



Parent Participation and Home Partnerships

October 2016

Wahroonga Public School understands that the educational outcomes of students are improved when schools work in collaboration with the parent community and provide opportunities for parents to be involved in school events, decision making, policy development and strategic planning.

OBJECTIVES

The objective of this policy is to articulate the shared responsibility of school leadership, staff members, parents and the community to work transparently and cohesively with a culture of collaboration to best deliver both curriculum-related and extra-curricular programs for students that maximise the academic, social, emotional, spiritual and physical wellbeing of all. This policy explains the important collaborative and consultative role that parents and the community play in the daily and longer-term strategic operations of Wahroonga Public School.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

- A culture of collaboration underpins successful partnerships between schools and communities.
- The community and school want the best for their children which include the right to be given the opportunity to reach their academic, social, emotional and physical potential.
- Parents are the primary educators of their children.
- Staff members are qualified educational professionals with the overall accountability, custodianship and stewardship of the school.
- School leadership may, at times, make decisions without consultation, as the selected professionals responsible for operations and programs.
- Public primary schools work in a local context and should be responsive to local expectations and values.
- The Parents and Citizens Association represents the views of the community and is responsible for reporting to the principal and community.
- The principal takes advice from the Parents and Citizens Association.
- Families and the school value the diversity of families and use this as a resource for building partnerships and communities.
- Family-school partnerships are based on mutual responsibility, respect and trust.
- Partnerships strengthen the connections between the school and the community and involve a range of organisations.

RESPONSIBILITIES

All community members have responsibilities in the realisation of effective home/school partnerships. A sense of shared care and collaboration is central.

School leadership will:

- Promote collaboration between the school and community.
- Liaise with the local State and Federal members of parliament.
- Develop and review school policies to ensure they enable effective home/school partnerships.
- Provide opportunities for parents to provide feedback regularly.
- Respond effectively to parent feedback.
- Make decisions that take account of the diverse viewpoints of various stakeholders with educational justification.
- Consult the community regularly about the school's strategic plan and report about progress in relation to stated targets.
- Communicate with the school community succinctly and proactively.
- Utilise the Inclosed Lands Act on visitors to the site who act inappropriately.
- Investigate incidents involving students with regards to procedural fairness and report to parents in line with the school and Department of Education's Student Wellbeing Policy.
- Ensure that parents and community members who work alongside students have obtained appropriate Working with Children Checks.

Teachers and administrative staff will:

- Remain informed by Australian Professional Standards for Teachers.
- Be respectful and courteous in their interactions with parents and the community.
- Observe Departmental policies relating to Code of Conduct and Social Media Guidelines.
- Collaborate with parents in the development of individual learning adjustments for students.
- Invite parents to participate in school events and activities such as excursions or reading groups.
- Where opportunities for parents to attend special days are limited, select parents equitably.
- Communicate proactively and honestly with parents about concerns with student learning progress and behaviour.
- Advise parents at the beginning of the school year communication methods and accessibility.
- Access interpreters for either face-to-face or phone conferences as required.
- Follow through with agreed courses of action consequential to meetings with parents.
- Develop Areas of Focus documents each term outlining the term's learning focuses in each Key Learning Area and grade based events.

Parents will:

- Be respectful and courteous in their interactions with staff members and members of the community.
- Advocate for their child in a balanced, considered and considerate manner.
- Communicate proactively with teachers and other staff members when matters of concern arise.
- Refer to the communication flow chart when raising concerns.
- Use school channels to address concerns about another parent's child.
- Collaborate with teachers in the development of individual learning adjustments.
- Read all official school communication including both School Stream app content and Bush Telegraph newsletter information.
- Use parent distribution lists ethically by only discussing organisational matters or asking relevant questions.
- Be mindful of and respect teachers' limitations on accessibility including their responsibilities outside of the classroom. Make appointments as appropriate.
- When volunteering in classrooms, respect individual student's privacy and confidentiality and refrain from discussing student achievement or competence with any other parent.
- Obtain a Working With Children Check (volunteer) clearance and provide a copy to the office prior to volunteering in school events.
- Supportively reinforce school messages and values at home with students.

KEY DIMENSIONS OF EFFECTIVE HOME/SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS

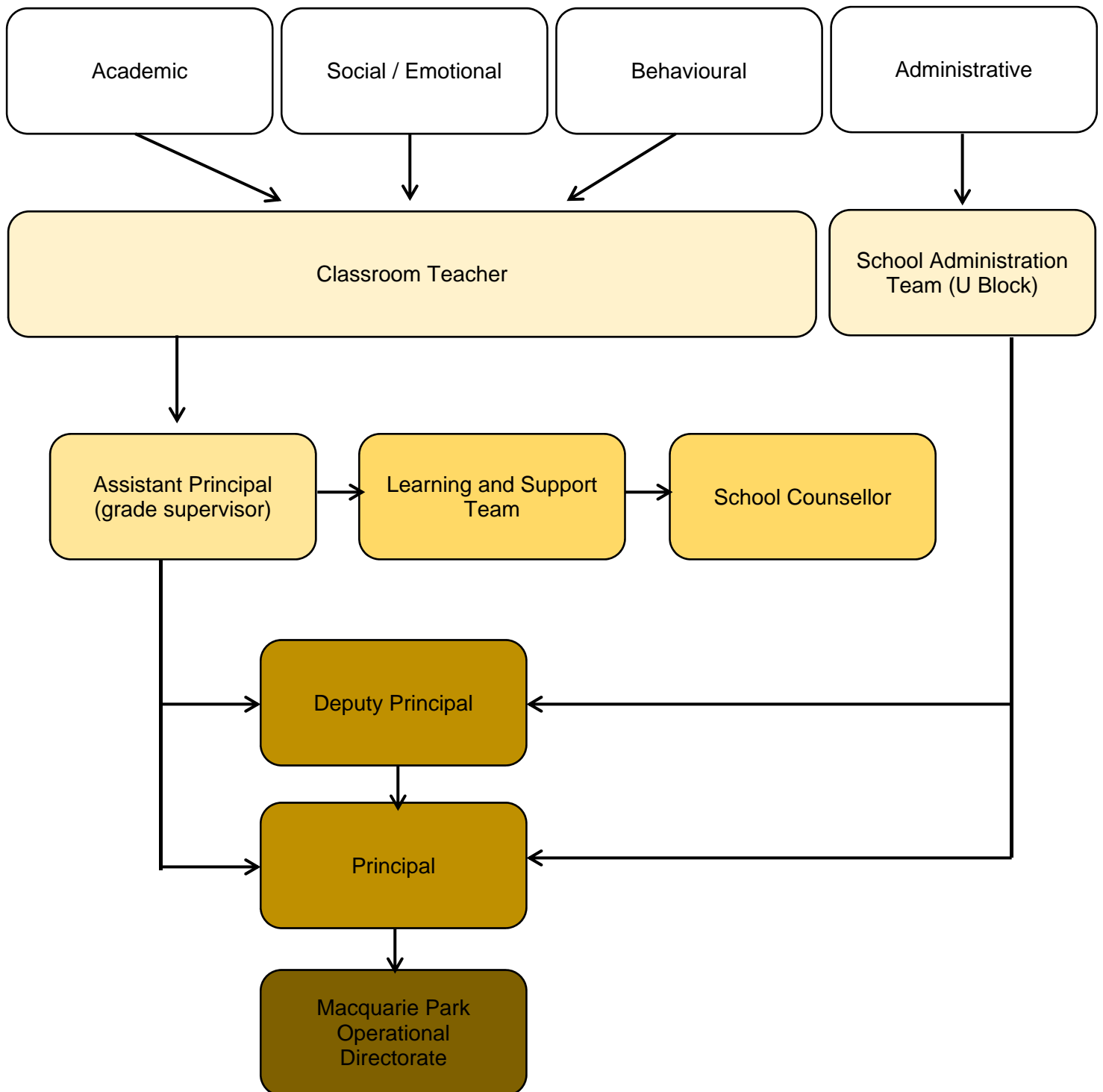
The following seven dimensions are recognised as being crucial to the formation and maintenance of successful home/school partnerships.

DIMENSION	STRATEGIES EMPLOYED BY THE SCHOOL
Communicating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Bush Telegraph newsletter ▪ Email access to wahroonga-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au and some staff members ▪ School smart device app School Stream ▪ @wpsbushschool Twitter account ▪ #wahroongaproud hash tag ▪ Information evenings at the beginning of each year ▪ Cultural representative groups and parent liaison ▪ Student leader tours of the site ▪ Customer Service Charter ▪ Parent library ▪ Parent class coordinator ▪ School handbook A-Z
Connecting learning at home and at school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Parent / Teacher formal interviews in Term 1 and on request thereafter ▪ Google Classroom lessons accessible from home ▪ Areas of Focus each term published on website ▪ Individual Learning Plans as required ▪ Personalised Learning & Support Plans as required ▪ Publication of referral services in the local community ▪ Copies of student work when receiving principal's awards ▪ Parent speakers in the classroom about their line of work ▪ Parents invited to staff professional learning sessions ▪ Newsletter pieces showcasing learning in the classroom ▪ Wordpress blogs maintained by some teachers
Building community and identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ BBQ breakfasts with the principal ▪ School roadside signage ▪ School values signage ▪ Read-alongs for toddlers in library ▪ P&C Social and Fundraising sub committee events e.g. barefoot bowls ▪ Wahroonga Masters Golf Day ▪ Local newspaper stories ▪ Kindergarten orientation Wahroonga Park play ▪ Ethics classes provided by parent volunteers
Recognising the role of the family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Publish School Plan on website ▪ Promote local parenting courses ▪ Home Partnerships policy ▪ Parent focus groups
Consultative decision-making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Parents included on committees ▪ Active P&C where any community member can add an item to the agenda ▪ Regular surveys ▪ Train P&C Executive through Federation ▪ Student Representative Council
Collaborating beyond the school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ After school care relations ▪ Local speakers ▪ Performing at local events ▪ Past students invited to speak at formal occasions ▪ Audio visual school museum (in progress)
Participating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Parent helpers in class and excursions ▪ Community 'Bush Patch' vege garden ▪ Parent experts invited to help at year-group workshops focussing on STEAM ▪ P&C 'Just One Thing' campaign ▪ Community Working Bees to improve grounds ▪ Suggestion box ▪ Published list of community hirers of facilities

COMMUNICATION FLOW CHART

To receive the most effective and timely response to a query, parents are asked to use the following chart when directing their communication within the school.

The flowchart only progresses to the next level if the issue or concern is not satisfactorily resolved.



T. Moth

Tom Moth
Principal

12 October 2016