



## Wollongbar Public School

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Education  
Public Schools

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### Wollongbar Public School Parents, Carers and the School Procedure

Parents and Carers naturally want the very best for their children. What exactly is "the best", of course, differs greatly from one parent or carer to the next, but basically 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 children's time and carry the greatest influence on their development into adulthood. The more harmony there is between home and school, the greater will be the chances of achievement and fulfilment of potential.

The contribution which parents and carers have traditionally made in schools is highly valued. However, children (first and foremost), parents, carers, 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 procedure is about parents, carers and our school. It uses the term *parent* or *carer* 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 carers and the 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 and carers have a unique knowledge and understanding of their own children, being their first and most influential educators.
- Parents and carers 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 and carers have talents, interests, energies and skills which enrich the life and programs of the school.

#### Involvement and Participation

**'Involvement'** refers to the contribution which parents and carers make to the life and business of a school without necessarily being part of the school decision making process.

Many parents and carers 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 and carers can also be involved by being consulted on particular issues by decision-makers.

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

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

Involvement and participation are equally valuable and parents and carers 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.

In encouraging the involvement and participation of parents and carers in our school the following guidelines must 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 and carers may participate in the development of a school's Discipline Procedure, 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 and carer, the school principal, teachers, school councillor and other staff, have a role to play in encouraging and supporting parent, carer & community participation in our school.

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

The Principal will:

- Consult with parents and carers and plan to promote parent and carer involvement and participation.
- Endeavour to foster the interest, knowledge and skills of parents and carers who have not previously been involved.
- Ensure that information is made available to parents and carers, establishing new channels where necessary.
- Monitor and evaluate parent and carer participation practices.
- Include, wherever possible and relevant, parents and carers in school development activities.
- Address, investigate and provide feedback on the concerns of parents and carers when expressed directly to the Principal.

### **The Responsibilities of Teachers**

Teachers will continue to work with parents and carers to:

- Help parents and carers feel welcome in the classroom, for example through planned classroom activities.
- Build good relationships with parents, carers and children.
- Ensure that parents and carers have all relevant information about their children's education.
- Following a written or verbal request, organise to meet with a parent or carer at a mutually agreeable time to discuss their child's progress or any concern.
- Provide a range of options in time to meet with parents and carers for the formal end of Term One Parent, Carer and Teacher Interviews.
- Consider the views of all parents and carers on matters relating to their children's education.
- Promote the idea of their parents' or carer's participation among children.
- Create a welcoming environment for all members of the school community.

### **The Responsibilities of Parents and Carers**

Parents have a responsibility to:

- Read the weekly school *Newsletter* and all other written communication from the school.
- Cooperate with school staff, other parents and carers, and students in the interest of their child's education.
- Show an active interest in their child's schooling.
- Be involved and support the organisations set up to facilitate parent involvement in 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 planned Parent and Carer Teacher interviews
- Support the implementation of school procedures.
- 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 and carers need to understand that information that comes home through the understanding and eyes of a child may need further investigation or be understood for what it is. If parents and carers hear something or are worried by their child's manner they certainly should talk to the teacher and the school, but just as teachers do not believe everything told in 'News', parents and carers also need to exercise discretion.

### **Responsibilities of Children**

Children have a responsibility to:

- Develop an understanding of the school's Discipline Procedure, Rules, Expectations and any other procedures 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 and carers 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 and carers to discuss concerns. Parents and carers should contact the teacher to arrange a time via the Office or school email using the *Approaching Your School* procedure ('purple form').

In other cases, parents and carers may wish to discuss their concerns with an Assistant Principal or the Principal. Appointments can be made by phoning the Office or emailing [Wollongbar-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:Wollongbar-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au), using the *Approaching Your School* procedure ('purple form').

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 or carer wishes to lodge a *Formal Complaint* this needs to be specified to the Principal so the required departmental policies can be followed.

A copy of the *Complaints Handling Guidelines* is at: [www.det.nsw.edu.au/policies](http://www.det.nsw.edu.au/policies)

Jennifer Thomas  
Principal