

Engaging Parents

What We Know



Decades of research have consistently shown the value and importance of engaging parents* in student learning and wellbeing.

1. Recognised benefits for students

- Enhanced wellbeing and higher academic outcomes
- Increased confidence, motivation and engagement in learning
- More positive attitudes about school and improved behaviour
- Improved school attendance, continued enrolment, and higher rates of graduation
- Increased likelihood of participation in higher education

2. Momentum for parent engagement continues to grow

- Governments—nationally and internationally—recognise the imperative of engaging parents.
- Parent engagement is a focus in three Australian Professional Standards for Teachers.

3. Engagement and Involvement are different

- Parents keeping time at the sports carnival or fundraising for the fete are worthwhile school involvement activities as they may prove the first step toward engagement, but engaging parents is more effective.
- Parent engagement is an active process designed to bring parents and their child's learning and wellbeing closer together.

4. Positive, respectful relationships are crucial

- Effective parent engagement is possible when schools and families work in partnership and respect each other's unique contributions.
- A good relationship between school and home also means that when challenging situations arise—around a child's learning or wellbeing—conversations, and the outcomes for all involved, are more likely to be productive.

5. Parents appreciate personal, two-way approaches

- Parent engagement is enhanced when schools and teachers use easy, direct, personal forms of contact and communication which offer parents ways of *staying* connected.
- Some approaches may not genuinely engage parents in their child's learning, so their effectiveness should be regularly reviewed and changed or adjusted accordingly.

6. Keep it simple

Engaging parents in their child's learning and wellbeing does not need to be overwhelming. With every opportunity, ask:

- How can I bring parents closer to what their child is learning in the classroom/school?
- How might parents contribute in easy, effective ways?

These initial snapshots of ideas for schools come from the research project, *Engaging parents in student learning and wellbeing: Using inquiry curriculum and online technologies during COVID-19* (EPIC, 2021) conducted by Linda-Dianne Willis, Beryl Exley, and Narelle Daffurn from Griffith University in collaboration with ISQ and QIS Parents Network.

*We describe *parents* generally to include carers and families and broadly to include communities with the responsibility and care for a student's learning and wellbeing.

REFERENCE

Willis, L.-D., & Exley, B. (2020). *Engaging parents in their child's learning and wellbeing – Change, continuity and COVID-19*. Our schools – Our Future Issues Paper. Published by Independent Schools Queensland. Retrieved from <https://www.isq.qld.edu.au/publications-resources/posts/engaging-parents-in-their-child-s-learning-and-wellbeing/>