

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:

Bryk, K & Schneider, B 2002, 'Trust in Schools'.

Kochanock, J 2005, 'Building Trust for Better Schools'.

Newaman, F & Wehlage, G 1995, 'School Restructuring Project'.

Sergiovanni, TJ 2000, 'The Lifeworld of Leadership'.

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.

HILLBROOK



Parents.Connect...

parents connecting with parents in each Home Class.

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Parents.Connect ... Mums and Dads making a difference

Parents.Connect...

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* liaison 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 liaison

2. Key contacts?

Parents.Connect Leader is a member of the P&F Executive and facilitates the sharing of information and activities, and recruits co-ordinators and liaisons. Our current leader is Kate Cox. (Kate can provide you with more information and can be contacted via Hillbrook's office).

Parents.Connect Class Liaisons - two parent volunteers per class.

Parents.Connect Year/s Co-ordinators are key contacts and support for the class liaisons in 2 year level groups (7/8/9, 10/11/12).

3. How does Parents.Connect work?

Each year the **Parents.Connect Leader** and the School Leadership Team [SLT] will invite parents or call for volunteers as parent class liaisons. It is possible that a parent liaison supports a Home Class for consecutive years.

The **Parents.Connect class liaisons** will 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 P&F meetings, Education Advisory Committee [EAC] Parent Information Evenings, school events where parent volunteers are needed (eg Sustainability Day or Hillbrook Under The Stars, Hillbrook In Action), or specific class events.

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

- Keep the **Parents.Connect Leader** and Year level/s Co-ordinator informed of any issues or concerns and any 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 electronic liaison list provided by the Leader. 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.