

2020

Parent and Community Engagement Framework



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Table of Contents

National School Improvement Tool	2
Domain 3 – A culture that promotes learning.	2
Domain 9 – School-community partnerships.	2
Communication.....	3
Every day.....	3
Early in the school year	3
Throughout the year	3
Once a year	4
Learning Partnerships with Parents.....	5
Every day.....	5
Early in the school year	5
Throughout the year	5
Once a year	5
Community Collaboration.....	6
Early in the school year	6
Throughout the year	6
Once a year	6
One-off.....	6
Decision Making.....	7
Every day.....	7
Early in the school year	7
Throughout the year	7
Once a year	7
School Culture.....	9
Every day.....	9
Early in the school year	9
Throughout the year	9
Once a year	9
One-Pager	0
Appendix	0
References	1

National School Improvement Tool

Domain 3 – A culture that promotes learning.

The school is driven by a deep belief that every student is capable of successful learning. A high priority is given to building and maintaining positive and caring relationships between staff, students and parents. There is a strong collegial culture of mutual trust and support among teachers and school leaders, and parents are treated as partners in the promotion of student learning and wellbeing. The school works to maintain a learning environment that is safe, respectful, tolerant, inclusive and that promotes intellectual rigour. (Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER), 2020)

Domain 9 – School-community partnerships.

The school actively seeks ways to enhance student learning and wellbeing by partnering with parents and families, other education and training institutions, local businesses and community organisations. Parents and families are recognised as integral members of the school community and partners in their children's education. Partnerships are strategically established to address identified student needs and operate by providing access to experiences, support and intellectual and/or physical resources not available within the school. All partners are committed to the common purposes and goals of partnership activities. Procedures are in place to ensure effective communications, and to monitor and evaluate the intended impacts of the school's partnerships. (Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER), 2020)

Communication

Effective communication between Longreach State High School, our parents, our students and the Longreach community forms the foundation for developing and maintaining partnerships. To have a significant impact on our student outcomes, communication needs to be focused on student learning and wellbeing. It must also be a genuine exchange of information and ideas between the student, the school, the home and the community.

Longreach State High School has a responsibility to help our parents understand the 'language of learning' including the terms used by teachers in the classroom with students to communicate learning goals and expectations. This will assist our parents to discuss learning with their child at home and to effectively communicate with our teachers using a common language.

Every day

At Longreach State High School our staff will:

- ❖ Ensure communication is positive, accurate, meaningful and respectful to nurture a shared belief in high expectations for all Longreach State High School students.
- ❖ Use language that is clear and accessible to parents and the community. Avoid or explain confusing educational terms. Find ways to educate parents in the language of learning (for example, through school newsletters, social media, and information or discussion sessions).
- ❖ Establish consistent expectations for how teachers communicate with parents to support student learning and wellbeing.
- ❖ Provide access to information in other languages and modes to meet the diverse needs of parents and community members (for example, in person through sign language, translators, easy English, in written languages other than English). This may include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and parents and next of kin for whom English may not be a first language.
- ❖ Show that the school is genuine in its desire to build understanding of students' backgrounds by creating an environment that provides opportunities for students and parents to share their stories and perspectives.
- ❖ Use assistive technology and other communication aids to better support inclusion of students and parents with disability.

Early in the school year

At Longreach State High School our staff will:

- ❖ Take the opportunity to communicate and engage with our parents and students who have recently enrolled at the school.
- ❖ Communicate with parents about the best times for them to talk with teachers and encourage parents to share knowledge, aspirations and concerns with their child's teachers.
- ❖ Ensure parents know about the various methods of communication the school will use, and what opportunities are available for parents/ carers to formally and informally communicate with the school.
- ❖ Consider every aspect of communication including non-verbal cues, the design of physical spaces in the school (especially the school office), signage and the processes used by staff to make parents and community members feel welcome and valued.
- ❖ Invite the Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C) to assist school staff to get to know their community.
- ❖ Ensure the P&C is reflective of the school community.

Throughout the year

At Longreach State High School our staff will:

- ❖ Make informal contact a deliberate part of parent and community engagement. Spend time with parents and community members in informal settings and at social events so that school staff and family/community members can get to know each other and build respect and trust over time.
- ❖ For new students, review transitions statements, OneSchool information, transfer notes and any other information available from previous education providers.
- ❖ Send home positive postcards.
- ❖ Invite the wider school community to special event days at the school to showcase students' learning for example, Grandparents' Day, Under 8's day, NAIDOC week, Career Expos.
- ❖ Promote good news and activities through newsletters, social media and local media.

Once a year

Longreach State High School will:

- ❖ Organise school open days to allow community members to tour the school, promote students' work and allow the community to experience how the school operates.
(Queensland Government, 2020)

Learning Partnerships with Parents

Quality partnerships require a reciprocal commitment from Longreach State High School staff and parents to work together to improve student learning and wellbeing.

Learning is not limited to the classroom. The beliefs, expectations and experience of parents are powerful determinants in students' achievement. Effective partnerships can help to raise parents' awareness of their ability to improve their children's learning and wellbeing. Understanding the school, home and community contribution to student learning helps cultivate a holistic learning environment.

Every day

At Longreach State High School our staff will:

- ❖ Model best practice by being friendly, caring and welcoming to parents to create a supportive environment and positively influence the behaviour of students.
- ❖ Recognise, acknowledge and utilise the expertise of staff.

Early in the school year

At Longreach State High School our staff will:

- ❖ With consideration of the school community, work with parents to identify ways they can help their child's learning at home, for example: — provide advice about spaces and routines for homework — encourage parents to take a supportive interest in their child's progress and set clear expectations for outcomes — provide activities that parents can use to enrich learning in areas of interest or need — include practical activities in homework that involve parents, especially in literacy and numeracy.
- ❖ Consider a school-based community liaison officer to facilitate communication between parents, the community and the school.

Throughout the year

Longreach State High School will:

- ❖ Offer professional development that gives teachers strategies to enhance communication with parents.
- ❖ Discuss parent engagement strategies and ideas at staff meetings.
- ❖ Involve students and parents in the development of individual curriculum, behaviour and personalised learning plans.
- ❖ Offer parent workshops, information sessions or webinars on commonly asked queries.

Once a year

Longreach State High School will:

- ❖ Identify different aspects of parent participation occurring in the school and which staff members are responsible for supporting each aspect.
- ❖ Collect and analyse feedback from parent and teacher surveys.
- ❖ Establish a clear process for parents to provide feedback to the school about what is working well, along with suggestions for improvements.

(Queensland Government, 2020)

Community Collaboration

Effective collaboration provides opportunities for Longreach State High School to develop a better understanding of their broader community and to build strong relationships within the Longreach context.

Community members and organisations offer unique knowledge, expertise and perspectives that Longreach State High School can use to enhance student wellbeing and make learning more authentic and connected.

Community approaches to improving learning make it possible for Longreach State High School to form strategic partnerships with families and community organisations. This type of collaboration can help address issues external to our school and better support students' wellbeing and ability to come to school ready and able to learn.

Early in the school year

Longreach State High School will:

- ❖ Collaborate with staff and parents to determine a school vision to address students' learning, health and wellbeing needs, and to identify members of the local community who could complement and support the school to achieve this vision.

Throughout the year

Longreach State High School will:

- ❖ Reach out to the local community to determine potential partners.
- ❖ Build networks that have the potential for long-term sustainability.
- ❖ Establish relationships with community organisations, including disability organisations, to access expertise and perspectives that support improved learning and wellbeing outcomes for all students.
- ❖ Work with local community and business groups to develop shared policies and approaches to supporting effective learning and positive community outcomes.
- ❖ Develop relationships with key community personnel.
- ❖ Work with local industry to develop opportunities to enhance student learning.
- ❖ Include succession planning when developing partnerships.
- ❖ Consider options for guests to conveniently engage with the school.
- ❖ Consider how the school can formally recognise community partners or celebrate their mutual partnership.

Once a year

Longreach State High School will:

- ❖ Design, develop or review community collaboration strategies that support learning and wellbeing appropriate for students at different ages and stages of development.
- ❖ Invite local businesses to be involved in a 'careers expo' to showcase career opportunities to students.
- ❖ Use initiatives such as Mental Health week and Deadly Choices to invite health and wellbeing partners to present workshops for students, parents and teachers.

One-off

Longreach State High School will:

- ❖ Consider how successful past students can be involved in events such as award ceremonies or graduations.
- ❖ Establish school alumni to encourage ongoing support from past students, families and staff. This can be especially useful where alumni also represent local cultural communities.
- ❖ (Queensland Government, 2020)

Decision Making

Parent and community involvement in Longreach State High School decision-making encourages greater ownership and ensures local needs are reflected. Decisions about student needs should involve effective consultation and collaboration with stakeholders and open and transparent communication at all stages of the process.

To support informed decision-making, parents and community members need to understand the purpose, aims and background to the issue, as well as the findings of any relevant evidence-based research. Reciprocal trust and ownership of decisions assists in successful implementation.

Every day

Longreach State High School will:

- ❖ Be open, accountable and transparent in decision-making.

Early in the school year

Longreach State High School will:

- ❖ Encourage active participation in the P&C, school council and other school decision-making groups.
- ❖ Involve parents and the school community in developing the **Code of Conduct for Students** to align the behaviour expectations of the school to community expectations and build a shared understanding of what is expected.
- ❖ Enlist Indigenous education workers and community liaison officers to help build connections and to enable all parents and community members the opportunity to participate in consultation and inclusive decision-making. In particular, these staff may be able to help school leaders understand and engage with local protocols and processes about how communities make and communicate decisions.
- ❖ Offer training and skill development opportunities to parents and teachers to help them make the most of consultation opportunities.

Throughout the year

Longreach State High School will:

- ❖ Ensure consultation processes are flexible to reach a wide range of students, parents and community members. Use different modes of communication for parents who may find it difficult to engage in decision-making and if needed, use different languages to ensure all respondents can participate. Organise interpreters if required.
- ❖ Encourage student participation in decision-making processes. Develop the capability of student leaders so they can participate effectively in decision-making, as appropriate.
- ❖ Discuss and review strategies being used to encourage parent and community engagement at school leadership team meetings.
- ❖ Consider involving independent third parties in consultation activities to enable discussion of matters that are particularly sensitive.
- ❖ Welcome a diversity of views, beliefs, behaviours and preferences within communities.
- ❖ Establish networks to link parent and community leaders to the broader school community.
- ❖ Encourage the school's P&C to review the P&Cs Qld website for ideas on how to work with school leaders and to contribute to collaborative decisions.

Once a year

Longreach State High School will:

- ❖ Depending on the school community, formally or informally survey parents regarding their satisfaction with, and suggestions on, their involvement in the school's decision-making processes and suggestions for improvement.
- ❖ Evaluate if:

- consultative mechanisms about school priorities and needs have been effective
- goals are mutually set to meet the school’s vision.

❖ Seek feedback from the P&C and other partnership members to determine if it considers parent and community partnerships are influencing school decisions and improving student outcomes.
(Queensland Government, 2020)

School Culture

Respectful relationships between Longreach State High School, students, parents and the school community need to be actively cultivated and valued.

Nurturing a culture that respects and values difference amongst the whole school community is vital in supporting the inclusive engagement of all families.

Parent and community participation in student learning and the Longreach State High School community should be acknowledged and recognised. This involvement sends a clear signal to students about the value of education.

Every day

At Longreach State High School our staff will:

- ❖ Model and demonstrate the importance of positive and caring relationships.
- ❖ Consult key people for advice on engaging meaningfully with cultural groups in the school community for example Community Education Counsellors, regional and school-based Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Teacher Aides, and community liaison officers.
- ❖ Access to bilingual personnel for parent-teacher meetings, as appropriate.
- ❖ Be visible to parents and students.

Early in the school year

Longreach State High School will:

- ❖ Ensure staff have an understanding of inclusive education and the Department of Education's commitment to ensuring schools are supportive and engaging places for all school community members.
- ❖ Provide a school calendar outlining key dates where parent engagement is encouraged. Include cultural events that are relevant to the school and broader Queensland community.
- ❖ Discuss the physical, attitudinal, communication and social environment of the school with parents and the community and look at ways to improve inclusion of students and parents with disability, illness or other needs that require consideration.

Throughout the year

Longreach State High School will:

- ❖ Collaborate with staff to build mutually respectful relationships across the school community and encourage staff to build relationships that will enhance student learning and wellbeing.
- ❖ Consider creating informal areas around the school where parents and teachers can meet.
- ❖ Seek advice from the community about the kind of school events and activities they value.
- ❖ Engage community members in designing and promoting learning experiences, school events and extracurricular activities.
- ❖ Invite and support a diverse range of parents and community members to become involved as guest teachers and speakers.
- ❖ Build parent, caregiver and community participation by offering activities, events and roles that are respectful and meaningful. Provide guidance to volunteers about their obligations, school protocols and cultures represented in the school.
- ❖ Formally recognise the contributions that volunteers make to the school (for example, thank you letters).

Once a year

Longreach State High School will:

- ❖ Establish a clear process for parents to provide feedback to the school on their beliefs/experiences in relation to inclusivity.

- ❖ Provide professional development for staff in English as an Additional Language or Dialect support, and cross-cultural awareness and communication.
 - ❖ Develop/update a database of parent and community skills, talents and availability to draw on when appropriate.
- (Queensland Government, 2020)

LSHS Parent and Community Engagement Framework 2020-2021

Community

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Every Student Succeeding

- Formal Reporting occurs four times per year
- Parent/Teacher Interviews occur twice per year.
- Informal interactions via community and school events.
- Variety of open communication platforms:
 - Website
 - Facebook
 - QParent
 - Newsletter
 - Emails
 - Letters
 - Phone calls
- P&C Meetings

- A range of information sessions for Parents
 - Year 7 Transition Night
 - Senior Schooling Information Evening
- Introduction email sent home to parents at the beginning of each year from each of the student's teachers.
- Parents emailed assignments and revision notes.
- Timely notification to parents when student is requiring extra support.

- Longreach State School
- Our Ladies Catholic Primary School.
- Longreach School of Distance Education.
- Longreach Shire Council
- Outback Futures
- RAPAD
- RESQ
-

- Active participation in the P&C is encouraged.
- Involve parents and the community in developing and reviewing school policies.
- Annual School Opinion Survey.

- Implementation of the School Learning and Wellbeing Framework (SLAWF).
- Implementation of the Inclusion Framework.
- Hold a range of school events:
 - Harmony Day
 - NAIDOC Celebrations
 - ANZAC Day
 - Themed Days
 - Athletics and Swimming Carnivals
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Appendix

References

Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER). (2020). *National School Improvement Tool*. Retrieved from School Improvement: https://www.acer.org/au/school-improvement/improvement-tools/national-school-improvement-tool?tfa_1_success=1#form-one

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