



# FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT NETWORK POLICY

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## FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT NETWORK (FACE)

Catholic schools commit to nurturing active partnerships with families and providing parents and caregivers with opportunities to participate in the life of the school community. The student's learning journey is enriched through positive and reciprocal relationships.

### HISTORY

A group of parents participating in the workshops over our first year of operation in 2013 provided the following information which assisted in formulating the FACE Network policy which was presented at the FACE Meeting on 12 November 2014. The story continues to be told.

Parents believed that: -

- FACE gives families a voice regarding involvement in their child/children's education
- FACE provides a welcoming spirit of involvement minus the obligation
- FACE is a shared responsibility and equity
- FACE provides opportunities to spread the word
- FACE provides an open communication
- FACE has a focus on Professional Development
- FACE suggests that when parents are involved, children are proud and they are learning.

### INTRODUCTION

#### THE ALICE SPRINGS EDUCATION DECLARATION

##### The Education Goals for Young Australians

Improving educational outcomes for all young Australians is central to the nation's social and economic prosperity and will position young people to live fulfilling, productive and responsible lives. The Declaration has two distinct but interconnected goals:

Goal 1: The Australian education system promotes excellence and equity

Goal 2: All young Australians become:

- Confident and creative individuals
- Successful lifelong learners
- Active and informed members of the community

Achieving these education goals is the responsibility of Australian Governments and the education community in partnership with young Australians, their families and carers and the broader community.

## Developing Stronger Partnerships

Parents, carers and families are the first and most important educational influence in a child's life. They have a critical role in early development, including social, emotional, intellectual, spiritual and physical wellbeing. They instil attitudes and values that support young people to access and participate in education and training and contribute to local and global communities. It is critical for the education community to work in partnership with parents, carers and families to support a child's progress through early learning and school.

Partnerships create opportunities for young Australians to connect with their communities, business and industry and support the development and wellbeing of young people and their families. These connections and associations can facilitate development, training and employment opportunities, promote a sense of responsible citizenship and encourage lifelong learning. These partnerships should aim to enhance learner engagement, progress and achievement.

In particular, the development of partnerships and connections with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities will greatly improve learning outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and benefit all young Australians. Effective partnerships are based on culturally supportive and responsive learning environments.

Welcoming and valuing the local, regional and national cultural knowledge and the experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples will help the education community to build authentic partnerships with local communities and teach young Australians the value of our nation's rich history. More importantly, it will foster a culturally supportive learning environment where all young Australians can thrive educationally and in all facets of life.

**Australian Governments commit to building partnerships that support learners' progress through the education system, and to provide them with individualised, high quality learning opportunities and experiences, and personal development. Further, Australian Governments commit to fostering these**

## THE FAMILY

***"The family, as the fundamental and essential educating community, is the privileged means for transmitting the religious and cultural values which help the person to acquire his or her own identity. Founded on love and open to the gift of life, the family contains in itself the very future of society."*** <sup>1</sup> Familiaris Consortio 1981 Pope John Paul 11.

Home and school support each other in their distinctive roles in relation to the education of children and young people. Therefore, Good Shepherd Catholic School values the engagement of our families as part of our family network group which is known as *Family and Community Engagement Network (FACE)*.

## OVERVIEW

This policy reflects Good Shepherd's Mission Statement: *"by embracing stewardship as a way of life, sharing our time, talents and treasure"*. Therefore, this policy is concerned with a whole school approach to members of the school community through an understanding of the core of our Catholic Identity that is Good Shepherd. That is, embracing stewardship as a way of life. As a stewardship community, we show our faith, love and appreciation for God, and the many blessings he has bestowed upon us, by giving back to others. We give to God not only our treasure, but our time and talent as well. By living a stewardship way of life, we are each examples of the presence of God in our daily lives.

Stewardship begins with a profound recognition that God has lovingly given us our home, this world, and all that we possess and all that we are.

After Jesus had washed their feet... he said "Do you understand what I have done to you? You call me Master and Lord, and rightly; so I am. If I, then, the Lord and Master, have washed your feet, you should wash each other's feet. I have given you an example so that you may copy what I have done to you." John 13:12-15.

## PURPOSE

Every school community has a range of ways of engaging with families and the wider school community. It is Good Shepherd's purpose to develop and support a sustainable and effective partnership between all members of the school community, including teachers, families and students. We have developed a Framework that reflects the goals of the FACE Network that is aligned to Brisbane Catholic Education's Strategic Priorities.



## RATIONALE

Parents/caregivers, school staff and pastors have differing responsibilities within the school community. Catholic schools value relationships which sustain and nurture the partnerships between family and school. ***This relationship depends on the acceptance of mutual responsibility and recognition of each other's family heritage, culture, experiences and skills that each brings to the relationship. Such partnerships need to be based upon mutual respect. Schools and parents share a common goal – the holistic development of their students.*** 2

Parents are the first educators of their children and they continue to influence their children's learning and development during the school years and long afterwards. Schools have an important responsibility in helping to nurture and teach future generations and families trust schools to provide educational foundations for their children's future.

Research demonstrates that effective schools have high levels of parental and community involvement. This involvement is strongly related to improved student learning, attendance and behaviour. Family involvement can have a major impact on student learning, regardless of the social or cultural background of the family.

Family involvement in schools is therefore central to high quality education and is part of the core business of schools. Good Shepherd values parental involvement as volunteers in every aspect of the life of Good Shepherd Catholic Primary School.

## TERMS

The word 'engagement' for *Good Shepherd Catholic Primary School* community focuses on communication or information delivery, consultation, involvement and collaboration in decision-making, and empowered action in informal groups or formal partnerships.

The word 'community' for Good Shepherd focuses on the religious understanding of community which is inclusive, welcoming and promotes and lives out the Gospel Values of Jesus. We have as our guide, "*Good Shepherd's Way of Being Community*".

'*Community engagement*' is therefore a planned process with the specific purpose of working with identified group of people, namely our families of Good Shepherd. We include in this group, Our Lady of the Southern Cross Parish, St Augustine's College, the wider Springfield community, Brisbane Catholic Education Office, Centacare and Brisbane Catholic Archdiocese. The linking of the term 'community' to 'engagement' serves to broaden the scope, shifting the focus from the individual to the collective, with the associated implications for inclusiveness to ensure consideration is made of the diversity that exists within our community.

## VALUES

### Participation

- Families are actively welcomed in the life of the school and encouraged to contribute to the liturgical life, teaching and learning, pastoral care, policy making, resourcing and voluntary assistance.
- Families have opportunities to contribute their knowledge and skills to engage with their children's learning, to support the school's goals and to promote the principles of Catholic education.
- Commitment to processes of open reciprocal communication is evident in developing the partnership within the school community where *Good Shepherd's Way of Being Community* forms part of who we are as a community.
- Our families are integral to the process of school renewal, including both review and future planning which occurs during meetings and committees.
- The responsibility of policy implementation rests with the principal in collaboration with relevant groups.
- *Family and Community Engagement Network* exist to further develop the partnership between home and school, playing a vital role in promoting family engagement.
- Families support *Good Shepherd Catholic Primary School* financially, in accordance with their capacity.
- Good Shepherd Catholic Primary School is accountable to our community with transparent processes in leadership, religious education, curriculum, pastoral care, funding and resourcing.

## LEARNING AND TEACHING

- Families are informed of contemporary curriculum directions and educational programs.
- Good Shepherd provides professional development for all families.
- Good Shepherd communicate regularly with families and carers regarding their child's learning, development and wellbeing.
- Good Shepherd explore interactive ways to connect families with student learning.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Staff and parents understand, respect and support one another in their varying roles and responsibilities and so give true witness to the values of the Catholic faith.
- Good Shepherd support families to understand that the school is a faith community within the context of the local church.
- Good Shepherd families work together to educate the students to become faith-filled, responsible citizens who contribute to a better world.

Community engagement can take many forms and covers a broad range of activities. Some examples of community engagement undertaken by Good Shepherd include:

- Informing the community of policy directions of Brisbane Catholic Education, Archdiocese, State and Federal Governments.
- Consulting with the community as part of a process to develop policy, build community awareness and understanding.
- Involving the community through a range of mechanisms to ensure that issues and concerns are understood and considered as part of the decision-making process.
- Collaborating with the community by developing partnerships to formulate options and provide recommendations.
- Empowering the community to make decisions and to implement and manage change.
- Meeting several times during the year for the purpose of consultation, planning and decision making for the common good of Good Shepherd
- Involving Good Shepherd in the wider community events
- Promoting and fostering the Catholic identity of FACE in supporting Catholic education at Good Shepherd.
- Providing support for prayerful reflection and faith development opportunities for parents through attendance at Lenten programs, school and Parish Liturgies, Morning Prayer, Annual Retreat;
- Developing relationships with FACE through Our Lady of the Southern Cross Parish, St Augustine's College, Brisbane Catholic Education Office, Centacare and other relevant bodies to work collaboratively to further the mission of the Church;
- Recognising the voice for Catholic school parents at a school, state and federal level;
- Actively seek representation on key committees and reference groups
- Supporting the increasingly complex and diverse need of families especially when there is a need for pastoral care

## IMPLEMENTATION

Our aim is for the whole school to be involved in building community at *Good Shepherd Catholic Primary School* as part of the wider parish and community situated in Springfield Lakes. We achieve this through:

- ❖ Surveying families for information about their children to build community
- ❖ Providing and facilitating workshops to develop parents' skills in the areas of learning and teaching in order to hold quality conversations with the teachers.
- ❖ Providing parents with *Good Shepherd's Way We are Being Community* as a way forward for who we are as part of a community.

FACE seeks to create directions for Good Shepherd's families to support new initiatives. This model replaces the model of the Parents and Friends and School Boards, in-order to:

- Stimulate an active interest in the life of the school,
- Foster a spirit of positive fellowship amongst parents, staff and friends of the school,
- Promote a spirit of genuine cooperation between parents, staff and students of the school,
- Provide financial assistance for the development of the school's facilities and teaching resources.
- Provide a pathway for parents to be involved in supporting the school.
- Help in the Tuckshop
- Attend parent-teacher interviews
- Join the FACE Network group
- Be involved in the various support groups under the following areas



## PARENT INVOLVEMENT

When parents ask what they can do to help their child? Good Shepherd's response is '*be interested in everything that they do and above all, as often as parents can, be there to watch them in action in this most exciting phase of their life*'.

There are many ways in which our parents are involved in the child's/children's educational journey at Good Shepherd. These include:

- Becoming involved in your child's education at school
- Asking the children what they learnt at school today
- Helping the children to meet assessment task deadlines by helping them set goals, manage their time better
- Reinforcing the expectations of the school in relation to uniform, behaviour and work ethic
- Coming along and watching the children perform in their cultural or physical activities
- Participating in the Student Protection and Volunteers Workshop
- Volunteering in your child's classroom
- Attending school Liturgies (Community Prayer Gatherings)
- Attending school events, including sports/carnivals
- Attending school information evenings
- Taking an interest in what the children are doing at school (both in and out of the classroom).

## MEETINGS

Our *Family and Community Engagement* (FACE) meetings are held once a term or when required for the purpose of consultation, planning, implementation of policies, special celebrations and events. Meetings are held either in the morning, afternoon or/and evening. Minutes of the meeting are placed in the following newsletter. Minutes are typed by a member of FACE/Leadership Team.

## ACCOUNTABILITY

Together with the Leadership Team and staff of Good Shepherd, the FACE Network group respect, value and involve family engagement as partners and decision-makers in our school's continuous strategic planning in consultation and collaboration with the Principal and the Leadership Team. FACE members are encouraged to collaboratively:

- Review policies regarding school involvement with families
- Involvement in Internal, External Reviews, Annual Strategic Plan
- Create family engagement activities that respect the various cultures, languages, practices and customs; and build inclusive relationships among families through bridging economic and cultural barriers that is compassionate and hospitable.
- Promote consistent and effective two-way communication between all family members and school personnel as part of building a Catholic Community.
- Design a range of meaningful opportunities for parents and families to be involved in *Good Shepherd's Way of Being Community* that reflects our *Catholic Identity and Visible Learning*.
- Create a welcoming and supportive school environment for parents and families that is child-centred and family-strengthening.
- Support Good Shepherd's endeavours in fundraising for the common good of our educational goals that reflect the Australian Curriculum and Brisbane Catholic Education goals on contemporary learning.

Responsibility of Good Shepherd, including FACE rests with the Principal. Parents/Carers need to comply with all relevant policies, procedures and guidelines, and the principals' directives that pertain to visitors when they enter a school.

<b>Policy Implemented</b>	<b>12 November 2014</b>
<b>Policy Review</b>	November 2016
<b>Policy Review</b>	March 2018
Policy Reviewed by Judith Anne Seery 19 May 2020	<b>Amendments:</b> Removed Uniform Shop, Melbourne Declaration and Parent Representatives.
<b>Policy reviewed March 2021</b>	<b>Upgraded the Strategic Plan to reflect 2021 -2025</b>

1. John Paul II, Message for the XXVII World Day of Peace, 1 January 1994, no. 2. Also, "Familiaris Consortio" 1981 Pope John Paul 11.
2. Archdiocese of Brisbane. Queensland Bishops' Catholic Schools Research Project Archdiocese of Brisbane 1998-2011, Brisbane, 2001, p.13