Parent and Community Engagement Framework

Moonie State School
Purpose:

‘There must be a profound recognition that parents are the first teachers and that education begins before formal schooling and is deeply rooted in values, traditions, and norms of family and culture.’ Sara Lawrence Lightfoot

Parents are the first teachers for their children and schooling is secondary. Schooling is referred to as baby sitting (local teenager/grandparents/next door neighbour or family friends), Daycare, Kindergarten/Preschool, primary and secondary school.

**Extract: DETE**

(Department of Education, Training and Employment. – Parent and Community Engagement Framework)

Parents and the broader community play a vital role in supporting successful learning outcomes for our children. This framework is about schools engaging with parents and community to work together to maximise student learning outcomes.

The research tells us that the most meaningful partnerships are those where schools, parents, students and the community work together to focus on student learning. Parent and community engagement that is effectively focused on student learning can deliver powerful outcomes.

This Parent and Community Engagement Framework identifies what schools can do to strengthen learning outcomes for students – through effective partnerships between principals, teachers, students, parents and the community. It sends a call to action to our schools to focus on parents and community engagement as a key part of supporting student learning.

The quality of these relationships will determine the quality of learning. This framework outlines five key elements of parents and community engagement to make positive difference in our students’ education.
Introduction

Communication – Effective communication is an exchange between parents and carers, communities and schools that involves information sharing and opportunities to learn about each other.

Learning Partnerships – Partnerships between parents and carers, communities and schools that promote student learning and high expectations for student success.

Community Collaboration – Relationships with the school and wider community to strengthen the ability of schools and families to support student learning and developmental outcomes.

Decision-Making – Parents, carers and community members play meaningful roles in school decision–making.

Participation – Parents, carers and community participation in student learning and the school community is acknowledged and valued.

At Moonie State School we do:

Communication: Effective communication between schools, Parents, the community and students forms the foundation in developing and maintain partnerships. Schools also have a responsibility to help parents understand the language of learning.

- Use a range of communication tools and channels, including
  - Weekly newsletter – teaching staff are to put in a ‘blurb’ on what is happening in the classroom.
  - Updated our school website – very reader friendly and school Facebook page
  - Parades are hosted by the school leaders – hand out classroom awards
  - Formal Parent Interviews are conducted Term 1 & 3. Student Goals are updated. Data Books are discussed and the assessment tasks in the student portfolio.
  - Teachers are encouraged to share e.g. email address for easy access for parents.
  - Term Overviews are sent home at the beginning of each term for each class with the curriculum areas being covered and any other relevant information for that term.
  - Weekly updates emailed or sent home to parents from class teachers to keep them informed of their child’s learning
  - Invite parents into the classroom once a Term to watch what happens in their child’s room

- School Calendar – a Term calendar is sent home at the end of each Term for the following term with significant dates for the school and community. All parents and community members receive this calendar

- High expectations are talked about on weekly parade, published in the school newsletter and displayed on the school sign.

- Individual Student Data Reports are sent home each Semester with the report cards – this tracks all diagnostic tests across the year for parents to view student progress

- Moonie State School postcards are used by teaching staff to communicate with students, parents, community members as a special note received in the mail

- Moonie State School brochure sent home at the beginning of the school year for parents and community to view the schools expectations and priorities for that school year

- Online surveys – sent out to parents to complete if they choose when a new document / policy is being developed

- Parent information evening at the beginning of the school year to explain new programs and initiatives
Learning partnerships: Learning is not limited to the classroom. The beliefs, expectations and experience of parents are a powerful determinant in student’s achievement. Understanding the school, home and community contribution to student learning helps cultivate a holistic learning community.

- Parent interviews are paramount to our Goal Setting Program and Term Data Books.
- Transition of Pre-preps into school through the Pre-Prep program held in Term 4 with a qualified Early Years teacher (6 Weeks)
- Inclusion of ‘How to assist at home’ on Literacy and Numeracy strategies in the school newsletter for parents to use at home
- Principal Awards informs the school and wider community of the high expectations expected at Moonie State School.
- Moonie Travelling Kindy (local playgroup) attends school events liaising with the Kindy Leader.
- Attending Under 8s Day with Cluster schools to build relationships throughout our small communities
- Through the weekly newsletter, news articles on building resilience and improving literacy and numeracy levels. This is followed up at P&C meetings.
- Prep Enrolment Questionnaire completed by Pre-Prep parents for planning purposes in Prep
- Parents are encouraged to attend our weekly assembly to share in the success of our students
- School designed survey at the beginning of the year is sent home to gauge what parent focuses are and points of importance for the year regarding the school and their child’s education
- Working together as a whole school community how we can cater for every individual in our school taking into consideration their needs, interests and learning abilities (Inclusive Education)

Community collaboration: Schools do not exist in isolation - they are often the central hub of their community. Schools should leverage their position in the community to work together with other community members, for the benefit of all.

- Positive partnership with the district Health services
- Workshops on Reading/Comprehension to be offered (Ready Reading/ Sheena Cameron Reading Comprehension Skills)
- Workshops on ICTs Learnings are on offer for surrounding schools and parents.
- Community members are invited to all school events (e.g. Anzac Day ceremony, End of year concert, sporting carnivals, official openings)
- Community members volunteer their time to do the Moonie Weekly newsletter with a Teacher-Aide, which goes out to parents, community and the wider community away from Moonie. Hard copies and digital copies are received by a large number of people
- Working closely with the Moonie ICPA (Isolated Children and Parents Association) who contribute annually to support our school with Pre-service teachers, resources for the students and school, and support for staff and families in rural and remote settings
- We invite neighbouring small schools to attend our annual school athletics carnival to build relationships amongst our students so they know more students when they attend Boarding school in their Secondary schooling
- Class visits to the town library for reading time
The school has a close relationship with the town Sports Club by sharing facilities and resources, including the pool.

Grandparents Day – each year the school celebrates how important Grandparents are in our students lives and education by inviting them to join in end of year activities with their grandchild/ren. The students also send postcards to their Grandparents in October.

Community members teach our Religious Education program.

**Decision – Making:** Providing opportunities for relevant consultation ensure decision reflects local needs – whether for an individual student or the school as a whole. Greater community ownership and trust of school directions and decisions can be developed through open and authentic consultation.

**Policies/Frameworks to be contextualised at site**

**Principal begins talks with stakeholders – staff, parents, students and wider community**

**Principal drafts a response for the school community (including students, staff, parents and the wider community)**

**Principal shares and prompts discussion on the draft proposal at P&C Meetings and in School Newsletter**

**Principal and staff re – draft policy and present final draft to P&C for approval.**

**Principal presents new policy/framework to the wider community.**
Participation: In a society where parents lead complex lives, opportunities to participate in a variety of ways, times and places is key to improvement. Parent and community participation in student learning and the school community should be acknowledged and valued. This involvement sends a clear signal to students about the value of education.

- The school website and school Facebook site is up to date with events, news and pictorial evidence.
- Term calendar (handed out at the end of the term for the following term) and newsletter (yearly dateclaimer included each week) informs parents and community well ahead of time of upcoming events so they can plan to attend.
- Parent and community helpers are encouraged to assist in the classroom.
- Professional Development (Reading, Asbestos, Code of Conduct) are on offer for parents and volunteers.
- Ready Reading Volunteers are welcome – training for Ready Readers to be offered at Moonie State School.
- Encourage parents/caregivers to share their talents with the school community via flyers attached to the newsletter.
- Annual Father’s Day evening – fathers, grandfathers, step-fathers attend a fun-filled evening on the Friday before Father’s Day with their child/ren. The children share their work with their father, show them what has been happening in the school and then participate in games, followed by dinner.
- At each sporting carnival held at the school, we have a parent race against staff and student leaders, which is enjoyed by all involved and those watching.

Markers of strong parent and community engagement:

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- 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.
- Schools have 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, homework.
- 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.
Continual Improvement at Moonie State School to ensure we have solid relationships with all stakeholders who play an integral part in our children's education:

- The Teaching and Learning Audit Dimension 3 – a culture that promotes learning provides a mechanism for schools to review their parent and community engagement

- The School Opinion Survey also provides schools with valuable data to reflect upon the effectiveness of their parent and community engagement

- School and Community Partnerships is one of the central elements for inclusion in the Annual Implementation Plan and School Plan