

Key dimension: Build community and identity

Family-School Partnerships Framework

A guide for schools and families

Strategies for building community and identity

'Build community and identity' is one of the seven key dimensions identified in the *Family-School Partnerships Framework* as guidelines for planning partnership activities. Strategies to build community and identity recognise the culture, traditions, values and relationships in the community. Using these strategies, schools can help to shape students' sense of identity and culture, and value their place within their broader community.

- Appoint a designated staff member, such as a Community/Family Liaison Officer, to facilitate family engagement strategies.
- Encourage students to identify, organise, participate and take lead roles in events that showcase their interests or talents.
- Encourage families to collaboratively develop and participate in community driven programs and events that are relevant to them, such as community choirs, sewing groups, festivals or cultural performances.
- Provide both formal and informal opportunities for families to meet school staff, build their understanding of schools and celebrate children's learning. This could include school staff members being present and available at school events where family and community are involved.
- Create a culture that recognises and values diversity within the community, and seek opportunities to celebrate the community's cultural backgrounds. Examples may include NAIDOC, Multicultural Days and International Day of people with Disability.
- Establish cultural awareness workshops for staff and families and employ culturally diverse teaching and non-teaching staff.
- Provide opportunities to introduce families to school life, such as playgroups and early literacy programs.
- Implement ways that the school can become a community resource, such as adult learning programs and community meetings. This can be achieved through an interagency approach.
- Provide a place for families to meet and participate in programs and activities, such as literacy learning, health care or TAFE outreach.
- Welcome and support new families into the school community through a designated staff member or Community/Family Liaison Officer. This could include holding one-on-one meetings with families to gain an understanding of their needs.

- Assist the resettlement of new migrants through the work of teachers of English as a second language, Community/Family Liaison Officers and other families in the school community. Invite people in the broader community to attend school functions, such as morning teas and Senior Citizens Day, where they can learn more about the school community and opportunities to participate.
- Invite Elders of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to become involved in developing an inclusive curriculum, mentoring and speaking to students.
- Invite significant community members and groups, such as local civic and service groups, to become involved in the school in a variety of ways. For example, mentoring and speaking to students.
- Create connections with local health and welfare services to facilitate access to support for members of the school community.