

policy **COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION**

To be read in conjunction with Volunteer Policy and Grievance Procedure

RATIONALE

Members of the Sunshine school community model the belief that all people deserve respect and publicly recognise the efforts and contributions of individuals and groups.

A school climate that encourages growth and change is desirable and should be developed and maintained with parents regularly invited to join in partnership with teachers and students so they can confidently participate in decision making processes and support the learning environment at school and at home.

It is recognised that the school will invite participation of parents, guardians and community groups to assist in the support and development of our students.

AIMS

To enable parents and guardians to:

- play an active role in all aspects of their children's schooling
- build positive community and school links (based on the six principles of effective community involvement of volunteering, establishing home learning conducive to learning, effective two way communication, support with home school tasks and educational decisions, developing community leaders, and developing community agencies that will support and strengthen the home/school learning relationship)
- feel valued and welcome in the school setting
- become aware of school expectations, processes and issue resolution procedures
- to use ARDOCH to place suitable volunteers in a range of activities.

IMPLEMENTATION

Where ever possible the school community will support and develop parent, guardian and volunteer participation through:

- 1. Recruiting and organising parent, guardian and community organisation, help and support:**
 - by recruiting volunteers widely so that all families know that their time and talents are welcome
 - make flexible schedules for volunteers, assemblies and events to enable parents who work to participate
 - organise volunteer work, provide training, match time and talent with school, teacher, and student needs, and recognise efforts so that participants are productive

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2. Assisting all families establish home environments to support children as students by:

- providing information to all families who want it or who need it, not just to the few who can attend workshops or meetings at the school building
- enable families to share information about culture, background, children's talents and needs with schools
- assure that all information for and from families is clear, usable, and linked to children's success in school.

3. Design more effective forms of school-to-home and home-to-school communications with all families each year about school programs and their children's progress:

- forms will be readable and have clarity, in all forms of memos, notices, and other print and non-print communications
- communications will consider parents who do not speak sufficient English, do not read well, or need large type two-way channels for communications from home to school and school to home will be established through developing clear guidelines for conflict and grievance resolution
- Communication will also be available on the school website.

4. Provide information and ideas to families about how to help students at home with learning:

- parents and teachers should be encouraged to work together to develop Learning Improvement Plans for children where needed
- in-service and information sessions should be made available to parents to ensure they feel part of a team and to inform and support them in their work around the school
- teachers should specifically model procedures they expect parents to perform as volunteers in the classrooms.

5. Include parents in school decisions through, School Council, subcommittees, parent forums and developing parent leaders and representatives:

- include parent leaders from all of racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, and other groups in the school
- offering training to enable leaders to serve as representatives of other parents, with input from and return of information to all parents
- include students (along with parents) in decision making groups.

6. Identify and integrate resources and services from the community to strengthen school programs, family practices, and student learning and development:

- inform families of community programs for students, such as mentoring, tutoring, business partnerships, and other programs
- assure equity of opportunities for students and families to participate in community programs or to obtain services
- match community contributions with school goals; integrate child and family services with education.

EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle.