



Family Engagement

in BCE schools

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At Brisbane Catholic Education (BCE), we believe the positive partnership between families and staff at our schools is key in achieving our vision of being 'a faith-filled learning community creating a better future' for students, staff and families.

The intention of this Family Engagement in BCE schools document is to describe what families can expect and what can be expected of them upon enrolment in one of our schools. It provides a point of reference for staff and families as we join together to provide the best possible education for all young people, while continuing to build safe communities in which everyone belongs, feels valued and can experience success.

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The Benefits

At BCE, we believe in families rights and responsibilities to be engaged in and contribute to the educational experiences of their children.

We know that a relationship between school and families works best when it is based on mutual respect and acknowledgement of the value that each brings to the learning and wellbeing process.

All our schools aim to complement and build on the work of the family so that all students reach their full potential and affirm their sense of belonging and importance. Through this, we believe they will become effective and successful learners and future positive contributors to society.

Family engagement in learning and wellbeing

The influence of the family at home can have a significant impact on their child's educational achievements.

Families are highly influential when they:

- have high expectations for their children's conduct and courtesy, punctuality, sense of responsibility and engagement in family and school activities
- show interest in their children's learning by helping them connect what they are learning in school to real world experience
- are supportive of the work of all school staff and ensure their child attends school every day, with a positive attitude to learning
- model the behaviours of successful learners
- support their child's interests and provide opportunities for children to extend their engagement in these areas
- discuss their children's educational and career aspirations and encourage them to set goals for their progress
- engage with school activities to learn more about how to support their child's learning and wellbeing
- feel welcomed at the school from the first point of contact (e.g. enrolment interview/school tour).

Communicating

School staff keep families informed about their child's learning achievement and progress through both formal and informal contact.

Formal contact may include:

- Parent information meetings
- Parent-teacher interviews
- Report cards, including progressive reporting
- Occasional formal meetings requested by teachers and/or parents for specific purposes
- Email/digital communications

When a formal meeting is required, an appointment should be made to meet at a mutually convenient time. Families should contact the school office to arrange such an appointment with their child's teacher. Occasionally, circumstances dictate an immediate meeting, however, generally, families can expect that meetings will not be scheduled during class time.

There may also be opportunities for informal/impromptu communications. All interactions must be considerate of staff responsibilities with regards to supervision, preparation time and other duties.

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Family involvement in schools

Schools utilise a range of processes and platforms to engage and encourage family involvement, such as:

The Family and Religious Life of the School

At BCE we honour our partnership with families and recognise the vital role that they play in the religious life of our schools. We encourage and value their active participation in Masses, liturgies, and other religious events, as well as involvement in our work of solidarity supporting various charitable works. This engagement not only strengthens the faith community but also enriches the spiritual development of our students. By participating in these activities, families model the importance of faith and service, fostering a deeper connection to our Catholic values and traditions. Together, we create a vibrant and supportive faith-filled learning community.

Volunteering

Volunteering at your school assists in providing services and opportunities for children's learning which might otherwise not be possible. These may include supporting small group class activities, supervision on excursions, assisting in the uniform shop, coaching sporting teams, training and conducting eisteddfod choirs, contributing to stalls for the school fete and participating in school community activities.

Families may be asked if they are interested in volunteering for these types of activities.

All volunteers must complete an induction program to understand conduct and student protection requirements/obligations. Volunteers who are not legal guardians of a student in the school must provide a positive notice Working with Children Blue Card.

Consultation (formal and informal)

Families bring valuable insights to decisions affecting the priorities and future direction of our schools. Therefore, they can expect to be invited to provide formal and informal feedback to review and improve the school. Families can contribute as a member of a focus group, a forum or as a participant.

School bodies such as the Parents and Friends Association (P & F), School Pastoral Board or a locally developed model are the most prominent formal groups for family involvement in providing consultation or advice in decision-making processes.

Parents & Friends (P&F)

The role of the P & F is to support the school and follow BCE processes. Activities may involve a variety of areas. P & F activities may involve a variety of areas. Social events like Welcome BBQs, movie nights, and year level dinners build community among families. Pastoral support provides assistance during significant events such as births, deaths, or illness through food banks, school drop off/pick up, or sympathy cards. Resourcing may involve supplying classrooms with items like books or art supplies, while financing may cover costs for buses, camps, or extra lessons. Fundraising may include events like a school fete, colour runs or disco. Families also contribute to the school environment through activities such as working bees. Finally, curriculum-focused efforts engage families through discussions, education evenings, or seminars to enhance their skills and involvement.

School Pastoral/Advisory Board

The School Pastoral/Advisory Board comprises members of the community with the primary purpose being to provide support and advice to the principal with:

- articulating and enacting the school's vision, mission, Catholic (or ecumenical) ethos and culture
- promoting education programs, faith formation and development
- developing school procedures to enact Brisbane Catholic Education policies
- developing the school strategic and annual improvement plans
- forming the annual school budget and managing other financial matters
- master planning, capital resources and maintenance.

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Other Family Engagement Models

Hybrid, or locally designed models (such as the PFG, PEG, FACE or PACE) bring together elements of the P & F and the School Pastoral Board as appropriate to the individual school community.

(NB: PFG – Parent and Friends advisory Group; PEG – Parent Engagement Group; FACE – Family and Community Engagement; PACE – Parent and Community Engagement)

These models include opportunities for families to meet and engage on matters which enhance their child's school experiences or to contribute through specific working parties. Meetings are scheduled during the year to focus on key priorities of the school's strategic plan and annual improvement plan. These meetings are to garner family input to provide opportunities to grow their understanding of how they can support their children. Working parties may be formed to undertake specific tasks, manage events or lead initiatives linked to the school's strategic plan and annual improvement plan. These are determined through the school leadership team and confirmed at meetings.

Agreed Expectations

The Family Engagement in BCE schools document is supported by the BCE Code of Conduct for Parents and Visitors to our community and the BCE Employee Code of Conduct. Families agree to expectations outlined in the BCE Code of Conduct for Parents and Visitors and the Family Engagement in BCE schools document at enrolment. School staff agree to the BCE Employee Code of Conduct when signing their employment contract.

Relevant Codes of Conduct are available on each school and the Brisbane Catholic Education website.

