



## **How Do We Build Effective Parent-School Partnerships in Inclusive Schools?**

There's an enormous body of research and studies on the positive impact of parent partnerships and student success not just in school but throughout life. We cannot educate our children without reaching out to their parents. When schools and families work together, children have a far better chance of not only being successful in school but being successful in life as well. There are three R's to effective partnerships: respect, responsibility and relationships. Inclusive schools who are successful in their parent partner and school partnerships share these three qualities.

### **Respect**

In building respect both the parent and the school are valued, they are trusted and they are respected. The needs of the child come first and the child's needs form the basis of all interactions. Both recognise that the family perspective is invaluable in providing insight and information as to what a child needs to be successful in school. The parents are full partners in the decision making process because that information is so important and that is what we call an open door policy at school. Open door in that there is a climate that welcomes parents and that expresses concern for their needs, the parent's needs as well as the child's needs. There is also what we call the recognition of limits. Parents have limits, they have other responsibilities as well so schools provide access to services, supports, resources and meetings at times and places that work for their parents. If both want what's best for that child then both are willing to share responsibility for the success of the child.

### **Responsibility**

The emphasis is placed on making parent-friendly schools and school-friendly homes. When we talk about parent-friendly schools we're talking about schools that are all inclusive that welcome all children that value their differences. When we talk about school-friendly homes, we're looking at homes that re-enforce education, that help with homework, that make sure that they re-enforce at home the importance of school. That also means that schools have the responsibility to stay connected and parents have the responsibility to stay connected. Parents need to educate the school about their child. They need to share their journey with that child and schools need to connect and have a responsibility to connect with families. We often say that communication needs to be regular, on-going, two-way, including feedback and meaningful. Meaningful communication provides information, lets us know about goals, about the scope and sequence of the curriculum and lets us know about homework responsibilities. Responsibility means staying connected and staying informed.

## Relationships

The keys to building relationships with partnerships are the same as building relationships in the classroom. We need to feel like we belong, we need to trust and we need to believe that we are valued. Relationships nurture the teamwork that is so necessary for partnerships to survive and to help kids succeed in school.

The three R's, Respect, Responsibility, and Relationships help us to form those partnerships that truly make a lasting difference to all pupils.

## **What strategies do we use to encourage parental engagement at Limes Farm Junior School?**

Our approach identifies four key success strategies designed to support parents, so that they have the opportunity, skills and tools to work together with staff and contribute fully to the success of their child at Limes Farm Junior School;

1. School Climate — we will foster and sustain a positive, welcoming school climate in which all parent perspectives are encouraged, valued and heard.
2. Eliminating Barriers — we will aim to identify and remove barriers to parent engagement that may prevent some parents from fully participating in their children's learning, and to reflect the diversity of our students and communities.
3. Support for Parents — we will provide parents with the knowledge, skills and tools they need to support student learning at home and at school.
4. School Community Involvement — we will foster good relations between different partners through regular social events to build the community.

### What is parental engagement?

At Limes Farm Junior School, we recognise many different forms of parental engagement, and believe that each is an important contributor to a child's success at school.

### Here are some key examples.

1. Attend Parent Meetings, which is a great opportunity to exchange perspectives, and to ensure parental views are communicated appropriately.
2. Providing a positive learning environment at home, actively working with children to support what they are learning in school, and making learning an important part of the day.
3. Having productive conversations with teachers so that there is clear communication between the school and at home.
4. Becoming involved in other school activities, and volunteering to help with school events, trips and other activities.