**Make decisions**

**Identifying priorities**

When you have established your school’s current needs and created your vision of what you want your home-school partnership to become, you can then identify the gaps between what you want and what you’ve got.

The whole school community can share this information and identify priorities for action. These can become the basis of a home–school partnerships action plan. When the parent group clearly wants action in a particular area, this is always a priority for the school.

It may be that the results of the data gathering will reveal that the school’s home–school partnerships are already in good shape and do not need a special focus at this stage. The school would then decide to put its resources into improving some other aspect of their practice. However, it’s important to take time to record the strengths you have identified in your current partnerships and to think about “where to next?” so that you can sustain and build on this strong relationship.

**Plan for a flexible and sustainable approach**

When you have established your school’s current needs and created your vision of what you want your home-school partnership to become, you

If your school goes ahead with a home–school partnerships initiative and specific actions are planned, you will need to monitor the results of the changes.

The New Zealand Curriculum’s teaching as inquiry approach can be adapted by schools planning to develop their home–school partnerships. Just as teachers do, you can ask:

* What is important and worth spending time on, given where our partnership is at?
* What strategies are most likely to help us make the changes we want to make?
* What happened as a result of using these strategies, and what are the implications for the next steps in our partnership?

You will also need to listen to parents’ responses and gather additional further data, on an ongoing basis, to establish whether the initiative or actions are meeting their planned purposes or whether you should consider a different approach.

**Developing an action plan**

Your school will now know what it wants to achieve. You may have decided to change your current policies and practices for one or more of the following:

* designing and reviewing the school curriculum to best meet the needs of the students and community and to be inclusive and culturally relevant
* enrolment
* making contact with parents and entering into a two-way discussion with them about school issues in general and/or their child’s learning in particular
* helping parents to support their children’s learning in specific areas
* setting homework and seeking parents’ support for the homework programme
* holding parent–teacher meetings
* reporting to parents on students’ progress
* fund-raising activities involving parents
* accessing resources or information from parents and the community or creating them together.

You will need to:

* consider the opportunities and limitations of your specific school context
* consider the time implications
* consider the cost-effectiveness of the possible options
* predict the benefits (and possible disadvantages) of the chosen initiative.

It’s important to be aware of what could go wrong with your plan. There is no certain recipe for building good relationships, and it is a learning journey. Be prepared to learn from your mistakes as well as to celebrate your successes.