

School culture

Respectful relationships between the school, students, parents and the school community need to be actively cultivated and valued.

Nurturing a culture that respects and values difference amongst the whole school community is vital in supporting the inclusive engagement of all families.

Parent and community participation in student learning and the school community should be acknowledged and recognised. This involvement sends a clear signal to students about the value of education.

Points to consider

- ▶ How is the school welcoming and supportive of all children and parents?
- ▶ What opportunities are given for parents and community members to participate in school activities?
- ▶ How does the school support and maintain mutually respectful relationships across its community?
- ▶ How does the school appreciate and value students' varying cultural backgrounds?
- ▶ How does the principal and senior management team build the cultural competence of school staff?
- ▶ How can volunteers contribute to teaching, learning and wellbeing?
- ▶ How does the school community recognise and support volunteers?
- ▶ Are parents notified about major events well in advance so they can plan ahead? How?
- ▶ Does the school celebrate significant cultural days and events reflective of the broader Queensland community (for example, NAIDOC)?



Links with the NSIT

A culture that promotes learning aligns with the following aspects of Domain 3 and 9 of the NSIT:

- ▶ All students and staff have an obvious sense of belonging, all parents are welcomed and all staff, students and parents speak highly of the school.
- ▶ School staff demonstrate an understanding of the importance of positive and caring relationships to successful learning, and work to build mutually respectful relationships across the school community.
- ▶ The school appreciates and values students' varying cultural backgrounds and works to build the cultural competence of school staff.
- ▶ Partnerships are sustainable and have become an accepted part of the culture of the school community and partner organisations.





Achieving results: Ideas for improvement

Every day

- ☑ Model and demonstrate the importance of positive and caring relationships.
- ☑ Consult key staff for advice on engaging meaningfully with cultural groups in the school community for example Community Education Counsellors, regional and school-based Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Teacher Aides, and community liaison officers.
- ☑ Provide access to bilingual personnel for parent-teacher meetings, as appropriate.
- ☑ Consider opportunities for the leadership team and teachers to be visible to parents and students, for example, at school pick-up and drop-off times, in community areas of the school, at school events.

Early in the school year

- ☑ Ensure staff have an understanding of inclusive education and the Department of Education's commitment to ensuring schools are supportive and engaging places for all school community members.
- ☑ Provide a school calendar outlining key dates where parent engagement is encouraged. Include cultural events that are relevant to the school and broader Queensland community.
- ☑ Discuss the physical, attitudinal, communication and social environment of the school with parents and the community and look at ways to improve inclusion of students and parents with disability, illness or other needs that require consideration.

Throughout the year

- ☑ Collaborate with staff to build mutually respectful relationships across the school community and encourage staff to build relationships that will enhance student learning and wellbeing.
- ☑ Consider creating informal areas around the school where parents and teachers can meet for example, community courtyard, garden, or yarning circle.
- ☑ Seek advice from the community about the kind of school events and activities they value. Some communities may prefer more informal gatherings and opportunities to network with school staff rather than formal ceremonies, particularly early in the engagement process.
- ☑ Engage community members in designing and promoting learning experiences, school events and extracurricular activities.
- ☑ Invite and support a diverse range of parents and community members to become involved as guest teachers and speakers.
- ☑ Build parent, caregiver and community participation by offering activities, events and roles that are respectful and meaningful. Provide guidance to volunteers about their obligations, school protocols and cultures represented in the school.
- ☑ Formally recognise the contributions that volunteers make to the school (for example, thank you letters).

Once a year

- ☑ Establish a clear process for parents to provide feedback to the school on their beliefs/experiences in relation to inclusivity.
- ☑ Provide professional development for staff in English as an Additional Language or Dialect support, and cross-cultural awareness and communication.
- ☑ Develop/update a database of parent and community skills, talents and availability to draw on when appropriate.