Parent and Community Engagement Framework

It's CLEAR at the Lake
Celebrate Learning Excellence Attitude Respect
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

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 development 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 Lake Clarendon State School we valued parental and community involvement in our school. In 2013 the staff and parents began their journey with the philosophy of GLASSER’S CHOICE THEORY followed by KIDS MATTER. Implementing Glasser into our school has changed the dynamics of interactions between students, parents and teachers. We value positive relationships and work towards developing our students into self managed individuals with the support of Parents and Teachers.

Kids Matter Primary is the Australian Primary Schools Mental Health Promotion, Prevention and Early Intervention Initiative.

It aims to improve the mental health and wellbeing of primary school students.

Kids Matter along with Glasser’s Choice Theory can be broken into 4 components

1. **A positive school community** – encourages schools to provide a sense of belonging and inclusion within the school community, a welcoming and friendly school environment, and a collaborative sense of involvement of students, staff, families and the local community.

2. **Social and emotional learning for students** – encourages the selection and systematic provision of a social and emotional learning curriculum that is taught to all students which addresses the five basic needs; Survival, Love, Belonging, Power, Freedom and Fun.

3. **Parenting support and education** – promotes school as an access point for families to extend their social and support networks, and to learn about parenting, child development and children’s mental health to assist parents and carers with their child rearing and parenting skills.

4. **Early intervention for students experiencing difficulties** – assists schools to support early intervention by identifying children showing early signs of mental health difficulties (as well as those children can support these students by referring them for assistance, monitoring their function at school, and closely liaising with parents, carers and support services.)

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At Lake Clarendon 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
  - Parades are hosted by classes on a roster basis – celebrate the weeks events and hand out ‘Good ones’ and ‘birthday’ prizes
  - Formal Parent Interviews are conducted Term 1 & 3. A Student Performance Profile is emailed to the parents at the end of every term. These profiles include goals, data collected on the student and assessment tasks and are added in the student portfolio after discussion with students.
  - Teachers share eq email address in our newsletter for easy access for parents.
  - Principal advertises mobile phone number on the weekly newsletter for parents to use any time.
  - Parent chats morning and afternoon.

- School Calendar is embedded in the newsletter and is available on our website.

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

**Learning partnerships:** Learning is not limited to the classroom. The beliefs, expectations and experience of parents is a powerful determinant in student’s achievement. Understanding the school, home and community contribution to student learning helps cultivate a holistic learning community.

- Parents interviews are paramount to our Goal Setting Program and Performance Profiles.
- Principal Awards (weekly) informs the school and wider community of the high expectations are expected.
- Hosting Cultural events, surrounding schools, parents and community members attend.
- Through the weekly newsletter, news articles on building resilience and improving relationships. This is followed up at P&C meetings.

**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 local doctor, paediatricians and psychologists
- Positive partnership with Indigenous parents – who help organise NADIOC Week
- Positive partnership with Auskick AFL. Students from other schools join us in participation after school.
- Positive partnerships with Band 6 school networks.
- Positive partnerships with Glasser schools to further our learnings in relationships.
- Workshops on Reading/Comprehension are annually on offer (Lexile/ Café 5)
- Workshops on ICTs Learnings are on offer for surrounding schools and parents.
- Chaplain will update school sign to advertise the strengths of the school and the wider community.

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**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.**

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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.

- Ensure the school website is up to date with events, news and pictorial evidence.
- Professional Development (Reading, Aesbostos, Code of Conduct) are on offer for parents and volunteers.
- Reading Volunteers are welcome – training for reading and comprehension are on offer at Lake Clarendon State School.
- Encourage parents/ caregivers to share their talents with the school community via flyers attached to the newsletter
- Parents and carers encouraged to attend and participate in parade celebrations.
- Solving Circles –parent volunteers from each class meet regularly to discuss positive and negative points of our school. We work in partnership to develop solutions.

Markers of strong parent and community engagement

Extract: DETE

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, curriculum and 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 (phone conversations and emails)

There are mechanisms to build relationships with relevant members of the community

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Continual Improvement

- The Teaching and Learning Audit Dimension 3 – a culture that promotes learning provides a mechanism for schools to review their parent and community engagement (2013 result High/Outstanding)
- The School Opinion Survey also provides schools with valuable data to reflect upon the effectiveness of their parent and community engagement (2013 100% parents satisfied)
- School and Community Partnerships is one of the central elements for inclusion in the Annual Implementation Plan and School Strategic Plan

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