1. Bring together staff, school council members and parents (e.g. representatives from the Parent Association) to review how your school currently communicates with parents.

2. Identify what you are doing well, as well as the areas you would like to develop.

3. Use this tool to address areas that you would like to improve and to generate ideas for ways to create better relationships with parents.

Building better links between your school and your students’ homes encourages positive learning experiences for students. The more parents know about your school, the more likely they will be able to improve and support their child’s learning. Better communication also supports your efforts to build your school’s reputation.

Even the strongest school-parent relationships can benefit from ongoing revision. This tool encourages you to think about how you engage with parents. It also provides suggestions for new approaches to keep parents involved and interested in your school and their child’s education.

This kit contains information on:
- understanding the needs of parents
- encouraging parents to get involved
- written communication to parents
- meeting parents
- ideas for connecting with parents.

Templates/samples included:
- Parent Contact and Medical Information Form
- Sample Student Excursion Consent Form
- Getting the Most Out of Parent-Teacher Interviews Guide
- Parent Skills and Assistance Registration Form.
Understanding the needs of parents

Parents generally have high expectations about the information they want to receive. Most importantly, they want honest, open and timely information.

What do they want to know?

Despite the best efforts, many parents often feel ‘left out of the loop’ and can be overly reliant on information from word-of-mouth sources.

As a starting point, consider the way you currently communicate with parents. For example:

• How do they find out about activities happening at your school?
• Are they satisfied with the information they receive about your school?
• What other information would they like to receive?
• Do they know where to get assistance or information if they need it?
• Do they feel comfortable coming to the main office for help?

The best way to answer these questions is simply to ask parents. Not only will they be able to provide you with useful information, but they will appreciate someone taking the time to ask.
Case study

Reaching all members of the school community: Lowanna College

Every school has its own unique community due to cultural, socio-economic and religious diversity. Effective communication to parents can pose a challenge if schools do not understand their community’s needs.

Lowanna College has shown that they are committed to reaching all parents in their community. With over 1200 students from Years 7 to 12, Lowanna recognised the importance of effective communication and its ability to impact student engagement and participation, and family support.

The school identified that their traditional approach to contacting parents, which relied on newsletters and other paper-based communication, was not working well with all parents. Some parents seemed to have little contact with the school and were not involved in many school activities.

Close to 45 per cent of parents at Lowanna College receive the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA). Understanding the needs and priorities of families who may be experiencing unemployment or financial stress was an important factor in knowing what information they wanted to receive and in what form.

The school took an innovative approach and used research to consider new ways of reaching parents. This research involved external consultants meeting with a range of focus groups to identify communication issues and the use of international research on poverty.

Lowanna College is planning to apply this research to their own day-to-day communication practices. This includes:

• changing the language in all communication with parents (avoiding ‘eduspeak’ or a patronising tone)
• designing a webcast-style newsletter
• revamping the traditional newsletter with more pictures and personal stories
• holding events outside of the college
• arranging for a school staff member, such as a coordinator, to call parents on a regular basis.

These changes are expected to improve communication between Lowanna and parents from all sectors of the community.

Here are some ideas for capturing parents’ thoughts, opinions, and feedback:

• Ask them directly during individual conversations (e.g. at the end of parent-teacher interviews or school drama performances).
• Provide a feedback section at the end of your newsletter inviting comments on what articles they liked, what they would like to see more of and what they thought of the layout and readability.
• Create a short survey and insert it in the school newsletter.
• Post a short survey on your website and email parents the link.
How do they want to receive information?

There are a number of ways that your school can communicate with parents. The most common methods are via a printed newsletter/information sheet, over the telephone or face-to-face contact. Your school may already use modern technologies such as email and SMS, or may be considering these methods in the future.

Make use of as many distribution methods as possible. For example, send home a written newsletter with students but also add a copy to your website.

Think about how parents would most like to receive information. It may depend on the nature of the information, for example, is it urgent? Is it a delicate topic? Again, asking parents directly is the best way of obtaining this information. Although you may not always be able to tailor your approach for each parent, you will get a sense of the method that most parents prefer.

Don’t forget this may change over time as more people gain access to the Internet and other technologies or when their circumstances alter.

The Toolkit includes a Parent Contact and Medical Information Form which you can ask parents to complete at the beginning of the year.

You can regularly prompt parents about updating their situation or needs. For example, your newsletter can include a small, highlighted text box reminding parents to update their contact details if there have been any recent changes.

Sometimes it’s worth stepping back and thinking about what parents want out of your written correspondence or forms. Have you covered everything? For example, attached is a Sample Student Excursion Consent Form that may cover points you have not considered before.

TIP
Consider offering an incentive for families to reply to a survey. For example, enter the names of those who responded into a prize-draw.
Case study

Revealing research from Harvard

The benefits of effective home-school communication are many:

- Parents and teachers consider communication the number one factor to increase trust (Adams and Christenson, 2000).
- Strong communication can also encourage higher and realistic parental expectations. When teachers and parents are on the ‘same page’ they can engage in more individual and concrete discussion around student progress and develop realistic goals and plans of action that are linked to student achievement (Drake, 2000; James, Jurich and Estes, 2001).
- Parents who receive more consistent information about their children’s school performance report a higher degree of commitment to helping children improve (Helling, 1996).
- Communication serves as the first step to other types of parent involvement to follow (Elman, 1999).1

1 Compiled by Family Involvement Network of Education (FINE) at Harvard Family Research Project (HFRP).
Encouraging parents to get involved

Communication with parents is most effective when it is two-way. That means encouraging parents to contact the school and giving them opportunities to get involved.

So how do you encourage parents to approach you?

For the most part, it’s about providing opportunities and creating the right environment for parents to feel comfortable using them. Like all relationships, first impressions are powerful – and can set the tone for the school-parent relationship. So it’s important that your school makes a good first impression.

Here are some things you might like to consider:

- Front office or administration staff are often the first contact parents have with the school; encouraging a friendly and responsive manner can go a long way to making parents feel welcome.
- Provide a welcoming reception area that is inviting to parents.
- Treat student visits to the office the same way as adults are treated – these messages travel home.
- Welcome parents and visitors when they arrive at your school; helpful staff on playground supervision can give directions to the front office or assist with an enquiry.
- Always give parents the facts and ‘good stories’ to enhance your school’s reputation.
- Create a call-out rather than a call-in culture. Being proactive with phone calls to parents shows you are interested in their child and creates goodwill.
- Set the expectation that all staff should respond to parents the day they contact the school – even if it is to say that the issue will be resolved later.

Provide school contact details to parents including the school phone number, address, fax, email and relevant contacts on a fridge magnet. Even a business card that can fit into parents’ wallets or diaries is a good idea.
Maryborough Education Centre paves the way for good parent-teacher relationships from the beginning of the school year.

All Year 7 students and their parents are invited to attend the first day of the term where students are presented to the school in their full school uniform.

The first day is seen as an opportunity for students and their parents to meet the homeroom teacher and familiarise themselves with the school.

Each homeroom teacher spends time meeting individually with the student and their parents. This enables parents to put a face to a teacher’s name and also provides them with a personal school contact that they can approach directly.

During these meetings, parents are invited to share any information that they feel is necessary for the teacher to know. Teachers also inform parents about the role of the student diary to maintain regular communication throughout the year.

Although separate interviews with each student and their parents is a time-consuming process (there were approximately 130 students in the last Year 7 intake), the school believes that this sets the foundation for good communication for the rest of the school year.

There has been a positive response from parents who feel better connected to the school because of this initiative. Homeroom teachers keep contact with parents throughout the year by means of student diaries, class newsletters, telephone calls and during class activities.

Western Heights Secondary College has found a simple solution to help keep parents informed about important school dates. By introducing a fridge magnet planner, parents are always prepared for upcoming activities.

Designed by the assistant principal, the planner is an A4 colour plastic sheet with an attached magnet.

The planner provides a calendar highlighting major college dates for each term. Information includes school holidays, curriculum days, report days, VCE information nights and graduations.

School contact details are also provided, along with the names of key staff on the back of the planner.

Unlike paper notices, a fridge magnet is less likely to be misplaced or lost. It acts as a quick, easy reference point.

Parents know where to go to find out what is happening and when.

The planner is mailed out to parents towards the end of Term 1. The calendar covers the period from the beginning of Term 2 to the end of Term 1 the following year.

Parent feedback suggests that the planner acts as a support to formal reminders, notices or newsletters. A parent may read about an upcoming event in a newsletter, but will use the fridge magnet to confirm the date closer to the day.
Getting back to parents

Many parents contact the school using the phone, email, and in writing. As staff are responsible for a number of tasks, it can be challenging to get back to parents promptly. At the same time, parents become understandably anxious when they do not hear back from the school.

Consider developing a set of guidelines for responding to parent-initiated contact. This may include guidelines outlining appropriate turn-around times. Once these are confirmed, communicate these to parents so that they are clear about when they should expect a response. Try to ensure that the guidelines are manageable because once set, it is critical that they are adhered to. Some recommended turn-around times are suggested in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication from parents</th>
<th>Suggested turn-around time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phone calls</td>
<td>Returned within 24 hours of parent’s call</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Email                      | Email reply within 48 hours of receipt  
(set up an automated ‘out of office reply’ when away on camp, excursion, or in-service) |
| Written letter             | Acknowledge receipt of letter within 72 hours |
Written communication to parents

Written notices and newsletters to parents are the most common form of communication between schools and parents. Because parents rely so heavily on these sources of information, it is worth spending some time reflecting on your written communication.

Things you need to be mindful of:

- ensure correct grammar, spelling and punctuation
- summarise the key points at the beginning of the notice
- choose vocabulary that shows consideration of the social and cultural backgrounds of parents
- avoid using education jargon. If you have to use it (e.g. name of a program or curriculum area) describe what it is or does in everyday language and explain how it impacts on the students at your school
- keep notices short and to the point
- be clear on what is required of parents. Consider adding a ‘requested action’ box at the end of notices so parents know exactly what they need to do (e.g. return the bottom section to school by Monday, sign the form, tick to volunteer for the committee).

Colour-code your notices according to their content. For example, pink notices may require parents’ signatures, yellow might indicate an upcoming event and green could indicate general information.
Case study

Colour-coded letters to parents: Vermont Primary School

Vermont Primary School has developed a creative ‘letters home to parents’ initiative. This involves colour-coding all letters sent to parents according to their content.

The school uses pink forms to indicate important information, which needs to be read, signed and returned to the school. Yellow forms are used to provide parents with a calendar of activities occurring over the next two months. This includes camps, ride-to-school days, sport days and pupil-free days. Green forms are year level specific and keep parents updated on what is being taught in the classroom each week.

Feedback from parents has been extremely positive. Parents have become accustomed to the information contained in each coloured form and report that they are always on the ‘look-out’ for the pink forms that need to be returned to the school. Pink forms often request parental permission for activities such as excursions, incursions and bus trips.

The school reports that the colour-coded system has significantly improved the number of forms received back from parents. It has also saved time and energy associated with chasing up these forms at the last minute.

Pink forms were chosen especially for the most important information because businesses tend not to use the colour for promotional purposes. It is therefore more likely to stand out among a mass of brochures, documents and letters.

Colour-coded forms have been used for three years at Vermont Primary School. Based on parents’ feedback the school plans to continue to use the system to assist their communication efforts in the future.
Develop a Parents’ Information Kit

Many of the questions that parents ask themselves during the year can be easily addressed in an information kit. It might be worthwhile developing a Parents’ Information Kit that can be distributed to families at the beginning of the year. Parents can then access it throughout the year. Try to make your kit as comprehensive as possible.

Some of the content you might like to address in the Parents’ Information Kit includes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School operations</th>
<th>Student activities</th>
<th>Security and safety</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• school department contacts (e.g. phone numbers, addresses, fax, email, reception, sickbay)</td>
<td>• assembly dates and times</td>
<td>• lost property</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• who to contact when child is sick; need to collect them early</td>
<td>• sports/physical education</td>
<td>• use of lockers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• traffic flow/parking</td>
<td>• music programs</td>
<td>• accidents/emergency procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• structure of school day</td>
<td>• camps</td>
<td>• illnesses and medication book/infectious diseases exclusion table</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• codes of conduct</td>
<td>• Languages Other Than English (LOTE)</td>
<td>• security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• school philosophy/values</td>
<td>• transition programs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• lunch/tuck shop menu with prices and process</td>
<td>• curriculum details</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• planned curriculum days</td>
<td>• information about pathways (secondary)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• term dates</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facilities and services</th>
<th>Parent resources and advice</th>
<th>School procedures and policies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• library</td>
<td>• tips for parents on ‘how can I help my child?’</td>
<td>• class sizes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• before-and after-school care program</td>
<td>• advice on how to get involved in the school</td>
<td>• voluntary contributions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• information and communications technology</td>
<td>• calendar of events</td>
<td>• Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• second-hand book stall</td>
<td>• booklists</td>
<td>• policy statements (e.g. peer relations and bullying, SunSmart policy, homework, behaviour guidance, harassment)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• teaching expertise</td>
<td>• head lice management (visit: <a href="http://www.education.vic.gov.au/aboutschool/childhealth/headlice">www.education.vic.gov.au/aboutschool/childhealth/headlice</a>)</td>
<td>• attendance policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• custody and access</td>
<td></td>
<td>• learning behaviours and expectations for children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• co-curricular offerings</td>
<td></td>
<td>• birthdays and birthday party guidelines</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Meeting parents

Some parents find visits to the school intimidating or uncomfortable; however, personal contact is a great opportunity for you to build rapport. When meeting with parents try to be conscious of ways to make them feel more welcome.

Some basic considerations include:

• ensuring meeting rooms are comfortable and appealing. Try to remove any subtle suggestions of authority or power imbalance (i.e. sit in a circle or around a coffee table instead of behind a desk)

• using opening comments to set a tone of collaboration about working towards best outcomes for students

• leading meetings with open-ended questions (e.g. if a parent has requested the meeting: ‘Thank you for initiating this meeting. How can I be of assistance?’)

• always thank parents (e.g. thank you notes, small mementoes).

Parent-teacher interviews

For some families, parent-teacher interviews are the only formal contact that parents have with your school. They are a great opportunity to present your school in the best possible light. Here are some suggestions to make your parent-teacher evening a positive experience for both parents and staff.

Setting up

Try to give yourself at least an hour before the first interview to set up. Your parents will notice if time and effort has been put into ensuring that the room or hall is comfortable and accommodating. There are some simple ways to improve the atmosphere for both parents and staff. These include:

• playing soft background music. This can also help to keep conversations private

• providing refreshments such as water, tea, coffee and biscuits

• ensuring that the students have tidied their locker areas before they leave for the day

• conducting a general clean-up of noticeboards, displays and entry areas

• keeping the teacher’s and parents’ chairs at the same height to create an atmosphere of equality.

Directions

Parent-teacher interviews are normally held during the evening when it is dark. Remember that your parents are not always familiar with the school grounds and buildings. It is a good idea to assign someone to greet parents and point them in the right direction.

Good signage on doors and in corridors can also reassure parents that they are on the right track.
Timing
Most parent-teacher nights follow a tight schedule. This makes it difficult when parents are late or interviews run over time.

Try to ensure that schedules give parents enough time to ask questions without feeling like they are pressured to move on. It can be useful to draw up a schedule of possible interview times and assign a double slot for students with special needs or if you anticipate that parents will want to discuss an issue in more detail.

If you sense that parents feel there has been insufficient time, you can offer to meet with them on another occasion with less time constraints.

You may also need to consider split families. In some circumstances this will require two separate time-slots for the one child if the parents would prefer to have individual interviews.

Process
Interviews are a chance to inform parents about the academic progress of their child. Below are some ideas to make the process more interesting and informative. It is also important to capture parents’ evaluation of the process.

- Consider showing samples of student work to parents. Student work can be used to demonstrate the student’s strengths and areas for development. This may require prior preparation but parents will appreciate the effort.
- For primary-age children, you can encourage parents to write a letter to their child at the end of the interview. This can help parents focus on the positive aspects of the interview and plan for providing feedback to their child.
- Address any challenges that have arisen in the past. Some parents might appreciate a year level coordinator sitting in on the interview if their previous experience has been negative.
- Provide a feedback and follow-up form for parents to fill out at the end of the interview. This will give them the opportunity to reflect on their experience. Ask questions, such as ‘Was the feedback about your child helpful?’; ‘Was the venue suitable (e.g. temperature, lighting, easy to locate)?’; ‘Did the timing of the interview suit you?’; Provide a drop-box so that parents can respond anonymously.
- Publish a snapshot of parents’ feedback in the newsletter following the interview sessions. Develop a list of themes, issues and areas for improvement for the next round of parent-teacher interviews. This will show parents that you are both interested and responsive.
- If parents are unable to attend the parent-teacher interview evening, offer them alternatives such as a phone interview or a meeting on another day.

Parents may find the attached Getting the Most Out of Parent-Teacher Interviews Guide useful to read before the interview. Send it home with the Notice of Parent-Teacher Interview Time with the student.
Ideas for connecting with parents

Involving parents in your school can be fun, informative and helpful. Many parents would like to be more involved in their child’s school but are not sure how to go about it.

Try to identify as many opportunities as possible to increase parents’ direct interaction with your school. It is also important that the quality of the interaction makes the parents feel welcome and heard. The list below outlines several methods to achieve this.

Direct contact with your school

- Introduce a parents’ room for parents to drop into after they have dropped off their children. The room could provide tea/coffee facilities, a noticeboard and, most importantly, offer parents the opportunity to meet other parents. Assign staff members to drop in on different days to meet parents.
- Principal coffee mornings offer parents the opportunity to meet the school principal over an informal coffee (e.g. once a term).
- Invite parents to help out in the classroom (e.g. to conduct a reading group or assist during art classes).
- Consider assigning a ‘communication liaison representative’ who can act as an intermediary between the parents and the school. Parents could use the representative as their first-point of contact when they have a concern or need further information.
- Set up a Parent Association Committee to represent the views and concerns of your parents. Advertise committee positions and invite contributions in your school newsletter. For more information, visit www.parentsvictoria.asn.au
- Set up a regular Parent Ring-in Time on a weekly, bi-weekly, monthly or term basis. During this time, parents can call to discuss their questions or concerns. These Parent Ring-in Times can be announced in the newsletter, notes sent home with students or at school meetings.
Case study

Introducing a parents’ room: Kangaroo Flat Primary School

Kangaroo Flat Primary School works hard at integrating parents in their school community.

The school has introduced a ‘parents’ room’ on the school campus. The room offers a space where parents can interact before, during or after school hours.

Many parents visit the room after dropping off children at school while others use the room as a get-together when they have arrived early at the end of the school day.

The room provides parents with a relaxed and comfortable environment at their child’s school. There are tea and coffee-making facilities, a microwave and a fridge for parent use. A library of parenting resources is also made available for borrowing. Parents can find out more about each other, the school, DE&T and other relevant information from pamphlets, brochures and newsletters provided.

A regular coffee meeting is held every Tuesday morning and teachers are welcome to call in to meet with parents at any time.

The school’s welfare officer regularly visits the room to discuss issues that parents face when raising children.

Other purposes for the room include Parent Club meetings and a space where fundraising preparation and activities can occur.

In many ways, the parents’ room demonstrates that the school is willing to put its ‘open door policy’ into practice. The school feels it communicates well with parents and maintains a sense of community spirit and pride as a result.

Case study

A smooth transition: Ringwood Secondary College

Many parents are uncertain about the changes that occur when their child moves from primary to secondary school. Secondary schools are often much larger than primary schools and parents can be unfamiliar with the school grounds, teaching staff and the general way things are done.

Ringwood Secondary College has introduced a program aimed at offering advice and support to parents who are new to secondary school.

The program involves assigning a parent representative for each Year 7 class. The parent is a voluntary representative and is the person that other parents can go to if they have any questions or concerns.

The parent representative offers an easy-to-access point of contact for parents who may not be comfortable approaching the school directly. Having another parent as the representative encourages parents to be open and honest with their questions. Parents appreciate being able to share their experience and find it reassuring to hear that other parents have felt the same way.

A particular strength of the program is that it involves providing feedback to teachers. Parent representatives meet with teachers during the year to discuss the issues raised by parents. This feedback is used to look at ways the school can further facilitate the transition process next year.
Co-curricular support

Think about setting up committees related to various co-curricular activities. Parents can then become involved in activities that interest them or that their children participate in. For example, you may set up a ‘Friends of Music Committee’ or a ‘Friends of Netball Committee’.

Information sessions and seminars

Information sessions and seminars are an effective way to inform parents and students. They provide the opportunity to share knowledge and discuss concerns with other parents who may be in a similar position. You might like to consider:

• conducting information sessions and curriculum evenings at the beginning of each year. It is important to allow time after the session for parents to discuss what they have heard. Teachers should be available to address any immediate questions or concerns
• holding parent seminars to discuss topics such as safe parenting, school readiness, VCE support, cyber-bullying, challenges of and for teenagers, healthy eating or self-esteem. Consider inviting subject matter experts to present at these seminars
• organising workshops on how to help children with reading or maths (primary)
• running sessions on how to make home learning materials and games (primary).

Programs

Programs to include parents who may find it more difficult to interact with the school, include:

• starting a playgroup for preschool children. This can increase parents’ and children’s familiarity with the school and offer opportunities for parents to meet before their children start school
• setting up international parent groups. Consider the different cultural backgrounds of parents and organise for parents of similar backgrounds to meet and attend social activities.

School operations support

Invite parents to volunteer their knowledge, skills and expertise in planning, coordinating and running school activities. They may be able to offer their assistance in marketing, fundraising, maintenance, graphic design, sewing etc.

It can be difficult to identify parent expertise and ascertain whether they are interested in helping out. Consider inviting them to help out with a specific activity so that they don’t feel like they are making too much of a commitment. If they enjoy the experience, they will probably be willing to help out again.
Parents as a valuable resource: Vermont Primary School

Most principals and teachers recognise that parents possess a range of skills and expertise that can help with their school. The challenge is often identifying which parents can help out with specific school activities and projects.

Vermont Primary School has addressed this problem by capturing information on parents’ skills and expertise when they first enrol their child.

A section of the enrolment package invites parents to self-nominate for a volunteer roster. They are asked whether they are interested in helping the school with projects and/or activities during their child’s education. If so, they are then asked to list details on their expertise such as their educational background, nature of employment, interests, hobbies etc.

The school has found that nine out of ten parents are keen to offer their assistance, which may include attending excursions, supervising swimming classes or helping out with reading in the classroom.

One parent has helped run a special art program on ceramics and another has taken classes on cake decorating.

The information obtained in the enrolment package is stored in a parent job description register. This allows the school to target parents with relevant skills for specific tasks. For example, if a parent has noted that they have a horticulture degree, the school will contact them directly to help out with gardening activities.

The parent job register was also useful when the school undertook a new building project. During the process a parent with an engineering background was invited to act as a reference point on the school council. The parent’s involvement led to the school being able to obtain an engineering certificate and helped to identify an architectural error.

Vermont Primary School’s experience suggests that many parents welcome the opportunity to be involved in their child’s school. The parent job register provides them with a tool to reach parents who are likely to be interested and experienced in specific activities and projects.
# Parent Contact and Medical Information Form*

**Child's name**

**Date of birth**

**Sex**  [ ] M  [ ] F

**Parent/Guardian's name (primary carer)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Home phone</th>
<th>Work phone</th>
<th>Mobile</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Email**

**Address**

**Post code:**

Please select your preferred method of communication:

- [ ] Phone
- [ ] SMS
- [ ] Email
- [ ] Post
- [ ] Information sent home with child

What is the best time of the day to contact you?

- [ ] Morning
- [ ] Afternoon
- [ ] Evening

**Additional information**

---

**Parent/Guardian's name (secondary carer)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Home phone</th>
<th>Work phone</th>
<th>Mobile</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Email**

**Address**

**Post code:**

Please select your preferred method of communication:

- [ ] Phone
- [ ] SMS
- [ ] Email
- [ ] Post
- [ ] Information sent home with child

What is the best time of the day to contact you?

- [ ] Morning
- [ ] Afternoon
- [ ] Evening

**Additional information**

---

*Note: parents/guardians should take responsibility for ensuring that the school is notified of any changes to information provided in this form.*
Parent Contact and Medical Information Form (continued)

Special family arrangements: Please outline any information we might need to assist us to contact the most appropriate parent/guardian/case manager etc.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alternative Emergency Contacts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Note:</strong> This can include relatives, neighbours or other trusted adults</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Primary emergency contact</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home phone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Secondary emergency contact</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home phone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Medical Information**

Hospital/clinic preference

Medical practitioner | Phone
Health insurer | Policy number

Please tick if your child suffers any of the following:

- Asthma
- Bed wetting
- Blackouts
- Diabetes
- Dizzy spells
- Fits of any type
- Heart condition
- Migraine
- Sleepwalking
- Travel sickness
- Other

**Allergies to:**

Penicillin:

Other drugs:

Any foods:

Other

Any special care needed:
# Student Excursion Consent Form

1. **Name of school:**

2. **Title of excursion:**

3. **Destination of excursion:**

4. **Date(s) of excursion:**

5. **Information about the excursion:**

   **Note:**

   Schools need to provide sufficient information to parents about the nature of the proposed excursion, including a description of the activities to be undertaken and the degree of supervision, to enable the parents to give informed consent to their child's participation. This information should be included here or provided as an attachment. As a minimum, such information would normally include:

   - departure and return times
   - a description of the excursion, including the premises to be used, sleeping arrangements, general and specific activities, and travel arrangements (if another parent is providing transport, include parent’s details and car registration number)
   - staff members and supervision
   - cost (and refund policy)
   - clothing and equipment needed
   - name of excursion contact person and contact details
   - other matters that may apply, such as behaviour, dress, selection of students (if places are limited).

   If the above information is provided as an attachment, the school should identify and list in this part of the form the specific documents that are attached under a subheading ‘attachments’.

6. **Student behaviour:**

   **Note:**

   Schools may choose to also include the following statement:

   ‘I acknowledge that during the excursion, acceptable standards of behaviour will be expected of the students. I understand that in the event of my son’s/daughter’s serious misbehaviour during the excursion, he/she may be sent home. I further understand that in such circumstances I will be informed and that any costs associated with his/her return will be my responsibility.’

7. **Parent consent:**

   I have read all of the above information provided by the school in relation to the excursion, including any attached material.

   I give permission for my daughter/son to attend.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parent/guardian</th>
<th>(name)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(signature)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(date)</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
CONSENT TO MEDICAL ATTENTION

Where the teacher in charge of the excursion is unable to contact me, or it is otherwise impracticable to contact me, I authorise the teacher-in-charge to:

- consent to my child receiving such medical or surgical attention as may be deemed necessary by a medical practitioner
- administer such first aid as the teacher-in-charge may judge to be reasonably necessary.

Signature of parent/guardian: ____________________________

Date: ____________________________

Prior to a child taking part in any excursion approved by the school council, the Department of Education & Training requires this consent form to be signed by the parent/guardian.

**Student Excursion Consent Form (continued)**

**Confidential medical information for school council-approved excursions**

Please complete and return by

This information is intended to assist the school in the case of any medical emergency. All information is held in confidence. Under the *Information Privacy Act 2000* and the *Health Records Act 2001*, schools have a duty to protect the privacy of the individual with regard to their personal and health information. All the personal and health information collected by this form will be kept confidential and only used for the purpose of providing appropriate care of your child. Health information is requested so that staff can properly care for the student and withholding health information that may be required can put the student’s health at risk.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Child’s name:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date of birth:  School year:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent/guardian’s full name:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post code:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency telephone numbers: after hours:  business hours:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name and address of family doctor:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Medical/Hospital insurance fund:                                                                 |
| Contribution number:  Medicare number:                                                           |

Please tick if your child suffers any of the following:

- [ ] Asthma
- [ ] Bed wetting
- [ ] Blackouts
- [ ] Diabetes
- [ ] Dizzy spells
- [ ] Fits of any type
- [ ] Heart condition
- [ ] Migraine
- [ ] Sleepwalking
- [ ] Travel sickness
- [ ] Other

**Allergies to:**

- Penicillin:
- Other drugs:
- Any foods:
- Other:

Any special care needed:

**Tetanus immunisation:** year of last tetanus immunisation __________________________ (tetanus immunisation is normally given at four years of age (as Infanrix vaccine) and at fifteen years of age (as ADT vaccine))

**Tablets and medicines:** Is your child presently taking tablets and/or medicine?  YES  NO

If YES, please state name of medication, dosage etc.

All medication must be handed to the teacher-in-charge prior to departure. All containers must be labelled with your child’s name, the dose to be taken and when it should be taken. (These will be kept in the first aid centre and distributed as required.) If it is necessary or appropriate for your child to carry their own medication (i.e. asthma puffers, insulin for diabetes) it must be with the knowledge and approval of both the teacher-in-charge and yourself.

Previous experience: Is this the first time your child has been away from home?  YES  NO
Parent-teacher interviews offer an important opportunity to speak to your child’s teacher face-to-face and find out how your child is progressing at school.

By asking questions and gathering information about your child’s work habits, participation, behaviour and learning style, you have an opportunity to become more involved in their learning and provide support where needed.

Here are some useful tips for getting the most out of parent-teacher interviews:

• Determine what information you need before the interview. Ask your child before the interview what they enjoy about school. Are there any areas where they need extra help, or have concerns? Be prepared to share this information with your child’s teacher during the interview.

• Write a list of specific questions you wish to ask your child’s teacher. During the interview, take notes so that you can share the comments with your child.

• If you need a translator arrange this with your school prior to the interview.

• If you want to know about a specific area of your child’s progress (for example, how they are progressing in English) let your child’s teacher know this from the outset so you can focus the interview on this topic.

• Ask your child’s teacher what the expectations are in their subject area with regard to homework and assignments. How much time should they be spending on their homework? Are there any areas or ways you can help your child at home?

• Find out how your child is participating in classroom activities and whether there are any general issues with behaviour or discipline that need discussing.

• If your child is finding the work too easy, ask your child’s teacher whether they can provide extension activities.

• If the conversation moves away from the topic, to an area that is not about your child, be prepared to refocus it.

• End the interview on a positive note and keep in regular contact with the teacher to follow up on a mutually agreed plan.

• If, after the interview, you feel there wasn’t sufficient time, request to meet again for a longer period.

• Talk with your child about the interview and discuss how you can work together to improve their learning.
Dear Parents/Guardians,

Throughout the year we have many events, activities and initiatives at our school to support your child’s education. Your assistance is always greatly appreciated. All contributions are welcomed; however, we understand the busy schedules of parents and carers.

Please complete this form and return to (insert) so that we can create a resource and confidential information list to help us with our planning.

Don’t be modest! There are a huge array of skills and talents among our parent community that could be a great resource for our school.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this form and share this information with us.

Yours sincerely,

(School Principal, School Council President, and Parent Club President)
## Parent Skills and Assistance Registration Form (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parents'/Guardians’ names:</th>
<th>(1)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children/s name</td>
<td>(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year level (class)</td>
<td>(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact details: Phone/Mobile</td>
<td>(1) Email</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2) Email</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Can you share a little bit about yourself?

Do you have any skills, interests, hobbies or aspects of your profession that may be of assistance for our planned events and school activities?

For example:

- Graphic designer – help design and lay out invitations and newsletters
- Nurse/doctor – help at events or sporting activities
- Tradesperson – help build, design and construct props and sets for musicals; school maintenance at working bees
- Musician – play, perform or help with rehearsals
- Sports and fitness – assist with netball, football, athletics to train or umpire; nutrition
- Publicity – help fundraising, sponsorship, advertising efforts, PR

- Financial services – assist with budget preparations and collection of funds
- Organisational skills
- Editing and writing skills
- School council experience or interest
- Supporting specific curriculum areas (e.g. science, art, languages)
- Dressmaker/sewing skills
- Computer and Internet skills
- Photography skills
- Keen, interested, enthusiastic, and willing to have fun – this kind of help is always in high demand!

### Occupation

#### Interests/hobbies

#### Other skills and talents

Please tick the box below if you would like to help with an event or activity:

I/We would be interested in helping with:

- Art show
- Fete
- School council
- Dance
- Fashion parade
- Musical
- Excursions
- List other events/activities which may be of interest to you

(Schools can insert own events, activities, councils, committees etc.)