School Strategies for Working with Parents as Partners

1. Schools can encourage and promote parent involvement and participation at the school level by:
   - providing opportunities for parent and family involvement in the school and wider parish community through prayer, liturgical celebrations, and social justice action;
   - providing adult faith formation and education for parents, especially in the sacramental years;
   - openly welcoming and encouraging all parents to the school;
   - ensuring that families understand the school's vision, mission and curriculum objectives;
   - creating an environment in which teachers and parents treat each other with mutual respect;
   - promoting the benefits for student learning of parent involvement within the school community;
   - maintaining effective communication with parents about student progress and initiatives in the school and parish to support the learning and development of students;
   - encouraging and assisting parents to participate in their children's education both at school and at home;
   - advertising and promoting parent education programs provided by the school, parish and wider community;
   - respecting diversity of family backgrounds and cultures and their contribution to children's learning.

2. In order to assist parents in their role as first educators and valuable contributors to the school's goals, schools can provide assistance to parents to:

   Understand their children and support them as learners, through:

   - family support programs in areas such as religious development, health and nutrition, student safety and wellbeing;
   - parent information nights on parenting and child development at specific age and year levels;
   - information on classroom programs, how to help with homework and other curriculum-related activities;
   - family curriculum nights to assist families to understand school programs;
   - homework activities that involve two-way interaction with parents, e.g. shared reading, religious education learning activities.

   Access opportunities for two-way communication, through:

   - development of a school communications policy which includes a process for putting complaints or grievances to the school;
   - timely information about courses, programs and activities within the school and broader Catholic community;
   - clear information about how to access school policies;
   - annual provision of information packs that include details of the roles and responsibilities of key school personnel, school phone and fax numbers, and where appropriate, details of parish personnel and contact details;
   - parent noticeboard and newsletters including online publications, for news and regular updates;

- invitations to attend parent focus groups to discuss key issues;
- use of interpreters and written translations for families with a language background other than English;
- interviews with teachers on student progress;
- accommodation of differing family commitments by scheduling events at different times.

Encourage parent involvement in activities that support students, teachers and schools through:

- involvement in classroom activities;
- assisting with school excursions;
- involvement in school boards and parent associations;
- assisting with fundraising;
- volunteering to demonstrate interests, skills and talents;
- providing links to parent representatives;
- seeking feedback from parents on draft policies and processes.

Cooperate with the local community in order to promote student learning and wellbeing by:

- linking parents to community services either on a sessional basis or permanently from the school;
- inviting agencies to talk about their services to groups of parents;
- ensuring lists of local community services are kept up to date;
- providing information on community health, cultural events, recreational activities, religious activities, social support and other services in newsletters and noticeboards;
- displaying examples of individual student and class work within and outside the school;
- using the local media to promote student and school achievements;
- encouraging former students to be involved in school programs or activities;
- identifying opportunities for students to work supportively within the community;
- involving students in neighbourhood projects;
- providing opportunities for communities to use school space or facilities.