



Parents and Schools Working Together – Better!

We are extremely concerned about the impact of recent media statements portraying parents as aggressive, violent and the cause of stress for principals and teachers.

Violent or threatening behaviour by anyone is totally unacceptable and can never be condoned. We know that parents are involved in 5% of these kinds of incidents against staff in schools, and that is 5% too many.

But the recent media reports have exacerbated tension between two of the most significant parties in a young person's school life – parents and teachers.

Instead, as leading organisations for parents and communities in our nation's schools, we ask how we can foster and support good communication and collaboration, for the benefit of everyone invested in children's education.

All parents and teachers, along with other selected professionals, have a shared responsibility for the wellbeing and development of young people.

Every day, parents and grandparents entrust their precious children to teachers and other school staff. In most cases, a child leaves their parent's care by 9am and returns to their side around 3pm with little communication or knowledge of what happens in the hours between.

For many reasons, teachers often only communicate with parents for the first time when there is an issue. This is not a good place to begin such an important relationship.

We have long argued for more time and resources to be invested in engaging families.

The 50 years of research clearly proves that student outcomes improve and relationships between home and school are far more positive when schools invest in authentic family engagement.

This is why we believe it is time to invest in measures that would positively impact the relationships between teachers and parents and we expect the next Education Minister to take steps to do this.

We realise this isn't going to happen overnight, but we must work towards a future where school communities form strong partnerships with families and work together for the benefit of young people. Schools and parents need to be able to share each other's knowledge of the strengths and challenges of each child.

Schools and parents need to talk openly and clearly about children, so they can respond effectively to any issues long before they become a concern.

We believe this would build trust, reduce frustration, and ultimately minimise unacceptable behaviour.

Violence is not just a school issue. It is a community issue. We need to deal with it through a community approach.

Our parent organisations would welcome the opportunity to collaborate with principal and teacher organisations, as well as education departments and other education authorities to improve family engagement.



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May 14, 2019