



Diocese of Toowoomba
Catholic Schools

Parent Engagement Charter

We believe the partnership between parents and staff of schools is key in achieving our purpose of 'enabling full and flourishing lives' for students, staff and families.

The Parent engagement charter describes what parents can expect and what is expected of them. It provides a point of reference for staff and parents as they work together to provide the best possible education for all students and build a community in which everyone belongs, feels valued and can succeed.

The benefits

At Toowoomba Catholic Schools we believe in a parent's right and responsibility to be involved in and contribute to the educational experiences of their children.

We know that a relationship between school and parents works best when it is based on mutual respect and acknowledgement of the value that each brings to the learning process.

All of our schools aim to complement and build on the work of the family so that all students can pursue their gifts and affirm their sense of belonging and importance. Through this, we believe they will become effective and successful learners.

Learning the language of school

At home parenting

While parents strive to be involved in their child's educational journey the opportunities do not always fit with the many other demands of work and family. Parents have a powerful influence on their child's educational outcomes as a result of what happens at home.

Parents are highly influential when they

- have high expectations for their children's conduct and courtesy, punctuality, sense of responsibility and involvement in family activities
- show interest in their children's learning by helping them relate what they are learning in school to the world beyond school
- are supportive of the work of teachers and ensure their child attends school every day, ready and willing to learn
- model the behaviours of successful learners
- talk to children about things that interest them and provide opportunities for children to extend their engagement in these areas
- discuss their children's educational and career aspirations and encourage children to set goals for their progress.

Parent engagement in learning

Opportunities for parents to find out and learn more about how to support their child's learning and wellbeing will be offered by the school. Parents are encouraged to engage in these activities.

Communicating

Teachers keep parents 'in the loop' about their child's learning achievement and progress through both formal and informal contact.

Formal contact includes

- parent information meetings (usually at the beginning of first term)
- parent-teacher interviews (usually scheduled at the end of first term or second term)
- report cards
- occasional formal meetings requested by teachers and/or parents for specific purposes.

When a formal meeting is needed, an appointment should be made to meet at a mutually convenient time. Parents should contact the school office to arrange such an appointment with their child's teacher. Occasionally, circumstances dictate an immediate meeting, however, as a general rule parents can expect that meetings will not be scheduled during class time.



Parent involvement in school

Volunteering

Volunteers assist in providing services and opportunities for students' learning which might otherwise not be possible. These might include staffing the uniform shop, coaching sporting teams, training and conducting eisteddfod choirs, contributing to stalls for the annual fete and participating in working bees.

Parents may be asked if they are interested in volunteering for these types of activities.

All volunteers are to complete an induction program to ensure understanding of the conduct expectations for volunteers, especially in the area of student protection.

Decision making

Parents add a unique perspective to decisions affecting the priorities and future direction of our schools and so can expect to be asked to provide feedback to review and improve the school. Parents may contribute as a member of a focus group, a parent forum or as a participant in a survey.

The Parents and Friends Association (P&F) and School Advisory Council or a Parent Engagement Network are the most prominent formal groups for parental involvement in decision-making processes.

P&F

The P&F supports the principal and staff to provide the very best educational experiences at school. It acts as a representative of all parents in the school, a medium of support, information and engagement of parents in their children's education and in the school community.

School Advisory Council

The School Advisory Council comprises members of the parent community with the primary purpose being to provide support and advice to the Principal in

- articulating and enacting the school's vision, mission, Catholic ethos and culture
- promoting education programs, faith formation and development
- developing school policies as required and interpreting Toowoomba Catholic Schools policies within the school context
- discussing issues such as the school strategic plan
- discussions about the annual school budget and other financial matters
- master planning and capital resource planning and maintenance.

Parent Engagement Network (PEN)

The PEN brings together the best of the P&F and the School Advisory Council.

The PEN includes opportunities for parents to meet and engage on matters which enhance their child's school experiences or to contribute through specific working parties. PEN meetings are scheduled during the year to focus on key priorities of the school's strategic plan and annual action plan. These meetings are to garner parent input or provide opportunities to grow parents' understanding of how they can support their children. Working parties are formed to undertake specific tasks, manage events or lead initiatives linked to the school's strategic plan and annual action plan. These are determined through the Executive of the PEN and confirmed at meetings.

Agreed expectations

The TCS Parent engagement charter is supported by the TCS Parent Code of Conduct and TCS Employee Code of Conduct. Parents agree to the TCS Parent Code of Conduct and the TCS Parent Engagement Charter at enrolment. School staff agree to the TCS Employee Code of Conduct when signing their employment contract.

Both codes of conduct are available through each school and the Toowoomba Catholic Schools website.