

BE A PART OF YOUR SCHOOL COMMUNITY

Family-school and community partnerships are re-defining the boundaries and functions of education. They take education beyond the school gates.

All experiences children have shape their sense of self-worth and competence, their attitudes to learning, their understanding of the world, and their dreams for the future.

Children of all ages feel good and learn best when adults in their lives - parents, carers, other family members, teachers and community people - work together to encourage and support them.

Some schools and families think education is the school's job. But education is a shared responsibility. There are many benefits when families are engaged in their children's learning and involved in their children's schools.

Becoming a part of a school community or volunteering helps families to feel welcome and be involved, and helps schools to access very valuable support.

Volunteering is not just about doing things at the school during school hours or with sports teams. It is about supporting school programs and student activities 'in any way, at any place, and at any time'.

Volunteering does not have to be a big commitment. Choose a couple of things across the school year that will work for you and commit to these.

Active and successful involvement of parents in schools makes an important contribution to student success and to the school community - building social capital is everyone's business.

Find something that feels right for you

Not everyone is suited for the same type of involvement - you may have to 'try on' a few activities before you find something that feels right for you.

- Look at your school's newsletters and website to find out some ways that parents can help to support students, teachers and the school.
- Volunteer for an excursion, participate in a reading program, attend a storytelling session, work in the library, go to a celebratory event, offer to share some of your own culture, help put up a display or put on an event, help with a sports team or other co-curriculum activity. Perhaps your school has a student or family support program, or a community partnership that you can become involved in? Maybe you can lead a class or after-school activity? Maybe you can help to find a guest speaker, or offer a contact name in a community organisation? Perhaps there are online opportunities to be involved?
- Stay informed and engaged in your school community, read school newsletters, do a school survey or use the parent portal if your school has one or attend an information session.
- Do you have a passion for something that can be translated into an activity to support your child's learning? Can you get some ideas from teachers about how you can support the curriculum in activities at home and in your local community?
- Perhaps you will be interested in joining a school committee or working group, or the school board/council? If you aren't sure what board/council work involves, you can research this through the online Guide for Parents on School Boards and School Councils (<https://www.studentsfirst.gov.au/guide-parents-school-boards-and-school-councils>).

Remember volunteering:

- Isn't just about doing things at the school in school time
- Doesn't have to take up lots of time
- Will work best for you when you find something that feels right and fits with life
- Is a great way to build relationships
- Enriches students' education opportunities
- Builds your confidence and skills
- Shows your child that you are interested in their education

For more information visit: www.austparents.edu.au