

LEADING LOCAL CURRICULUM GUIDE

# Information sharing and building learning partnerships

Having conversations with young people and their families and whānau about their learning and progress

Poipoia te kākano kia puāwai.  
Nurture the seed and it will blossom.

The nautilus logo on page 3 is by Penelope Newman.

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## About this series

We want all our young people to have meaningful learning experiences. Such experiences energise everyone – students, teachers, parents and whānau, and community members. Through the Education Conversation, we have heard the request for greater support to develop and review local curriculum and learning that enriches the whole child.

The *Leading Local Curriculum Guide* series has been developed to steer review of your curriculum, assessment, and design decisions as you strengthen your local curriculum, respond to progress, and reinforce learning partnerships with parents and whānau. There are three guides:



- **Local curriculum**  
Designing rich opportunities and coherent pathways for all learners



- **Assessment for learning**  
Using the right tools and resources to notice and respond to progress across the curriculum



- **Information sharing and building learning partnerships**  
Having conversations with young people and their families and whānau about their learning and progress

These guides are for curriculum leaders to help with your planning and school review. You can lead discussions with all your staff or within curriculum or year level groups – whichever works for your school.

We suggest you read the three guides and then decide which areas you'd like to focus on. You can complete the sections within each guide at your own pace.

## About this guide >>

**You can use this guide to lead conversations with:**

- your staff, parents, whānau, hapū, iwi, and the wider community – to better understand the opportunities available to build and strengthen learning partnerships
- your staff – to review your local information-sharing practices and decide what is working and what could be improved.



It contains guidance, review questions, activities, examples, and resources to enable deep discussions in your school about information sharing and learning partnerships. These discussions will help to maintain a clear focus on equitable and positive outcomes for all your students. The start of the year is a good time to begin conversations with your staff that can continue throughout the year.

**This guide also includes links to further information, including video clips and websites. To access the hyperlinks, click on the underlined links in the PDF.**

# Relationships for learning

## Child well-being at the heart

Information sharing and building partnerships is about developing three-way genuine relationships that focus on learning and progress. They're the kinds of relationships where you know you are working together on something that is really important – a child's learning and well-being.

## Why are three-way partnerships important?

**Students want to learn and progress** – to do so, they need support to take risks, make changes, and share their thinking with others.

I love being in control of what I am doing. It means I get to do what I love and makes me feel more capable, strong, and trusted. Being told what to do is not learning, it's just being told what to do.

11-YEAR-OLD GIRL IN YEAR 7



**Teachers make a difference** – they know and understand pedagogy and the curriculum, and research shows they are the strongest in-school influence on learning.



Good teachers are teachers who are helpful – they make the difference between me achieving and failing.

MĀORI STUDENT IN ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION

From *Education matters to me: Experiences of tamariki and rangatahi Māori*, Office of the Children's Commissioner.



## Parents and whānau know their child best.

You know your child better than anyone, including their strengths and weaknesses, their interests and talents, and what works for them. You are the most important out-of-school influence on your child's educational success.

From *Partners in Learning*, Education Review Office (Guide for parents)



I would like to be part of the team that creates plans for my child. I would like to understand the system and support my child.

EUROPEAN PARENT



I want an inclusive environment that respects the diversity of learners at school. I want teachers to recognise prior learning and respect the cultural capital of each learner.

NZ EUROPEAN/FILIPINO PARENT

**Ākongā are more likely to make progress and succeed when parents and whānau and their teachers:**

- work together in a way that is focused on learning
- share information and acknowledge expertise
- understand and celebrate similarities and differences.

School conditions should support parents, whānau, and students to be active partners in learning.

**Find out about schools developing the conditions for students, parents, and whānau to participate.**

Sylvia Park School has focused on supporting parents and whānau to understand what achievement information means.

A teacher at Flanshaw Road School has supported 5-year-olds to lead their three-way conversations.



# What actions underpin your relationships for learning?

Schools are moving away from the notion of a one-way flow of information to two-way, ongoing, genuine information sharing between teachers, parents, and whānau.

Conversations about student progress and achievement across the curriculum require meaningful, ongoing information-sharing processes. It's important that roles and expectations are clear for students, teachers, parents, whānau, and the wider community. Sharing information is an essential part of creating relationships for learning.

When we talk about sharing information for learning, there is broad agreement that we don't want an accountability-driven, one-way flow of information such as on the left in the table below.

The school is open to suggestions on what might be best for our children.

PARENT



One-way, accountability-focused reporting	Information sharing that informs learning and builds partnerships (to be completed in the activity on page 7)
Teachers report to parents what their children have learned or achieved.	
The focus is on describing successes and failures.	
Accountability and compliance are the key drivers.	
Reporting is done once or twice a year only.	
Reporting takes no heed of parents' knowledge and views about their children's learning.	
Reporting is from school to parent, essentially a one-way "take it or leave it" message.	
Paper-based reports are sent home.	



**Find out about the approaches Owairaka School used to develop strong reciprocal relationships with parents and whānau. The five video clips in this series are:**

1. Ideas to engage your community
2. An open door policy that works
3. Supporting teachers with community engagement in the classroom
4. Community engagement – a parent’s perspective
5. Engaging Pasifika families – Owairaka School builds a fale.

## Activity >>

### Identifying indicators for your school for “information sharing that informs learning and builds partnerships”

Refer to the table on page 6 and create meaningful indicators to go in the right-hand column.

- What else might families and whānau add? Treat this as a living draft.
- Use these indicators as criteria to check the work you actually do. You could also use them for other activities in this guide. They will help you make decisions about what to stop, start, and do more of.

### Further resources for guidance



The Education Review Office has developed a set of [indicators and examples of effective practice](#) for educationally powerful connections and relationships.

You may find it useful to discuss these indicators and examples and explore some of the [video examples](#).



# What information do parents and whānau want to share?

Parents and whānau expressed their views through the Education Conversation. They said they would like more:

- information about their child's progress, including how they can support their child's learning
- information beyond academic achievement, for example, on student well-being and social and cultural learning
- opportunities to contribute to local curriculum and decisions that impact students.



We would like to be consulted before education decisions that affect our child's future are made and implemented.

MĀORI WHĀNAU

My son's teacher has asked about his interests and they have been taken up for use in classes.

EUROPEAN PARENT



Information that addresses their holistic learning, including cultural, as opposed to just academic.

TONGAN PARENT



Very little is shared about our Samoan history in the curriculum. Our children end up learning about Western views and ideas that don't complement what they are learning at home.

SAMOAN COMMUNITY



We want to know about specific gaps in our child's learning and if they are where they are expected to be, so that we can work together with the school to address any issues. Once children are in high school, so much more is expected of them, which makes it harder to catch up on any gaps in previous learning.

TONGAN/NZ EUROPEAN WHĀNAU





# What do teachers want to share?

Through the Education Conversation, teachers expressed that they want to share what students are doing across the curriculum, including their successes. They said they would like to help when things get a little tough. They want conversations that focus on future actions and summarise learning progress at key points.



We've been sharing progress about literacy and maths and suggesting to parents what they could be doing at home, but we have rarely said much about the whole curriculum. Even our conferencing has focused on literacy and maths, yet children's art work and other project work is all around the room. It would be good to focus on and celebrate the whole child when we talk with parents.

TEACHER FROM A TARANAKI FULL PRIMARY

## Discover what schools are doing to find out what parents want.

Schools have used surveys, hui, and fono to actively engage with parents and whānau and to find out what they want to know about their child's learning.

[Te Kopuru School](#) used a pet day opportunity to engage with parents and whānau.

[Pomaria School](#) held a community hui.

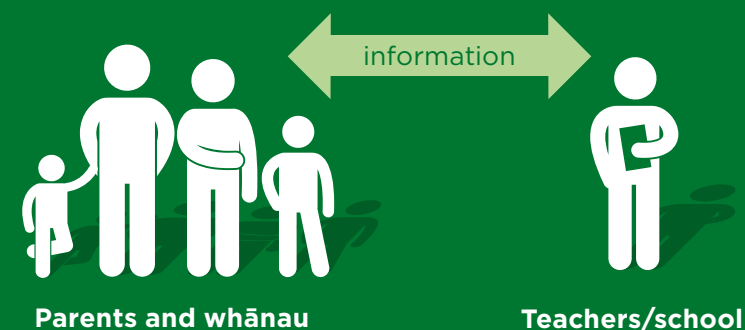
## Activity >>

### Exploring what good practice in building relationships with parents and whānau looks like

- Read and discuss this guide's stories of schools that are building strong relationships with parents and whānau.

### Reviewing your information-sharing approach

- Discuss what you would like to share with parents and whānau. Think about the whole curriculum, events you have at school, your school vision, and individual student goals. Work in small groups such as syndicates for learning areas.
- Compare and contrast what you want to share.
  - Does it change as children get older?
  - Is it the same for all learning areas?
  - Have you captured the essence of what is important for your setting? How will you ensure this approach reflects a genuine partnership between school and home?
- How does your description of what all parties want to share match your criteria for information sharing and building partnerships?



# Essential teaching and learning conversations – when and how?

It's a good idea to plan the learning conversations that you want to take place during the year. There are many opportunities for conversations about learning and progress with the following purposes:

- setting goals and developing new relationships, especially at the beginning of the year
- ongoing sharing such as celebrating successes at home or school
- summarising learning progress at key points to illuminate what has been learned and to inform future learning.

## Some conversations are more critical than others, for example, for:

- setting goals and developing relationships with new families and students, at the beginning of the year or when they first arrive at school
- ongoing liaison to ensure success
- providing support for students whose well-being is at risk and/or learning progress needs focused support.

## Helping to get the critical conversations right

Everyone wants information sharing to be timely and manageable. This can look different for different people. Careful consideration about when and how is needed for busy teachers and working parents.

Taking a multi-modal approach, including paper surveys, online surveys, hui, events, focus groups.

NZ EUROPEAN PRINCIPAL



Offering a variety of ways and multiple opportunities for engagement – digital, face-to-face, etc.

CHINESE PARENTS  
MĀORI TUMUAKI



Face-to-face meetings, hui that involve students performing or showing their learning, visits to homes when parents don't come to school.

NZ EUROPEAN PRINCIPAL



We are invited to hui and asked for input on our children's education. The kura consults with us, the whānau, on what works best for our children.

MĀORI WHĀNAU



I talk with his teacher regularly, and she is very good at listening to what we want for our son.

SCOTTISH PARENT



Teachers need to be more willing to listen to parents. I get put off having conversations with my child's teacher because they answer questions using meaningless buzzwords, or give answers that make them look good.

SAMOAN/NZ EUROPEAN PARENT



Being invited to parent groups, forums, and chats with teachers, where our thoughts, ideas, and aspirations are listened to and taken into consideration.

MĀORI WHĀNAU

**Read about a school explaining expectations around a student-led conference.**  
 Point Chevalier School describes the purpose of three-way conversations, why they are important, and how parents can support their child before, during, and after conferences.

# Activity >>

## Mapping when and how you share information with students, parents, and whānau

In small groups, discuss your context and then fill in the left-hand cell of this table.

What is shared/discussed?	When?	How?

Now take what you share and use the questions below to help you fill in the other two cells of the table.

- What conversations happen at the classroom level? (for example, during goal setting, capability building, regular informal communication, student conferencing, development of portfolios (digital and hard copy), three-way conferencing)
- What conversations happen at the school level? (for example, consultation on annual goals and actions, discussions with particular groups, reporting on progress)
- Identify the “flow” and connections between classroom-level and school-level conversations. Are they clear to all teachers? Would students and their parents and whānau understand them?
- Identify any gaps or bottlenecks in communication.
- How does your mapping match your criteria for *information sharing and building learning partnerships*?

## Reviewing community expectations

- How do you know what forms of communication different parents expect from the school? Is it timely to ask again?
- Do you find it difficult to communicate with particular families? Have we asked them what works best for them?
- Who in your community can help you make connections with whānau? (for example, fluent language speakers)



## What can you do now?



### Get more inspiration and explore what other schools have done.

ERO provides examples of schools [implementing deliberate strategies to improve their learning partnerships](#). Each case explores the review the school undertook and the changes they are making. There are also some starter questions that may be useful for your discussions.

- **Belmont School** is [building and maintaining genuine relational and learning partnerships](#) with parents, families, and whānau. The school has been identifying and improving the extent of their partnerships and looking at ways to sustain these changes.
- **Oratia School** is using and responding to a leader-led inquiry to [improve learner-centred relationships with parents](#). They have developed successful learning partnership strategies.
- **Papatoetoe North School** is [developing genuine learning partnerships](#) with parents to help students and teachers. They have been seeking and using parents' views and knowledge and sharing information and resources, while reinforcing the important benefits of the role of parents in their children's learning.
- **Christ the King School** is [developing educationally powerful connections](#) with parents, particularly with the parents of Māori children and of children in targeted support.
- **Aberdeen School** and **East Taieri School** have also been [developing powerful connections](#) with family and whānau.



- **Sylvia Park School** is exploring how [comprehensive information enables parents to support their child's learning](#) at home. They have been collecting and sharing assessment information about children's goals and next learning steps and involving parents in their children's learning.
- **Woodend School, Gleniti School, and Milson School** are working with parents on [transitions to and within a school](#).

Some schools share simple strategies that have [enhanced learner-centred relationships](#) with parents.

## Activity >>

### Starting the year fresh

What could you do differently when goal-setting with students and their parents and whānau? What are their implications for goal-setting?

- Review your criteria for *information sharing and building partnerships* from page 6.
- How can you use goal-setting to:
  - create the conditions so parents, whānau, and students can be active partners in learning
  - find out what parents and whānau want to share and when and how
  - focus on building partnerships for learning
  - support parents, whānau, and students to understand how learning conversations connect over the year?

### Creating a timeline for information sharing

When you have agreement on what should be shared and when and how:

- develop a visual timeline for students and their families and whānau on information sharing about goals and progress (use different graphics or colours for different year groups)
- share this timeline with parents and whānau, so it becomes part of the fabric of your school. For example, you could put it on your website and show parents a printed version when talking with them face-to-face.

### Innovating – trialling some new ideas

Some teachers may have parents and whānau who are willing to trial new ideas. For example, you could trial a new way of sharing digitally, new features in written reports, or having students contribute to written reports.

Make sure there are clear criteria and a process for evaluating the impact of the trials. Share the trials and their outcomes with other teachers and the board of trustees.

Not all trials are successful. However, if a trial leads to improvements, ensure that you can resource its implementation school-wide.





We hope this guide has been helpful. Please make sure you read the rest of the series:



- **Local curriculum:** Designing rich opportunities and coherent pathways for all learners
- **Assessment for learning:** Using the right tools and resources to notice and respond to progress across the curriculum

If you want to share your feedback or a story of quality information sharing, contact:

[progress.achievement@education.govt.nz](mailto:progress.achievement@education.govt.nz)

#### Where can you get further support?

The **guide series** is part of a package that will support schools to develop and review local curriculum.

Visit **NZ Curriculum Online** or contact your local Ministry of Education for further support and information.

#### Share



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TE TĀHUHU O TE MĀTAURANGA