

# Engaging with colleagues, parents, carers and the community

Engaging with colleagues, parents, carers, and the community is essential for teachers in Australia to provide a holistic education for their students. These connections create a strong support network that benefits students' academic and social development.

## Meeting professional ethics and responsibilities

Adhering to professional ethics and responsibilities is critical for every teacher. There is an expectation that every teacher in Australian classrooms maintains high standards of professionalism in their conduct and interactions. As a teacher in Australia, it is essential to understand and comply with various legislative and workplace requirements which are in place to ensure a safe, fair, and effective learning environment for all students. Staying informed about legal obligations, such as child protection laws, privacy policies, and workplace health and safety standards is important, and employers will assist teachers to meet their obligations. This knowledge helps teachers fulfil their responsibilities, protect students' rights, and maintain professional standards in teaching practice. By adhering to these requirements, teachers demonstrate their commitment to creating a positive and safe educational environment for staff and students.

*"Understanding the educational policies, procedures, and practices is critical. As teachers we are all mandatory reporters and therefore have legal requirements we must meet so it's important to know where you go and what you do with that information if a student discloses to you."*

---

**Lead Teacher - Secondary**

## Engaging with colleagues

Engaging and collaborating with colleagues enables teachers to share knowledge and support each other in professional growth to promote better outcomes for students. Teachers in Australia engage and collaborate with colleagues through various structured and informal methods. One key approach is through Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), where teachers regularly meet to discuss and share best practices, analyse student data, and develop effective teaching strategies. School leaders support collaboration in Australian schools in a variety of ways including providing time and resources for teachers to engage in professional dialogue, classroom observations, and feedback sessions. Teachers work together to plan and design effective teaching programs, evaluate their impact on student learning progress and modify their strategies, and take on leadership roles to initiate and lead professional discussions. This collaborative learning environment not only enhances teaching practices but also builds trust and a sense of community and common purpose among educators.

*"It's crucial to build rapport with your direct supervisor and have that connection. Be open and honest about how you're feeling because we are all people at the end of the day, regardless of our knowledge or what we bring to the classroom. I also suggest making a connection with your teaching colleagues, as they are the ones you will rely on and learn from throughout the years."*

---

**Highly Accomplished Teacher - Primary**

## Engaging with parents, carers and the wider school community

Including parents and carers as partners in the educational process is a core aspect of education in Australia and encourages a supportive home environment, enhancing student learning and well-being. Research indicates that students perform better academically, exhibit improved behaviour, and develop better social skills when their families are actively involved in their education. This collaborative approach ensures that students receive consistent expectations both at home and at school, leading to a more holistic educational experience. Further to this, engaging with parents, carers and the wider school community helps teachers understand the diverse backgrounds of their students, building a culture of high expectations while promoting inclusivity and cultural awareness.

*“When communicating, I emphasise to parents that we’re in a partnership. I might say, ‘I apologise for taking up your time, but I need to discuss this with you.’ It’s about working together, not handing off the problem. I encourage them to participate in finding solutions, this fosters collaborative problem-solving and ensures it’s a two-way discussion rather than a one-sided burden.”*

### Highly Accomplished Teacher – Secondary

Effective community engagement also supports students during key transition periods, such as moving from primary to secondary school. By fostering strong connections with the community, schools can ensure that students receive the necessary support to navigate these changes successfully. This collaborative approach not only benefits students academically but also contributes to their social and emotional well-being, setting them up for long-term success.

Schools that engage authentically with their parents, carers and communities help instil positive values, attitudes, and behaviours for learning that extend beyond the school boundaries. This engagement supports the development of a cohesive school culture where all members feel valued and included. By working together, schools and communities can create an environment that encourages students to strive for excellence and fosters a sense of belonging.

*“Australia is a melting pot of many different cultures and backgrounds. We have different types of families at schools.....with every permutation of parent arrangement and blended multicultural families. Understanding that this diversity is normal in Australia is important. We have people from across the world, and we celebrate it, so understanding you’re coming into a very rich melting pot of people is crucial. It’s important to understand the key events in different cultures to support and celebrate with families, ensuring everyone feels involved. I haven’t been in a school yet that hasn’t had that multicultural aspect. There needs to be an understanding and embracing of it.”*

### Highly Accomplished Teacher – Preparatory

#### Take action: Professional Learning Communities

Watch AITSL’s [In the Classroom video](#) to see how learning diversity leaders and classroom teachers share experiences and reasonable adjustment strategies to support the student transition from primary to secondary school.

