



Home–school communication

Practice brief

The practice

Teachers support communication between a student’s home and school by offering a range of different ways – including a reliable email address or other contact details – for parents/carers to discuss their child’s progress.

How does it help?

Collaborative partnerships between teachers and parents/carers contribute to the educational success of all students. Effective home–school communication allows parents/carers to access information about their child’s school life and gain a sense of their child’s progress, so they can provide support for school-related issues.

Teachers can help parents/carers by gathering information from students about a range of issues that can affect the student’s school performance and participation, including mental and physical health concerns. Home–school communication is important for many families, especially when students on the autism spectrum are experiencing challenges they may not discuss at home, such as bullying. In these situations, parents/carers rely on teachers to have an accurate understanding of their child’s school experiences.

Parents/carers can also provide teachers with valuable insights into students’ strengths and capacities. They have often worked therapeutically with their child for many years and can help teachers to tap into their child’s talents.

Frequent constructive communication between parents/carers and teachers enables both parties to share their knowledge from different contexts, enabling programs, strategies, and practices to provide consistent benefit to students.

What is it?

Home–school communication involves the student’s parents/carers and teachers sharing important information about the student on a regular basis to support the student’s success at home and school.





How does it work?

- Make a proactive effort to initially contact and maintain communication with families – holding a meeting at the start of the school year to establish the best ways of communicating may be helpful.
- Provide a mix of formal opportunities (e.g. parent–teacher meetings) and informal opportunities, depending on teacher and family preferences.
- Provide a reliable method of communication in the event of an emergency or to pre-empt potential problems in the school day.

How do I do it?

- Contact parents/carers to indicate that you value the family’s engagement and are available to discuss any issues, and provide reliable contact details.
- Inform families of all opportunities for formal meetings and engagements.
- Offer families a range of communication channels to suit preferences and needs.
- Review contact with parents/carers each school term. Identify any difficulties and revise accordingly.
- Regularly share information about students with parents/carers, providing them with an opportunity to understand what their child achieves in class.
- Consider what information from parents/carers might assist in classroom and instructional planning, e.g. special interests that may help to motivate a student.
- Communicate with parents/carers about the successes of their child – this can make a big difference to family morale.
- Ask questions about a student’s interests and strengths – this can enrich the student’s education plans and create a positive environment for collaborative home–school relationships.

It works better if the teacher:

- uses clear and accessible language, avoiding education jargon
- agrees with parents/carers on the type and extent of home–school communication
- offers a range of communication channels to parents/carers, e.g. meetings, phone calls, emails
- doesn’t take criticisms personally – parents/carers of students on the autism spectrum often experience intense stress and may have a history of negative encounters with schools
- acknowledges the perspectives of parents/carers
- ensures that home–school communication is constructive and positive.





It doesn't work if:

- home–school communication is mainly negative.

How will I know if it's working?

- Communication between school and home is consistent.
- You know more about your students as a result of the communication.
- The information you obtain from parents/carers informs your education planning.

Where can I go to find out more?

- [Queensland Government parent and community engagement framework](#)
- [article: seven effective parent–teacher communication tips](#)

Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (APST)

Implementing this practice will meet the Australian Professional Standard/s for Teachers:

- 7.3 – Engage with the parents/carers

