

School fact sheet

Background

Developing strong, positive and effective partnerships between schools and business can contribute greatly to children's successful learning and development.

Through school-business partnerships, businesses can provide their expertise and resources to enrich the school curriculum, expand opportunities for career development and allow students to learn in a more diverse and sophisticated education environment. Businesses can also provide leadership experience, or offer advice to schools about marketing and business planning to increase school enrolments.

Partnerships can take many forms, and the nature and extent of each partnership will vary according to the needs of the school community and the size and capacity of the business.

The benefits of partnerships

Partnerships with business can provide many benefits to schools:

- Enhance school capacity to provide a range of additional skills and resources to schools
- Build long term capacity to deliver improved performance through better engagement, retention and individual support, particularly for disadvantaged children and young people.
- Add value by complementing the delivery of the curriculum, broadening experience for children and young people, and improving access to high-quality and integrated services and operations.
- Support young people's transition from school to further training or employment and offer professional development opportunities for staff.
- Enhance community confidence, support and connections.

Practical steps to establishing school-business partnerships

When establishing a partnership, schools need to take into consideration these vital steps:

Identify an issue or goal to be addressed in your school and ask the school community what kind of business they would or would not like the school to partner with. The response should be documented and inform the school's decision making in regards to the partnership proposal. Visit the '*Identifying goals*' webpage of the [Create](#) section of the website for more information.

If your school is approached with a partnership proposal from a business, consider whether it fits within your school's annual implementation plan. As schools are accountable for the decision to enter into a partnership with a business, there are also a variety of questions and issues that schools should explore so that they are aware of the benefits and risks associated with the partnership.

Some specific questions that you can ask business include:

- What is your business' area of interest or expertise?
- What education outcome(s) do you want to support through partnership?
 - eg. Supporting disadvantaged students



- eg. Promoting Maths/Science curriculum
- How do you think your business can assist our school?
- Is your business located within the school's enrolment catchment (geographically)?
- Do you have any experience of working with schools?
- Do you have any particular knowledge of our school's ethos and operation?
- How would you describe your business' ethos?
- Are you aware that there are rules and restrictions on who schools can partner with?
- Does your business want to take a local or state-wide approach to the partnership?
- Are there any potential conflicts of interest with the school's policies?
- What benefits will the business expect to derive from the partnership?
- Will you be seeking to promote or advertise your business on school property?
- What are some of the not negotiables in the partnership?
- What are the expectations the business is expected from the partnership?
 - How will these expectations be managed and are these expectations clearly understood?

The responses to these questions can help a school determine whether it is appropriate to enter into a partnership with a business.

Review the partnership proposal with your school council (as authoriser of all partnership activity), and the broader students and families to ensure that the partnership is relevant, and will be beneficial for the school.

Schools must also determine whether the business complies with the restrictions and regulations concerning working with schools. For example, is the business involved in any form of activity as identified in the Victorian Government School Reference Guide that would prohibit it from working with schools.

Policies that provide relevant information on school partnerships with business include:

- [Business Working with Education: A Statement of Priorities for Partnerships between Business and Victorian Government Schools \(2010\)](#) outlines a framework for business and education to connect across critical priority areas.
- [The School Policy Advisory Guide](#) contains guidance for schools about entering into partnerships with business.
- [Local Learning and Employment Networks: Engaging with Industry](#) provide examples of industry partnerships that improve the education, training and employment opportunities of young people

Discuss the partnership proposal with neighbouring schools, existing local networks or Regional Office, especially if you are thinking of entering into a partnership with a medium to large business. This will provide an opportunity to investigate similar initiatives in the region, other schools that may also want to get involved and to brainstorm opportunities and concerns.

When considering a partnership with a medium to large business, the LLEN should also be engaged. Their knowledge of local partnerships, skills in brokering and experience would be beneficial to any school business partnership.

Following these discussions, Plan a strategy to achieve your goals/vision, which includes:

- agreement on clear and realistic objectives
- agreement about how resources will be provided
- inviting organisations and people to contribute to the partnership
- equitably assigned responsibilities between the partners
- a dispute resolution mechanism, just in case things go wrong
- an evaluation process.

Maintaining the partnership

It is important for both partners to understand and recognise the important differences in organisational structure, operations, responsibilities and the wide range of stakeholders each partner may have.

Even well planned partnerships can encounter barriers that may impede the ability to achieve the partnership's objectives. Tackling problems early and embedding ongoing communication, trust and respect can help resolve any issue as it emerges.

Visit the '[Addressing problems](#)' section of the Education Partnership Resource website and the 'Partnership Troubleshooting' fact sheet which details some common barriers and tips to overcome them.

More information

- Education Partnership Division
education.partnerships@edumail.vic.gov.au
(03) 9637 2525
- [The Business Working with Education Foundation](http://www.bwefoundation.org.au/)
(<http://www.bwefoundation.org.au/>)
- The Business Working with Education: A Statement of Priorities for Partnerships between Business and Victorian Government Schools (<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/directions/businessworking.htm>)
- [The School Policy Advisory Guide](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/spag) contains guidance for schools about entering into partnerships with business. (www.education.vic.gov.au/spag)
- [Tenderbridge](http://tenderbridge.acer.edu.au/home) can help schools locate and access funds to establish educational projects.
(<http://tenderbridge.acer.edu.au/home>)
- [Local Learning and Employment Networks: Engaging with Industry](http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/postcomp/llenindustry.pdf)
(<http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/postcomp/llenindustry.pdf>)
- [Local Learning and Employment Networks](http://www.llen.vic.gov.au/)
(<http://www.llen.vic.gov.au/>)
- [The Australian Taxation Office](http://www.ato.gov.au/)
(<http://www.ato.gov.au/>)
- DEECD Tax Compliance unit: tax@edumail.vic.gov.au or (03) 9637 3702