

## Communicating with school

When families and schools work together, children are more likely to build good relationships and be more successful at school. There are things you can do at home, and with your child's school, to help your child to be their best.

Teachers can provide suggestions that can help you to help your child learn. To work together, parents and teachers should build positive relationships based on mutual respect and understanding of each others' role, knowledge and expertise.

Communicating about your child's wellbeing, their progress at school and ways you can help will all assist your child to be their best. Good communication between parents and teachers gets everyone on the same page.

*It's okay to ask for advice about how to help your child or ask questions about what's happening at school. It also helps teachers to know if there is anything outside school that may be affecting your child.*

This fact sheet includes some tips for communicating with your child's school.

**Get to know your child's teacher/s**

**Find out what's happening in the classroom**

**Find out what's happening at school**

**Contact school and ask how your child is going**

**Be part of your school community**

## Getting to know your child's teacher/s

Parents and teachers are important partners in supporting a child's learning. Having a good relationship with your child's teacher or school will help you get to know what your child is learning and how they are going. You can work together if your child needs some extra support and celebrate with your child when they do well. This shows your child how much you care about their learning.

You don't have to be at school all the time to get to know your child's teacher/s.

## Parents can:

In primary schools, where children have one teacher most of the time, you can:

get to know the names of your child's teacher, the principal, and other staff at your child's school

meet with your child's teacher to get to know them and to help them get to know your family

talk about your goals and aspirations for your child, what helps them learn, the things they are good at, the things they love doing and learning, and how you can best support them at home

ask about the best way

## Secondary school

In secondary school, where children have multiple teachers, you can:

attend welcome nights

attend parent information nights

attend parent/teacher interviews

ask about the best way to get in touch if you have questions

read the school's handbook, access a hard copy through the school or from the school website

participate in parent workshops or other activities and events to connect with the school

attend performances or concerts your child may be involved in or is considering being involved in

ask about the best way to get in touch if you have questions.

## Find out what your child is learning

### Primary school

There are a few ways you can find out what your child is learning in the primary school years:

- find out if your school provides families with a curriculum or learning plan for your child's class

- see if there is a weekly timetable that you can easily refer to at home

- ask your child's teacher to give the parents in your classroom a list of the work they are covering at school every few weeks

- make use of a phone app if your school is using one.

### Secondary school

In secondary school, information may be available in the school handbook, during parent nights or seminars, or on the website. You can access the term or semester plans for each of your child's subjects, some schools have these online. You can use this information to:

- have conversations with your child about how school is going

- help them plan their study time

- find movies, games, books or activities that relate to what they are learning at school

- discuss your child's subject and homework timetable with them.

## Find out what's happening in the school

As well as asking for information or feedback from teachers, you can keep up to date with what's happening within the school community by:

- attending welcome events or family days

- keeping an eye on the information the school sends home. This might be through emails, notes, newsletters, website updates, Facebook, Twitter or mobile apps.

## Communicate with your child's school

You don't have to wait for your child's school report if you have questions about how they are going or if you think they might need some extra help.

### At primary school you can:

ask your child's teacher about their learning goals for the class and your child, and talk about how you will know if they are on track

ask your child's teacher to let you know if your child has any significant achievements or important breakthroughs – so you can praise small achievements as well as big ones

set up a time to talk if you have any questions or concerns.

### At secondary school you can:

find out if the school has a contact person for parents (eg a liaison officer to direct your questions to)

use alternatives to parent teacher interviews (eg phone or email)

contact the home group or care group teacher who has an overall view of your child's learning

become familiar with your school's leadership structure (eg year-level manager or sub-school coordinator as an alternative point of contact in particular circumstances).

All children may have trouble with learning at some point. If you are concerned, or if a teacher raises a concern, having a conversation about the issue is an important first step. You can work with the school to come up with a plan. You can ask how you can help, what the school will do, and how you will keep track of progress.

## Being a confident and enthusiastic learner

One of the best things you can do to help your child be a confident and enthusiastic learner is to show and tell your child that you believe learning is important and that you believe in your child.

Being part of your child's school community is one way of showing them that you value their education. Not all parents are able to volunteer at school – and that's okay. The helping children and young people learn information sheets suggest other ways to support your child's learning. Grandparents, aunts, uncles and other important people in your child's life can come along to school events, and even participating in a couple of activities each year can mean a lot.

### Tips for getting involved in your school community

#### **Volunteer**

If you'd like to be involved in your child's classroom or school but don't know how, you can ask. Your child's school might have a volunteer register, or you can ask your child's teacher about ways that you might be able to get involved in class activities, such as reading help, art activities, helping keep the classroom organised, or telling stories about your culture. There might be opportunities to help with school clubs, coaching sport or a 'working bee'. Volunteers in the public education system will need to follow requirements set by the Department for Education and Child Development.

#### **Go to school meetings and events**

Attending concerts, plays, assemblies, meetings, and other activities is a good way to become familiar with your child's school community and to find out what is happening.

#### **Be heard**

If you have the time and desire, you can ask to be part of the school governing council. Attending governing council meetings is a useful way to meet other parents, form friendships and influence the school's approaches.

#### **Join in social activities**

Social activities with other parents and families can be a good way to be part of the school community.

