

FAMILY SCHOOL  
PARTNERSHIPS POLICY



**ST PATRICK'S**

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## RATIONALE

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*"It takes a village to educate a child"*

St Patrick's Primary School believes strongly in this statement and we must recognise the spheres of influence that families, schools and the community play in the education of a child during their schooling years. These spheres of influence work best when they work together, cooperatively and collaboratively, and this policy provides the framework for an effective partnership between these spheres.

## AIM

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St Patrick's believes strongly in the research that says, "students learn more and succeed at higher levels when home, school and community work together and play collaborative, complementary and supportive roles to support learning and development" (Epstein & Sheldon 2006, Emerson et al, 2012). This policy aims to provide a framework for St Patricks to work with families and the community to achieve:

- Genuine partnerships between school and families;
- Positive disposition towards school; and
- High levels of achievement.

## DEFINITIONS

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**Catholic System** means all Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Melbourne, parish priests, canonical administrators and religious orders, together with Catholic Education Melbourne.

**Community** means the wider external community to the school, including sporting clubs, service providers, local businesses, etc.

**Families** is a collective term for any home arrangement established to care for and rear children, regardless of its makeup.

**Parent** is a collective term for any adult with parental responsibility and guardianship of a child.

**Participation** means any contribution that parents and families make to St Patrick's and Catholic education generally.

**Partnership** means a mutually respectful and responsive relationship in which goals are shaped and the assumption of goodwill and trust exists. It also includes participation in decision-making or an ability to contribute to and influence decisions.

**Two-way communication** means regular, meaningful communication between a parent or staff member, regardless of who initiates it.

## PROVISIONS

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### 1. Principles

The Federal Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations provides a list of principles which underpin effective Family School Partnerships, which St Patrick's also believes in. They are:

- All families and schools want the best for their child.
- All children have the right to the opportunity to reach their full potential.
- Families are the first and continuing educators of their child.
- Effective schools provide a nurturing and supportive learning environment.
- Families and schools value quality teaching and respect teachers' professional expertise.
- Family school partnerships are based on mutual responsibility, respect and trust.
- Leadership is critical to building, maintaining and renewing partnerships.
- Family school partnerships improve student motivation and learning.
- Family school partnerships strengthen the connections between schools and their communities.
- Partnerships can involve all organisations that support families and schools.

Catholic Education Melbourne believe in Parents as Partners in Catholic Education (<https://www.cem.edu.au/About-Us/Policies/2-25-Parents-as-Partners.aspx>) and have three guiding principles, which St Patrick's also believes strongly in.

- **Contribution.** Parents have knowledge and skills which they can contribute at all levels, to assist their children's learning, to support the school's goals and to promote the principles of Catholic education.
- **Partnership.** Effective partnerships for the education of children are based on a foundation of shared values and mutual respect between parents and all members of the Catholic system. These partnerships acknowledge the respective roles and responsibilities of each of the participants involved.
- **Whole-system Approach.** Parent involvement and participation are valued and encouraged at all levels of Catholic education through the creation of an environment in which parents feel welcomed and are able to contribute as valued partners.

### 2. Family School Partnership Team

St Patrick's will ensure that there is always a Family School Partnership Team (FSP Team) that works to ensure the ongoing work of this policy and its principles.

#### 2.1. Convenor

St Patrick's will seek from the teaching staff a Family School Partnership Convenor to be appointed each year to work with the staff to educate and assist the school staff about Family School Partnerships.

#### 2.2. Family Officer

St Patrick's will ensure that there is a Family Officer appointed each year to coordinate the work of the FSP Team and ensure the ongoing review and development of that work.

#### 2.3. FSP Team Membership

The FSP Team shall consist of at least the:

- School Principal
- Convenor
- Family Officer
- Transition Officer

- Learning and Teaching Leader
- Parent Representatives

with other members appointed as the FSP Team sees fit from time to time.

### 3. Key Pillars

#### 3.1. Communication

At St Patrick's, we wish to design and implement effective and diverse forms of school-to-home and home-to-school communications about school programs and children's progress. This includes two-way communication that helps to build a relationship between parents and teachers.

Communication can take many forms, including parent/teacher interviews and meetings, school newsletter, Seesaw, Facebook, Skoolbag, school website, email and much more. The FSP team should ensure that many different avenues of communication are used to ensure that all of our families are reached in a means most appropriate to them.

#### 3.2. Learning at Home

At St Patrick's we believe that it is important to recognise and elicit parent knowledge to support students' learning in the home as well as the classroom, connecting learning at home and at school.

Learning at home can take many forms, and the FSP team should encourage this through a variety of means, including supporting parents through forums on how to support their children's learning at home, promoting reading to and with their child, providing information on informal learning that happens in the home, etc.

#### 3.3. Parent Participation

At St Patrick's we strive to value and strengthen the parent voice and participation at school, both inside and outside the classroom, whether it be in volunteering, decision-making or by other means.

The FSP team should ensure that parents and families are given as many opportunities to be involved at the school as possible, which may include Parents and Friends Association, School Advisory Board, class helper, helping with fundraising, taking part in surveys, assisting on excursions, etc.

#### 3.4. Community Collaboration

At St Patrick's we aim to identify and integrate resources and services from the community to strengthen school programs, family practices and student learning and development.

The FSP team should ensure that the wider community is drawn up and invited into the school to assist, including linking parents with and families with community and government services and agencies, having community services on the school website, increase the onsite and offsite service interactions, etc.

### 4. FSP Annual Action Plan

The FSP Team will review the existing FSP Annual Action Plan over the course of the last two meetings of the calendar year. This review will consist of reviewing the work done throughout the course of the year and assessing what has been achieved.

The FSP Annual Action Plan will then be redrafted for the forthcoming calendar year, with a copy to be included on the school website FSP page, and copies distributed to the staff via email.

**5. FSP Branding**

The St Patrick's FSP Team have a logo to reflect the motto of "it takes a village to educate a child". The logo is:



This logo should be used in conjunction with the school logo on any initiatives of the FSP team, to help families, staff and students to identify the work of the FSP team.

<b>Responsible Officer</b>	Family Officer
<b>Ratified By</b>	Principal
<b>Ratified and Commenced On</b>	
<b>Review Date</b>	
<b>Relevant Legislation and References</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family-School Partnerships Framework, DEEWR</li> <li>• <i>Moving forward: Ideas for research on school, family, and community partnerships</i>, Epstein and Sheldon, 2006</li> </ul>
<b>Related School Policies, Procedures and Documents</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Privacy Policy</li> <li>• Complaints Policy</li> </ul>
<b>Policy Application</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> School-wide <input type="checkbox"/> Specific <input type="checkbox"/> Staff <input type="checkbox"/> Students <input type="checkbox"/> Families and Volunteers <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> All
<b>Policy Communication</b>	This school policy will be published on the school website once ratified, will be included in staff induction kits and hard copies provided upon request.
<b>Version Number</b>	01
<b>Amendments</b>	Not Applicable
<b>Previous Version Details</b>	Not applicable



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