
4. Schools and families work together to develop strategies to use in the home to build on students' strengths.
5. School, families and community agencies collaborate to develop a program of activities to support families.
6. The school facilities and resources are made available outside school hours for community groups.



Community Collaboration

Actions

Success Criteria



Focus: School policies and practices, learning activities and community building initiatives have built a culture of welcome, inclusion and belonging that reflects and respects diversity within the school's community. The school has established on-going strategic relationships with government and non-government agencies, community groups, businesses and other educational providers which enhance learning

Drivers

- Develop strong relationships with all families and community members.
- Create a family-friendly school atmosphere.
- Facilitate connections between families and community members.
- Respect and celebrate the diversity within the school community
- Connect families and students with community resources.

- Develop school marketing materials such as school banners and school logo
- Open school facilities for community use, including adult learning, community meetings and community interest groups
- Involve elders and other significant community members in developing inclusive curriculum practices.
- Schedule morning teas and other activities for families to meet staff, learn what is happening at school and celebrate children's learning.
- Invite local civic and service groups/ individuals to become involved in the school in a variety of ways, such as mentoring students and speaking in classrooms (chaplaincy program).
- Celebrate traditions, achievements and school milestones.
- Include school Adopt-a-Cop in school events and provision of information and learning for students around personal safety, bicycle safety, no bullying.
- Developing partnerships with local groups, government and non-government agencies and businesses to support activities e.g. work experience placements.
- Develop partnerships with universities for placement of pre-service teachers.
- Gather and provide information on community activities that link to learning skills and talents, including holiday programs for students eg, Camp Have A Chat.
- Establish partnerships with local businesses to provide work experience and structured work placements for students.
- Provide information and access for students and families on community health, cultural, recreational, social support and other programs or services.
- Develop a register of all support services outside the school to support students, families and community members. .
- Encourage engagement and induction of Volunteers and placements for students.

1. The school provides opportunities to support families and community members become more engaged in school activities.
2. The school is a welcoming place where families can drop in and connect with school staff and other families.
3. The P&C and school staff have jointly developed programs to help parents connect with each other.
4. The school has collaborated with families and community agencies representing all backgrounds to improve cultural understandings.
5. The school is an active member in regular external agency meetings where information is shared and strategies to promote services are developed.



Decision Making

Actions

Success Criteria



Focus: Families and community members are active contributors to school decision making and planning processes. They engage in relevant decisions about supporting student learning, school policy and practice and community building initiatives.

Drivers

- Ensure that all families have a voice in decisions that affect their children's learning and engagement irrespective of socio-economic status, Aboriginality and cultural background or geographic location.
- Involve families and community members in whole-school planning and evaluation processes.
- Develop and support accessible structures and processes which enable families and community members to be consulted on key matters affecting the school.

- Consult flexibly to reach a cross-section of students, parents and community members, not just the most confident
- Ensure information regarding consultation opportunities is widely circulated in a variety of forms
- Offer training or skill development opportunities to parents and teachers
- Develop strategies to help teachers balance any time and workload issues that may result from their involvement with consultative decision-making
- Encourage active participation in the student council and encourage student participation in decision-making processes.
- Create a volunteer position for a parent to be a community partnerships coordinator.
- Encourage participation and engagement of families and community members in school through P&C, school plans, finance and other school committees (PBL).
- School staff use a variety of strategies to engage in face-to-face discussions with families and community members.
- Teachers and families collaborate in the development and review of individual learning plans- ICPs.

1. Where possible, school policies ensure that parents have an equal voice in all relevant decisions that affect children's learning.
2. The school provides multiple ways for families and community members to contribute to whole-school planning and evaluation processes.
3. Parents are trained to co-facilitate parent workshops that build the knowledge and capacity of families and community members.



School Culture



Focus: Families and community members contribute to the life of the school in ways that reflect their interests, skills, experience and capacity to do so.

Drivers

- Provide opportunities for all families and community members to participate in the life of the school.
- Support families and community members to engage in student learning activities.
- Train parents and community members as classroom helpers and to work one on one with students during reading lessons.
- Build the capacity of family and community members to lead the learning of others.

Actions

- Load events, meetings and assessment calendars on the school website.
- Develop a database of parent and community skills, talents and availability to draw on when required
- Engage community members and business in designing learning experiences and extracurricular activities
- Invite parents and community members to become involved as guest teachers and speakers
- Train family and community volunteers and local staff to facilitate programs to support students.
- Support families and community members to assist in classrooms and school activities e.g. excursions.
- Build a directory of family skills and interest and provide opportunities for families to lead school activities.
- Hold activities where the whole family, including siblings and grandparents can participate.
- Recruit and train volunteers.
- Provide surveys asking family members how they would like to participate at their child's school eg establish a skills bank.
- Provide flexible schedules for volunteers, assemblies and school events, so that all are able to participate.
- Ensure parental involvement in children's learning is a recognised topic of staff meetings, professional learning and in the induction of new staff members.
- Provision of a dedicated P&C/volunteer room at the school for use by parents.

Success Criteria

1. The school participation program has reached out to all families and community members and offered opportunities for volunteering.
2. The school has developed a database of family and community skills and expertise to support student learning activities.
3. The school has invited families and community members to participate in school-wide training programs to support teaching and learning programs.
4. School and parent leaders have worked with parents and community members on a regular basis to develop ways to improve parents' capacity to support student learning.







Markers of strong parent and community engagement

- Parents are encouraged to take a genuine and close interest in the work of the school, are acknowledged as the first teachers of their children, and engage as partners in their children's learning
- Communication with parents provides information about where students are up to in their learning, what progress they have made over time and what they might do to support their children's further learning
- Respectful and caring relationships are reflected in the ways in which staff, students and parents interact and in the language they use in both formal and informal settings
- The school has regular and ongoing ways of finding out what parents need to engage with their child's learning
- Parents can list the school's key expectations for behaviour, attendance and learning foci.
- The principal and the teachers use many styles of communication appropriate for parents' cultural backgrounds, availability, working conditions etc
- The principal and teachers regularly connect with the parent/s of every child in the school
- There are mechanisms to build relationships with relevant members of the community.
- School Opinion Survey reflects parent confidence in the education that students are engaging in at Lee Street State Social School Special School.



Post School Community Partnerships

Partner	Purpose	Contact
	Designer Life 71 King Street Caboolture QLD 4510 Phone: 3333 2055 www.designerlife.com.au	SLES (School Leaver Employment Supports) program. Vocational education and training (VET) provider offering various Cert/Training courses
	Interact Australia 42-44 King Street Caboolture QLD 4510 Phone: 1300 388 873 www.interact.com.au	SLES (School Leaver Employment Supports) program. Disability Employment Services (DES) program. Individualised daily living support services
	Job Support 2/440 Hamilton Rd Chermside QLD 4032 Phone: 2101 5181 www.jobsupport.org.au	SLES (School Leaver Employment Supports) program. Specialist disability employment support (intellectual disability)
	Afford 5/69 King Street Caboolture QLD 4510 Phone: 1300 233 673 www.afford.com.au	SLES (School Leaver Employment Supports) program. Day programs, Supported accommodation
	Better Together 1-11 Toovey Street Caboolture QLD 4510 Phone: 5499 2230 www.bettertogether.net.au	SLES (School Leaver Employment Supports) program. Day programs, Vocational education and training (VET) provider offering various Cert/Training courses
	Epic Assist 42-44 King Street Caboolture QLD 4510 Phone: 5428 1508 www.epicassist.org	Disability Employment Services (DES) program, Career-Start Program
	Carers Qld Health Hub, 19-31 Dickson Rd, Morayfield QLD 4506 Phone: 5293 2800 www.carersqld.com.au	NDIS access (Local Area Coordinator)
 	CPL/Milestones 44 King Street Caboolture Qld 4510 Phone: 5499 3379 www.milestones.org.au	SLES (School Leaver Employment Supports) program.
	HELP Disability Care Caboolture Square Shopping Centre, 60-78 King Street, Caboolture QLD 4510 Phone: 5495 3300 www.helpdisabilitycare.com.au	SLES (School Leaver Employment Supports) program. Post-School Pathways program
	Multicap 269 Padstow Rd, Eight Mile Plains QLD 4113 Phone: 3340 9000 www.multicap.org.au	Day Services, assisted living, in-home community access
	Caboolture Family Network (CFN) 10 Grant Rd Morayfield QLD 4506 Phone: 5432 3966 www.cfn.org.au	Day programs, supported living, NDIS management

Partner	Purpose	Contact
 MS Queensland	MS Qld Level 2B, 19 Lang Parade Milton QLD 4064 Phone: 1800 177 591 www.msqld.org.au	High Physical Support Specialist Disability Accommodation. (in apartment facilities at Caboolture; part of the Orion on Rowe development)
	Aruma (formerly House with No Steps) 8 Lee St, Caboolture QLD 4510 Phone: 1300 538 746 www.aruma.com.au	A range of disability services (respite, accommodation, day programs)
	Endeavour Foundation (Learning & Lifestyle) 1-27 Rowe St, Caboolture, QLD, 4510 Phone: 5495 6818 www.endeavour.com.au	Day services – training, living skills education program, respite care
	Caboolture Neighbourhood Centre. 9 George Street, Caboolture Q 4510 Phone: 07 5495 3818 www.caboolturenhc.com.au/	Provide direct access to skilled professionals who can assist with social, legal, technical, financial or health circumstances. Includes a form-filling service.

Significant community partnerships

Partner	Purpose	Contact
Holt Bolt	NDIS partnership / school hire	Matthew Holt
Adopt-a-cop		
Special Education Training Alliance		
Caboolture Rotary	RYDA – driver education program	
Better Together Assoc. Inc.	Local Training agency – Cert III Education Support Students are able to complete 100 hours of placement.	Jenny Butler (07) 5499 2230
Lyndon Davies	Indigenous Elder Gubbi Gubbi Dance Troupe	Tel: +61 7 5472 7613 Mobile: 0408 446 446 gubbimob@hotmail.com
Endeavour Foundation	Delivery of post school preparation programs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Robotics • Virtual Reality driver training 	Melissa TeAwa Phone: 5495 6818 www.endeavour.com.au
Sunshine Linus Inc.	non profit group of volunteers who provide quilts and other comforts to those in need	Jenny Dettrick http://sunshinelinusgroup.blogspot.com
Mat McKraken	Disability Advocate	

