



Engaging with colleagues, parents and carers, and the community

In Australia, teachers are highly esteemed professionals who play a crucial role in shaping the future of the nation. They are dedicated to fostering a positive learning environment and are deeply committed to their students' success. Teachers engage professionally with colleagues, parents, and the broader community.

Colleagues

Schools in Australia vary in how they encourage collaboration between colleagues to support teachers to improve their practice. It is a requirement that all teachers seek and apply constructive feedback from supervisors and other teachers to improve their teaching practices. This requires daily collaboration and a culture of growth and teamwork. As a teacher in Australia, you will be working alongside a wide range of other professionals and teachers in varying roles.



Roles in Australian schools

Below is a list of professional roles within schools. Please note, role titles may differ across different systems, sectors and schools.

Principal: The head or director of a school, sometimes referred to as the Headmaster or Dean.

Assistant Principal: Reports directly to the principal and assists them in their responsibilities in their absence. Sometimes referred to as the Vice Principal, Deputy Principal, or Associate Principal.

Phase Leader: A highly skilled classroom practitioner who assists in improving the school's delivery of the curriculum and teaching of a specific learning area within the school. Sometimes referred to as a Curriculum Area Leader.

Learning Specialists or Instructional Coaches: Highly skilled teachers who deliver demonstration lessons and coach other teachers in curriculum delivery, assessment, and lesson creation.

Highly Accomplished and Lead teachers, commonly known as HALTs: Recognised in some systems and sectors as performing at the Highly Accomplished or Lead career stage of the Teacher Standards and having completed a process to gain national certification as a HALT. These teachers may or may not take on extra responsibilities within the school. Systems or sectors which do not offer HALT certification may have alternative recognition processes for expert teachers, with an alternate role title.

Classroom Teacher: The person who holds primary responsibility for the learning of every student in their class.

Learning Support Teacher: A fully qualified teacher that focuses on teaching small groups of students in pull-out lessons to catch them up to grade level. Sometimes referred to as an Interventionist or Intervention Teacher. They may also have responsibility for monitoring the school's compliance with the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data, more commonly known as the NCCD and inclusive practices for culturally and linguistically diverse learners.

Learning Support Officer: A diverse range of roles depending on the school, which range from administrative support to direct student and teaching support. May also be referred to as a Teacher's Aide, Teaching Assistant, or Mentor.

External staff: Depending on the school setting and the makeup of the students in your classroom, external providers may deliver services in the school. External staff may include Occupational Therapists, Speech or Language Pathologists, or other allied health professionals. In addition, some schools employ consultants for school improvement or allow private tutors or external music teachers on campus during school hours if requested by parents.

Casual relief teacher: is a registered teacher who teaches a school class when the regular teacher is absent or unavailable e.g., because of illness, personal leave, maternal leave and so on. Also known in other countries as a supply teacher, emergency teacher or substitute who works on an ad-hoc or on emergency basis across different schools.

Parents and carers

Australian parents and carers have a high level of involvement in their child's education, and as a teacher, you will be expected to engage with parents and carers using a broad range of strategies to involve them in the educative process.

Families play an essential role as the first educators of children therefore, ongoing, active engagement of parents, carers, families and communities has a significant impact on a child's success at school. Teachers and schools can support parent and carer engagement in learning by building partnerships to connect learning at home and school. While working with parents and carers, it is crucial to understand strategies for working effectively, sensitively, and confidentially.



Community

The role of community will vary depending on the location of your school, as well as the sector in which you are employed, and school leaders will encourage ties to the local area. Community plays an important role within regional and remote settings, particularly for active engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members of a local community. Senior members, such as Elders, may collaborate with teachers and leaders in learning projects and community events. Within the Catholic sector or in other religious schools, the connection to the local diocese or parish and surrounding schools and neighbourhoods is often part of a school's ethos.





Resources:

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The parent engagement implementation guide

The [Parent Engagement Implementation Guide](#) aims to provide school communities with practical guidance on implementing successful parent and family engagement practices.

The guide was developed by the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY) and is the result of a four-year parent and family engagement in learning project funded by the Australian Government.

Australian Council of State School Organisations

This Australian Council of State School Organisations (ACSSO) website provides tools and links which support [family engagement](#) practices in schools and how families encourage learning at home and in the community.

Catholic School Parents Australia

Catholic School Parents Australia have developed a comprehensive toolkit called [Gearing Up for Parent Engagement in Student Learning](#) which provides practical information including case studies to assist school staff and families to develop a better understanding of the importance of relationships between home and school.

Student Wellbeing Hub

The Australian Government's [Student Wellbeing Hub](#) offers a wide range of resources for teachers to enhance wellbeing and learning including a selection focused on establishing and maintaining effective partnerships.

Reflection questions

Use these reflection questions as a checklist to ensure you know about successfully engaging with colleagues, parents and carers, and the community:

- Who are the other adults in your classroom? How do you work alongside and collaborate effectively with these professionals?
- How do you engage parents and carers in their child's learning?
- How easy do you find talking to parents or carers? How could you build this skill?
- Have you been involved with all families in your classroom? Is there any student whose parents or carers you haven't contacted this year?
- How do you communicate sensitive matters to parents and carers, such as challenging student behaviour or learning challenges?
- Who can help you engage parents and carers at your school?
- Who are the other relevant individuals or groups in your school community?

