COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT POLICY

Parents and the broader community play a vital role in supporting successful learning outcomes for students at Salesian College. This policy aims to improve engagement with parents and the wider community to maximise student learning outcomes.

The education of our students is a shared responsibility, benefiting all students, our society and economy as a whole. Therefore, parents and the broader community have a reciprocal responsibility to engage with the College.

The College is better able to support student achievement by developing strong engagement with and between:
- students
- teachers
- parents and carers
- support staff
- community, industry and business groups.

Communication
Effective communication between the College, parents, the community and students forms the foundation in developing and maintaining partnerships. The College takes seriously its responsibility to help parents understand the language of learning.

To achieve this, the College aims to:
- communicate student progress to parents in a positive and meaningful way
- be clear about what teachers and parents need to discuss
- develop a shared language of learning between teachers and parents to explore the learning development, challenges and successes of students
- ensure that working parents or parents with language barriers can communicate with the school
- develop effective communication strategies with industry and business partners

Some strategies the College will adopt include:
- use of home-school liaison personnel to teach parents the language of schooling, including the nature of today's classrooms, how to speak with teachers and how to talk to their children about their schooling experiences
- use a range of communication tools and channels, including newsletters, websites, e-mails, assemblies, parent/teacher interviews, P&F meetings, web conferencing and text messages
- developing a school transition calendar outlining key points in the school year where engagement of parents and the community is vital
- being aware of and communicating how to access information in other languages and forms
- providing professional development for teachers to effectively communicate with parents
- sharing a consistent and ongoing message of high expectations for all students and their learning.

Learning partnerships
Learning is not limited to the classroom. The beliefs, expectations and experience of parents is a powerful determinant in student's achievement. Understanding the school, home and community contribution to student learning helps cultivate a holistic learning environment.

To achieve this, the College aims to:
- support parents to be positively involved with their child’s learning, at home and at school
- help teachers and parents work together to help children learn
- leverage community, industry and business knowledge and skills
- develop partnerships with the community to deliver more innovative models of partnership development, education and training
- assist teachers to understand and learn about their students and their culture, including their home and community contributions

Some strategies the College will adopt include:
- Build relationships with local early years services
- Include practical literacy and numeracy activities that involve parents in homework
- Provide parent/teacher workshops targeting areas of need or interest such as student resilience, literacy and numeracy
- Embed the practice of involving parents in goal setting and career planning discussions with their children
- Connect culture and learning by partnering with elders in educational experiences
- Develop local strategies to support transitions between early childhood education and care, primary school and secondary school, higher education and the workforce.

Community collaboration
The College does not exist in isolation – it is a central hub of the community. As such, we aim to work together with other community members, for the benefit of all.

To achieve this, the College aims to:
- find out what the community can do to support the school in areas such as drug education, anti-bullying, civic responsibility and the development of social skills
- find out what the community, including local employers, expect from the school, and how can they help student learning

Some strategies the College will adopt include:
- Generate and maintain contact with relevant health professionals in the area to support referrals
- Develop a school alumni group and other marketing materials such as school banners and fence signs
- Open school facilities for community use, including adult learning, community meetings and community interest groups
- Build networks to establish a community integrated student support/health/early childhood services hub, including Child and Family Centres.

Decision-making
Providing opportunities for relevant consultation ensure decisions reflect local needs – whether for an individual student or the school as a whole. Greater community ownership and trust of school directions and decisions can be developed through open and authentic consultation.

To achieve this, the College aims to:
- develop genuine, encouraging open and honest dialogues
- offer training and support to build parent leadership capacity, empowering parents to participate effectively in consultation
- consult on all formal/informal decision-making, reviews and new school policies (for example, assessment, reporting and curriculum changes)

Some strategies the College will adopt include:
- Consult flexibly to reach a cross-section of students, parents and community members, not just the most confident
- Ensure information regarding consultation opportunities is widely circulated in a variety of forms
- Offer training or skill development opportunities to parents and teachers
- Develop strategies to help teachers balance any time and workload issues that may result from their involvement with consultative decision-making
- Encourage active participation in the school council and/or the P&F and encourage student participation in decision-making processes.

Participation
In a society where parents lead complex lives, opportunities to participate in a variety of ways, times and places is key to improvement. Parent and community participation in student learning and the
school community should be acknowledged and valued. This involvement sends a clear signal to students about the value of education.

To achieve this, the College aims to:
- encourage parents and community members participate in school activities
- recognise and support volunteers of the College
- notify parents about major events well in advance so they can plan ahead
- celebrate significant cultural days

Some strategies the College will adopt include:
- Load events, meetings and assessment calendars on the school website at the start of each term, semester or year
- Develop a database of parent and community skills, talents and availability to draw on when required
- Engage community members and business in designing learning experiences and extracurricular activities
- Invite parents and community members to become involved as guest teachers and speakers
- Regularly build parent engagement and/or involvement into staff meetings to strengthen commitment, knowledge and skills.

RELATED PROCEDURES
- Enrolment
- Parents & Friends
- Social Media
- Twilight School