

ADVANCING PARTNERSHIPS



**WOOROOLIN**  
**STATE SCHOOL**

# **Parent and Community Engagement Framework**

## **2018**

# Advancing Partnerships

## Parent and Community Engagement



### What is parent engagement?

A meaningful relationship between the parent/carer and teachers with the goal of better learning and wellbeing outcomes for the student. Parent engagement goes beyond 'parent involvement' at school. Parent engagement directly benefits a child's learning at school and at home.



### What is the role of the community?

Sustainable relationships with the local community, including child and health services, community organisations, education and training providers, local businesses and industry may be used to leverage experiences, support, intellectual and physical resources not available within the school to improve students' learning and wellbeing outcomes.

## The Parent and Community Engagement Framework

Schools that continue to renew, strengthen and innovate their approach to engaging with parents and the broader community are rewarded with improved school community cohesion, student achievement and job satisfaction for staff. This framework prompts schools to reflect on their current practice, suggests strategies for engagement, and assists in ensuring school approaches align with the National School Improvement Tool.



**Around 85% of a child's time is spent outside school.**

Each year, a child spends



**If done well, parent engagement could add the equivalent of 2 or 3 extra years schooling for a child.**  
(Hattie, 2008)



## DIVERSE COMMUNITIES

Wooroolin State School comprises a diverse range of students, parents, families and staff. At Wooroolin we celebrate and support diversity through an inclusive culture that promotes the skills and insights of all people irrespective of age, gender, ethnicity, generation, sexual orientation or disability.

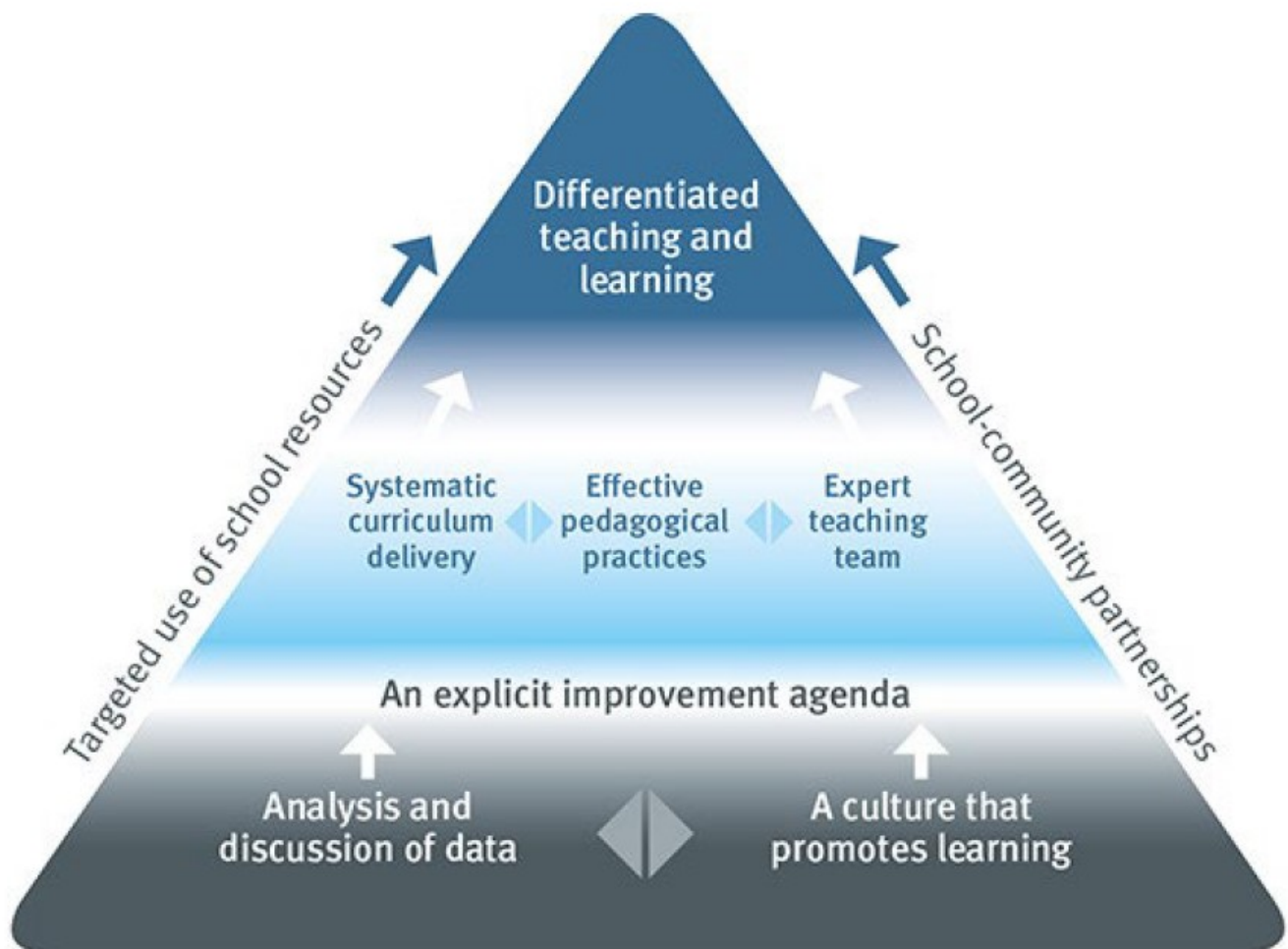
The Wooroolin State School Parent and Community Engagement (PACE) Framework strategy depends upon our students' learning needs and a wide variety of other factors including communication preferences of teachers and parents; resources available in the local community; the range of cultures represented in the school community, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures; the location of the community; and the proportion of working parents.



## THE PARENT AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

Wooroolin State School uses a range of strategies to engage with its community. It is an area that Wooroolin agrees can continue to innovate, renew and strengthen its approaches in recognition of the evidence that parent and community engagement has a positive effect on students' wellbeing and achievement.

Wooroolin State School acknowledges that school-community partnerships are recognised as a domain of the National School Improvement Tool (NSIT) which assists schools across Australia to review and reflect on their efforts to improve teaching and learning. The Wooroolin Parent and Community Engagement (PACE) Framework uses current evidence and best practice to provide a model that supports Wooroolin State School to enhance parent and community engagement.



**The School Improvement Hierarchy**



## FIVE ELEMENTS OF THE PARENT AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

The Wooroolin PACE outlines five key elements of parent and community engagement to make a positive difference in our students' education.

1. **Communication** – Effective communication is an exchange between students, parents, communities and schools that is inclusive and involves information-sharing and opportunities to learn from each other.
2. **Partnerships with Parents** – Partnerships between parents, students and schools promote student learning, wellbeing and high expectations for student success.
3. **Community Collaboration** – Relationships between the school and wider community strengthen the ability of schools and families to support student learning, wellbeing and developmental outcomes.
4. **Decision-making** – Parents, students and community members play meaningful roles in school decision-making.
5. **School culture** – Respectful relationships between students, parents and the school community are valued and enhance the promotion of student learning and wellbeing.



## MARKERS OF STRONG PARENT AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Wooroolin State School seeks to assess their engagement success and considers whether:

- The school genuinely values two-way communications between parents and school personnel to ensure both parent and school knowledge is used to inform practice.
- Parents are part of the conversation about implementing inclusive school practices and provide input into school improvement planning.
- Every parent feels welcomed and valued as part of the school community, and is comfortable expressing their views.
- Every interaction on the school grounds is respectful.
- 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 and wellbeing.



## 1. COMMUNICATION

Effective communication between schools, parents, students and the community forms the foundation for developing and maintaining partnerships. To have a significant impact on student outcomes, communication needs to be focussed on student learning and wellbeing. It must also be a genuine exchange of information and ideas between the student, the school, the home and the community.

Wooroolin State School has a responsibility to help parents understand the 'language of learning' including the terms used by teachers in the classroom with students to communicate learning goals and expectations. This will assist parents to discuss learning with their child at home and to effectively communicate with teachers using a common language.



### Links with the NSIT

Communication aligns with the following aspect of Domain 3 of the NSIT:

➤ Interactions between staff, students, parents and families are caring, polite and inclusive.

### Points to Consider

When considering effective communications, Wooroolin State School uses the following reflective questions regarding communicating and engagement -

- Is student progress communicated to parents in a positive and meaningful way? How? Are parents advised of student's strengths as well as areas for improvement?
- Is it clear what teachers and parents need to discuss? How?
- Is the school using language that is clear and accessible to parents and students and helpful for exploring learning development, challenges and success?
- How can school leaders work with parents and the community to establish a shared set of expectations about schooling?
- What practices support communication between the school and parents' individual circumstances including working parents, rural and remote parents and parents with a disability?
- Do all parents feel comfortable communicating with school staff? Do parents know the school's preferred communication channels? Is the school flexible with these arrangements? Does the school know parents' preferred modes of communication?
- How does the school communicate with community partners?



### Achieving Results: Ideas for Improvement

#### Every Day

Staff at Wooroolin State School seeks to—

- ✓ Ensure communication is positive, accurate, meaning and respectful to nurture a shared belief in high expectations for all students.
- ✓ Establish consistent expectations for how teachers communicate with parents to support student learning and wellbeing.
- ✓ Show that the school is genuine in its desire to build understanding of students' backgrounds by creating an environment that provides opportunities for students and parents to share their stories and perspectives.
- ✓ Use assistive technology and other communication aids to better support inclusion of students and parents with disability.



#### Early in the School Year

Early in the school year, Wooroolin staff—

- ✓ Take the opportunity to communicate and engage with parents and children who have recently enrolled at the school through parent information sessions.
- ✓ Establish opportunities for parents to meet with their child's teacher/s including open afternoons and a Parent Information Session
- ✓ Ensure parents know about the various methods of communication the school will use, and what opportunities are available for parents/carers to formally and informally communicate with the school. Wooroolin State School has an active website and facebook page. The school issues a fortnightly newsletter together with a regular P&C flyer as well as intermittent notices and flyers when needed. The principal makes herself available through an open door policy as well as communications to parents by phone and email.
- ✓ Invite the P&C to assist school staff to get to know their community through formal monthly meetings and regular informal conversations as needed.
- ✓ Ensure the P&C is reflective of the school community by inviting parents, staff and friends of Wooroolin State School to be active members of the P&C.



### Throughout the Year

- ✓ Staff at Wooroolin State School make informal contact a deliberate part of parent and community engagement. Staff spend time with parents and community members in informal settings and at social events so that school staff and family/community members can get to know each other and build respect and trust over time. Social events include our Melbourne Cup function, Grandparents' Day, Under 8s Day, playgroup, and the end-of-year break up.
- ✓ For new students, the school reviews Transition Statements, OneSchool information, transfer notes and any other information available from previous education providers
- ✓ Wooroolin State School sends home positive examples of students' work to show parents what their child has learnt. This can include project and assessment work.
- ✓ The school invites the wider school community to special event days at the school to showcase students' learning, for example weekly parades, Grandparents' Day, Under 8s Day and NAIDOC week.
- ✓ The school offers a Prep Transition programme.



## 2. PARTNERSHIPS WITH PARENTS

Quality partnerships require a reciprocal commitment from staff and parents to work together to improve student learning and wellbeing.

Wooroolin State School believes that learning is not limited to the classroom. The beliefs, expectations and experience of parents are powerful determinants in students' achievement. Effective partnerships can help to raise parents' awareness of their ability to improve their children's learning and wellbeing. Understanding the school, home and community contribution to student learning helps cultivate a holistic learning environment.



### Links with the NSIT

Building partnerships aligns with the following aspects of Domains 3 and 9 of the NSIT.

- Recognising parents and families as integral members of the school community and partners in student learning.
- Building partnerships with parents and families to improve opportunities and outcomes for students.
- Developing clarity around partner roles and responsibilities.

### Points to Consider

When considering partnerships with parents, Wooroolin State School uses the following reflective questions to analyse commitment and engagement -

- How do the school staff build a whole-school commitment to engaging with parents?
- How does the school ensure that it is inclusive of all parents in the school including parents with different cultural and educational backgrounds, working arrangements, and communication requirements?
- How can teachers and parents work together to help children learn?
- How does the school find out what would help parents?
- How do teachers seek to understand and learn about students, including their home situation and culture?
- How can parents better support teachers?



### Achieving Results: Ideas for Improvement

#### Every Day

Staff at Wooroolin seek to—

- ✓ Encourage all staff to model best practice by being friendly, caring and welcoming to parents to create a supportive environment and positively influence the behaviour of students.
- ✓ Recognise, acknowledge and utilise the expertise of staff, for example, consult with key staff for advice on engaging with cultures represented in the school community.



#### Early in the School Year

- ✓ Wooroolin State School works with parents to identify ways they can help their child's learning at home, for example:
  - provides advice about spaces and routines for homework
  - encourages parents to take a supportive interest in their child's progress and set clear expectations for outcomes
  - provide activities that parents can use to enrich learning in areas of interest or need
  - includes practical activities in homework that involve parents, especially in literacy and numeracy.

#### Throughout the Year

Wooroolin State School

- ✓ Offers professional development that gives teachers strategies to enhance communication with parents through staff meetings
- ✓ Discusses parent engagement strategies and ideas at staff meetings
- ✓ Involves students and parents in the development of individual curriculum, behaviour and/or personalised learning plans
- ✓ Conducts parent workshops, information sessions on commonly asked questions, for example, how to help children read, tailored and individual assistance, coding and robotics, transitioning to Prep/Junior Secondary. Wooroolin State School provides Teacher Relief Scheme (TRS) assistance to teachers to compensate for the preparation and delivery time to show that their expertise is valued and their time commitment is respected.

### Once a Year or As Needed

#### Wooroolin State School

- ✓ Identifies different aspects of parent participation occurring in the school and which staff members are responsible for supporting each aspect.
- ✓ Collects and analyses feedback from parent and teacher surveys including the School Opinion Survey.
- ✓ Establishes a clear process for parents to provide feedback to the school about what is working well, along with suggestions for improvements.





### 3. COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

Wooroolin State School does not exist in isolation. It leverages its position in the community to work together with other community members, such as the Grand Hotel, Wooroolin Lions, Wooroolin Community Group, Wooroolin Post Office and Wooroolin Machinery, for the benefit of all.

Effective collaboration provides opportunities for Wooroolin State School to develop a better understanding of our broader community and to build strong relationships within our local context.

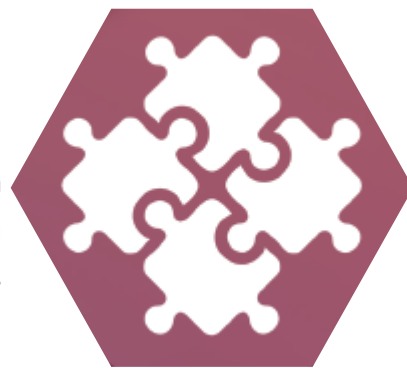
Community members and organisations offer unique knowledge, expertise and perspectives that Wooroolin State School can use to enhance student wellbeing and make learning more authentic and connected.

Positively geared community approaches make it possible for Wooroolin State School to form strategic partnerships with families and community organisations. This type of collaboration can help address issues external to the school and better support students' wellbeing and the ability to come to school ready and able to learn.

#### Points to Consider

In considering community collaboration, Wooroolin State School asks the following reflective questions -

- What are the key characteristics and strengths of the community (for example, demography, diversity, geographic location, local industries)?
- What can the community do to support the school in areas such as anti-bullying, civic responsibility and the development of social skills?
- What does the community, including local employers, expect from the school? How can they help students?
- How do community members/organisations show their commitment to working with the school? What is the purpose of the engagement?



#### Links with the NSIT

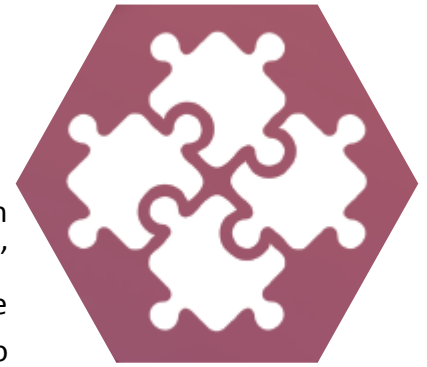
Community collaboration aligns with the following aspects of Domain 9 of the NSIT.

- Identifying and building community partnerships with local businesses and community organisations (including allied health, family support, counselling and rehabilitation services) to improve opportunities and outcome for students.
- Planning community collaboration and developing commitment.
- Collecting evidence to evaluate whether partnerships are having their intended impact in improving outcomes for students.

### Achieving Results: Ideas for Improvement

#### Early in the School Year

- ✓ Early in the school year, Wooroolin State School collaborates with staff and parents to determine a school vision to address students' learning, health and wellbeing needs, and to identify members of the local community who could complement and support the school to achieve this vision. This could include collaborations with organisations such as *Partners in Foster Care, Evolve, Family and Child Connect, Intensive Family Support, South Burnett Regional Council and Queensland Health*



#### Throughout the Year

Wooroolin State School—

- ✓ Reaches out to the local community to determine potential partners (e.g. Adopt-A-Cop, SES)
- ✓ Builds networks that have the potential for long-term sustainability, for example, linking Wooroolin State School with Kingaroy State High School.
- ✓ Considers how the school can formally recognise community partners or celebrate their mutual partnership.

#### Once a Year

Wooroolin State School

- ✓ Uses initiatives such as Fire Education to invite health and wellbeing partners to present work shops for students, parents and teachers.
- ✓ Participates in the ANZAC services at Wondai and Wooroolin.
- ✓ Performs at Forest View

#### One-Off

Wooroolin State School

- ✓ Considers how successful past students can be involved in events such as award ceremonies.
- ✓ Places poppies on war graves at the Memerambi cemetery.



## 4. DECISION-MAKING

Parent and community involvement at Wooroolin State School in decision-making encourages greater ownership and ensures local needs are reflected. Decisions about student needs involve effective consultation and collaboration with stakeholders and open and transparent communication at all stages of the process.

To support informed decision-making, parents and community members need to understand the purpose, aims and background to the issue, as well as the findings of any relevant evidence-based research. Reciprocal trust and ownership of decisions assist in successful implementation.

### Points to Consider

The following questions are considered in the decision-making process at Wooroolin State School—

- To what extent are goals, progress and achievements systematically and regularly monitored and refined if required?
- Is consultation and collaboration encouraging, open and honest?
- Does the school offer training and support to build parent leadership capacity, empowering parents to participate effectively in consultation?
- Does the school collaborate with the community by consulting on formal/informal decision-making, reviews and new school policies (for example, assessment, reporting and curriculum changes)?
- Has the school considered how it will include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents, Elders and community groups in decision-making processes?
- Are parents and community partners consulted as part of decision-making on issues in which they have a particular expertise?



#### Links with the NSIT

Decision-making aligns with the following aspects of Domain 9 of the NSIT:

- Major partnership decisions are made collaboratively and partnership activities are designed to make best use of partners' expertise.
- Goals, progress and achievements are systematically and regularly monitored and refined as required.
- Partners are involved in collaborative planning and committed to the purposes and objectives of the partnership.

### Achieving Results: Ideas for Improvement

#### Every Day

Wooroolin State School seeks to—

- ✓ Be open, accountable and transparent in decision-making.

#### Early in the School Year

Wooroolin State School seeks to—

- ✓ Encourage active participation in the P&C, and other school decision-making groups (eg PBL and Reading Teams).
- ✓ Involve parents and the school community in developing the *Responsible Behaviour Plan for Students* to align the behaviour expectations of the school to community expectations and build a shared understanding of what is expected.
- ✓ Offer training and skill development opportunities to parents and teachers to help them make the most of consultation opportunities.

#### Throughout the Year

- ✓ Wooroolin State School ensures its consultation processes are flexible to reach a wide range of students, parents and community members. Wooroolin uses different modes of communication for parents who may find it difficult to engage in decision-making.
- ✓ Wooroolin State School encourages student participation in decision-making through Student Council monthly meetings and Student Council monthly committee meetings. Wooroolin State School has a clearly defined process to develop the capability of students leaders so they can participate effectively in decision-making, as appropriate.
- ✓ Discussion and review of strategies being used to encourage parent and community engagement is discussed at staff meetings.
- ✓ Wooroolin State School involves independent third parties (e.g. Evolve) in consultation activities to enable discussions of matters that are particularly sensitive.
- ✓ The principal encourages the school's P&C to review the P&C Qld website for ideas on how to work with school leaders and to contribute to collaborative decisions, for example—business operations, policies and procedures.

#### Once a Year or as Needed

- ✓ Wooroolin State School seeks feedback from the P&C to determine if it considers parent and community partnerships are influencing school decisions and improving student outcomes.



## 5. SCHOOL CULTURE

Respectful relationships between Wooroolin State School, parents and the school community are actively cultivated and valued.

Nurturing a culture that respects and values difference among the whole school community is vital in supporting the inclusive engagement of all families.

Parent and community participation in student learning and the school community is acknowledged and recognised. This involvement sends a clear signal to students about the value of education.

### Points to Consider

Wooroolin State School reflects on the following questions when considering school culture -

- How is Wooroolin State School welcoming and supportive of all children and parents?
- What opportunities are given for parents and community members to participate in school activities?
- How does Wooroolin State School support and maintain mutually respectful relationships across its community?
- How does the school appreciate and value students' varying cultural backgrounds?
- How does the principal build the cultural competence of school staff?
- How can volunteers contribute to teaching, learning and wellbeing?
- How does the school community recognise and support volunteers?
- Are parents notified about major events well in advance so they can plan ahead?
- Does the school celebrate significant cultural days and events reflective of the broader Queensland community (eg NAIDOC?)



#### Links with the NSIT

A culture that promotes learning aligns with the following aspects of Domain 3 and 9 of the NSIT:

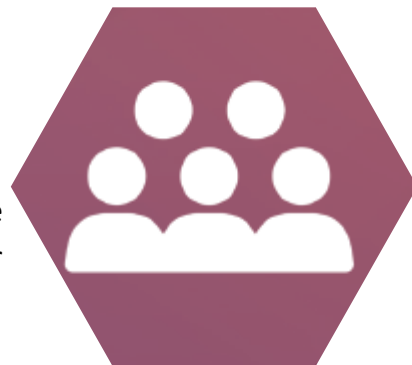
- All students and staff have an obvious sense of belonging, all parents are welcomed and all staff, students and parents speak highly of the school.
- School staff demonstrate an understanding of the importance of positive and caring relationships to successful learning, and work to build mutually respectful relationships across the school community.
- The school appreciates and values students' varying cultural backgrounds and works to build the cultural competence of school staff.
- Partnerships are sustainable and have become an accepted part of the culture of the school community and other organisations.



### Achieving Results: Ideas for Improvement

#### Every Day

- ✓ Staff at Wooroolin State School model and demonstrate the importance of positive and caring relationships through their connection with Kidsmatter.
- ✓ The principal and staff consider opportunities to be visible to parents and students, for example, at school pick-up and drop-off times and at school events.



#### Early in the School Year

- ✓ Staff at Wooroolin State School are provided with a school calendar outlining key dates where parent engagement is encouraged, including cultural events such as ANZAC Day and the Goomeri Pumpkin Festival that are relevant to the school and broader Queensland community.
- ✓ The principal leads staff discussion on the physical, attitudinal, communication and social environment of the school with parents and the community and staff and the P&C look at ways to improve inclusion of students and parents with disability, illness or other needs that require consideration.

#### Throughout the Year

- ✓ The principal collaborates with staff to build mutually respectful relationships across the school community and encourage staff to build relationships that will enhance student learning and wellbeing.
- ✓ The school creates informal areas around the school where parents and teachers can meet.
- ✓ Wooroolin State School seeks advice from the community about the kind of school events and activities they value.
- ✓ The school engages community members in designing and promoting learning experiences, school events and extracurricular activities such as Bugle Band and Guitar Club.
- ✓ The school provides guidance to volunteers about their obligations, school protocols and cultures represented in the school.

#### Once a Year

- ✓ Wooroolin State School updates a database of parent and community skills, talents and availability to draw on when appropriate.