3. How does Parents.Connect work? cont’d

- Activities you might plan could include, social gatherings. If you wish to have these meetings at school or a commercial venue, then the school’s or venues liability will cover this. If the meeting is at someone’s house then you will need to check that your public liability is up to date.

- Responding to urgent family situations that require support.

- Welcoming and responding to families joining the Hillbrook community.

- Directing any specific issues that parents may raise to the Home Class teacher, class teacher or SLT.

- Maintaining privacy and integrity of contact information. Details are not to be used for sending and/or requesting information for any other purposes. *Under no circumstances is this information to be used for any personal or business promotion.*

- We do not intend Parents.Connect to be a conduit for complaints. There are already channels in place for that. We’re hoping this initiative will be a positive force in the lives of our students.

For those who would like to pursue the research on which this initiative is grounded, we suggest the following books:


Whilst the Parents.Connect program is acknowledged by the Hillbrook Anglican School, all events and activities are privately arranged and are not official school events. The school takes no responsibility for any loss, damage, injury or consequential loss suffered by an person arising out of any event or activity arranged by participants in the Parents.Connect program.
1. **Why do we have Parents.Connect?**

‘Community’ is a word we use a lot at Hillbrook. In fact one of our key beliefs is that people need to be part of a larger group, and to feel that they belong. There is now much educational research suggesting that in a school this sense of belonging and personal connection, built on trust and respect, also promotes a “learning culture”. Our contributions and participation helps us make a positive difference in the lives of us all, but especially our students.

**Parents.Connect** is a role where one, preferably two parents from each Home Class acts as a liaison person with the other parents in their son or daughter’s Home Class. Such a connection enables a greater sense of belonging among the parents, and in particular the parents in your child’s Home Class. Where two parents are involved, ideally we would have one who has a son, and the other who has a daughter in the class.

We’re wanting to nurture a combination of support and trust among the parents of the Home Class and Home Class teacher.

This role is somewhat different to similar ones in primary school, taking into consideration the different stage of development and maturity of adolescence.

**The role is not intended to take any responsibility away from students. It is to strengthen a relationship that we know from research can be important in our students’ learning.**

“Being a Parents.Connect Coordinator has helped me connect with other families and their children and to be more aware of the workings of the school. It is sometimes the incidental things that happen when you are part of the whole picture that can become very meaningful and significant. I have received emails and had chats with other parents that I probably would never have had if I had not been in Parents.Connect - and it has thrust me out of my comfort zone, which can be scary at first, but so very worth it!

Our involvement at Hillbrook for probably 6 or 7 years was really through the music program, wonderful but still limited. Imagine if your child doesn’t play music, do drama etc and you are not particularly outdoorsy, then parents could have five years at the school without really connecting with too many people. Parents.Connect gives families a chance to contact another parent, to ask questions or socialise in a smaller group if whole school functions are too daunting.

Of course parents need to make the effort as well but Parents.Connect gives us a gentle and supportive push to communicate, connect and become part of a wonderful school community”.

_Wendy M - Parents/Connect Coordinator_

2. **What is the role of the Parents.Connect Leader?**

The Leader is a member of the P&F Executive and facilitates the sharing of information and activities of the Parents.Connect Coordinators for each Home Class.

Our current Leader is Ms Rosie Grant. (Rosie can provide you with more information and can be contacted via Hillbrook’s office).

3. **How does Parents.Connect work?**

Each year the Parents.Connect Leader and the School Leadership Team [SLT] will invite parents to volunteer as a parent liaison. It may be possible that a parent coordinator supports a Home Class for two consecutive years.

The Parents.Connect Coordinator will probably make contact with the other parents of their child’s Home Class a couple of times a term, informing parents about school matters such as Parents & Friends meetings, Education Advisory Committee [EAC] Parent Information Evenings, Business Week mentors, Work Experience placements, and volunteering for things such as Sustainability Day etc.

Taking on the role of Parents.Connect Coordinator for a Home Class would mean that you:

- Keep the Parents.Connect Leader informed of any issues or concerns and any events that have been planned.
- Keep a close connection with the Home Class teacher, whose prime responsibility is supporting and nurturing the student members of their Home Class. Messages sent to parents would be copied to the Home Class teacher.
- Make contact with the parents in your child’s Home Class using the Parent Network Booklet. This contact is most likely to be via email or if you wish it could be by phone.
- Answer any questions about such events or refer them to the school.
- Could initiate a parent social event that would allow you to meet with other parents.