



## DUNGOG PUBLIC SCHOOL

### Parents and Schools Policy

Parents naturally want the very best for their children.

What exactly is "the best" of course differs greatly from one parent to the next but the commonality is that we all want our children to be successful and happy - and to feel secure in all aspects of their lives.

During their school years, the home and school occupy the greatest part of their time - and carry the greatest influence on their development into adulthood. Obviously, the more harmony there is between home and school, the greater will be the chances of achievement and fulfillment.

The contribution which parents have traditionally made in schools is highly valued. However, children (first and foremost), parents, teachers and the school community generally stand to reap major benefits from even stronger ties.

The "best" possible outcomes from all children's education are very much enhanced by a strong partnership between parents, teachers and students.

#### ***Introduction***

This school based policy is about parents and our school.

It uses the term "parent" to refer to people who have responsibility for the care of children attending school.

Children learn best when school programs offer some understanding of their world. Therefore a strong partnership between parents and school becomes all the more important when the complex and rapidly changing nature of our society is considered.

The Department of Education, and this school, encourages participation because

- parents have a unique knowledge and understanding of their own children, being their first and most influential educators
- parents have the right, through their responsibility to and for their children, to be informed about their children's learning and to participate in reaching decisions which affect them
- parents have talents, interests, energies and skills which enrich the life and program of the school.

#### **Involvement and Participation**

##### ***Involvement***

- refers to the contribution which parents make to the life and business of a school without necessarily being part of the school decision making process

Many parents are already involved in their child's school in a variety of ways. Their involvement may involve working in the canteen or listening to children reading. Parents can also be involved by being consulted on particular issues by decision-makers.

##### ***Participation***

- refers to parents sharing in the making of decisions about school aims, policies and programs with staff and students. Participation may be through membership of the school council, the P&C, sub-committees, or in preparing submissions on issues of special interest.

The Department of Education is committed both to increasing parents' involvement and to ensuring that parents can participate in school decision-making if they wish to do so. The nature and level of each parent's involvement and participation remains a matter of individual choice.

Involvement and participation are equally valuable and parents should have the opportunity to choose how they are involved, or how they participate, from a wide range of options agreed upon by the school community.



### **Guidelines**

In encouraging the involvement and participation of parents in our school the following guidelines will be observed:

- Any involvement and participation recognise the framework of relevant legislation (such as the *Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Standards in Education*) and NSW Department of Education Policy and Procedures.
- Any involvement and participation must not conflict with the specific professional responsibilities for which principals and teachers are accountable.

*(For example, while parents may participate in the development of a school's Discipline Policy, it is the responsibility of the principal and teachers to manage student behaviour on a day-to-day basis.)*

### **Responsibilities**

**All of us** : each and every parent, the school principal, teachers and school staff, have a role to play in encouraging and supporting parent and community participation in our school.

#### ***The Responsibilities of the Principal***

The Principal will :

- consult with parents and plan to promote parent involvement and participation.
- endeavour to foster the interest, knowledge and skills of parents who have not previously been involved
- ensure that information is made available to parents, establishing new channels where necessary
- monitor and evaluate parent participation practices
- include, wherever possible and relevant, parents in staff development and school development activities.
- address, investigate and provide feedback on, the concerns of parents when expressed directly to the Principal.

#### ***The responsibilities of Teachers***

Teachers will continue to work with parents to:

- help parents feel welcome in the classroom, for example, through activities including class parents' meetings
- build good relationships with parents and children
- ensure that parents have all relevant information about their children's education
- organise to meet with a parent at a mutually agreeable time to discuss their child's progress or any concern if requested
- provide a range of options in time to meet with parents for the formal mid-year interview
- seek the views of all parents on matters relating to their children's education
- promote the idea of their parents' participation among children.
- create a welcoming environment for all members of the school community.



### ***The responsibilities of Parents***

Parents have a responsibility to:

- cooperate with school staff, other parents and students in the interest of their child's education
- show an active interest in their child's schooling
- be involved and support the organizations set up to facilitate parent involvement in the school where possible
- read the school's weekly newsletter and all other written communication from the school
- respond promptly to school requests for various permissions
- communicate concerns in a manner which allows for positive action to be taken. Politeness and common courtesy is expected
- make an appointment at a mutually agreeable time to discuss the progress of their child
- understand that the teacher is responsible for the whole class and therefore cannot engage in discussion "at the classroom door".
- attend a midyear interview
- support the implementation of school policies
- respect the professional knowledge and decisions of the teachers and the school
- assist the school in establishing a set of shared values and expectations.

Parents need to understand that information that comes home through the understanding and eyes of a child may need further investigation or understood for what it is. If parents hear something or are worried by their child's manner they certainly should talk to the teacher and the school but as teachers do not believe everything told in "Morning News," parents need to also exercise discretion.

### ***Responsibilities of Children***

Children have a responsibility to:

- develop an understanding of the school's Fair Discipline Code, Rules, Expectations and policies that apply to them
- co-operate with each other and with school staff to create a happy and safe learning environment.
- take every opportunity to learn as much and as well as possible through always trying to do their personal best.

### **Communicating concerns**

***There will be times where parents wish to query something or make a complaint concerning something which has occurred at school.***

So that we have the best possible chance of arriving at a solution which is best for all parties concerned, it helps if parents can give us a clear view of

- What is seen to be the problem
- What action or outcome is desired

In many cases, the class teacher may be the appropriate person to approach. All teachers are willing to set times where they can meet with parents to discuss concerns. Parents should either contact the teacher to arrange a time, or arrange this through the office.

In other cases, parents may wish to discuss their concerns with the Principal. Appointments can be made through a letter, contacting the office or with the Principal directly.



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It must be understood that it is not always possible for the action which is requested to be followed or for the desired outcome to be attained.

It is hoped, though, that if concerns are communicated at the time they are felt, then everybody can do their best to get as close as possible to a fair and workable solution.

### **Formal Complaints**

If a parent wishes to lodge a Formal Complaint this needs to be specified to the Principal so the required Departmental Procedures can be followed.

A copy of the Complaints Handling Guidelines is at: <https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/policies/index.shtml>

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