

THE PARENT/CAREGIVER/GUARDIAN OPINION SURVEY

FRAMEWORK AND ITEMS



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The Parent/Caregiver/Guardian Opinion SURVEY Framework and Items

The *Parent/Caregiver/Guardian Opinion Survey (PCGOS)* is a confidential survey made available to all Victorian government schools in Term 3 each year. Schools have the option to either invite all or select a random sample of approximately 30 per cent of parents/caregivers/guardians and provide them the opportunity to complete the survey.

The objective of this survey is to collect parent/caregiver/guardian opinion data from individual schools in and across the state of Victoria, and to use this information to assist with the future planning and improvement of Victorian schools.

This report presents the Parent/Caregiver/Guardian Opinion Survey Framework with a brief justification of the importance of the survey factors, along with the items for each factor.

Most survey items use a five-point Likert response scale with '1' indicating "Strongly disagree", 2="Disagree", 3 = "Neither agree nor disagree", 4 = "Agree" and '5' indicating "Strongly agree".

Table 1. The Parent/Caregiver/Guardian Opinion Survey framework

Domain	Factor	Items
Community Engagement in Learning		
Parent/Caregiver/Guardian community engagement	Parent/Caregiver/Guardian participation and involvement	3
	School communication	3
	Teacher communication	2
School ethos and environment	General satisfaction	2
	School improvement	2
	School pride and confidence	2
	Special needs (specialist schools only)	(2)
Excellence in teaching and learning		
Student cognitive engagement	High expectations for success	2
	Student motivation and support	2
	Stimulating learning environment	3
	Effective teaching	4
Student development	Student agency and voice	3
	Confidence and resiliency skills	2
Positive climate for learning		
Safety	Managing bullying	3
	Promoting positive behaviour	2
	Respect for diversity	3
Connection and progression	School connectedness	3
	Positive transitions	3
Demographics	Demographics	2
	TOTAL	46 (+2)

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN LEARNING

Domain: Parent/caregiver/guardian community engagement

Research on parental school involvement suggests that many activities, such as, volunteering in the classroom, communicating with the teacher, participating in academic-related activities at home like homework, communicating the positive value of education, and participating in the parent-teacher conferences are all included in parental school involvement, and each of these are also related to academic outcomes (Epstein & Sanders, 2002; Hill & Craft, 2003).

Parent/Caregiver/Guardian participation and involvement

There is evidence that suggests parental involvement positively influences student achievement and overall well-being (Bauch, 1990; Epstein et al., 2009; Flaxman & Inger, 1991; Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Myers & Monson, 1992; Shumow & Lomax, 2002; Shumox & Miller, 2001).

Description: Schools have a strong connection to their parent/caregiver/guardian community and promote involvement.

Framework factor: Parent/Caregiver/Guardian participation and involvement

Parent items
This school gives me opportunities to participate in my child's education
I feel this school values parent/caregiver/guardian s' contributions
This school has a strong relationship with the local community

School communication

Positive and effective communication between school staff and parents/caregivers/guardians is essential in a child's learning if family and school are to work together to best support the educational outcomes of the child.

Description: Parent/Caregiver/Guardian satisfaction of the school's communication with them.

Framework factor: School communication

Parent items
I am able to get the information I need through the school's regular communication channels
I feel comfortable about approaching this school with any concerns I might have
This school takes parent/caregiver/guardian's concerns seriously

Teacher communication

Evidence suggests that when teachers are sensitive and responsive toward student academic, social and emotional needs, and work with parents/caregivers/guardians in a support and approachable way, students are more successful academically (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009).

Description: Parents/Caregivers/Guardians feel that teachers are approachable and communicate effectively with them.

Framework factor: Teacher communication

Parent items
There is effective two-way communication between the teachers and parents/caregivers/guardians at this school
Teachers communicate with me often enough about my child's progress

Domain: School ethos and environment

Second, parents/caregivers/guardians' impressions of school climate can influence whether and how families engage with the school (Hoover-Dempsey et. al, 2005). Positive perceptions of school climate among parents/caregivers/guardians are associated with higher levels of parent/caregiver/guardian involvement.

General satisfaction

A well-resourced school can be expected to indirectly effect academic achievement because of the role in promoting and highly functional and rich learning environment. Classroom quality and access to learning technologies is known to influence student attitudes, teacher morale and attitudes toward teaching and learning (Buckley, Schneider & Shang, 2004; Earthman & Lemasters, 2009).

Description: Overall satisfaction with the school, its facilities, resources and extra-curricular activities.

Framework factor: General satisfaction

Parent items
Overall, I am satisfied with the education my child receives from their school
This school has clean and well-maintained facilities and grounds (reported separately as physical environment)

School Improvement

Social relationships or ties among students, parents/caregivers/guardians, teachers, and administrators, are a key component of school improvement efforts and are a common characteristic of effective schools (Epstein, 1996). School improvement can be characterised under five areas: strong leadership that raises expectations; effective teaching with teachers learning from each other; development and measurement of student learning; development of a positive school culture; and engagement of parents/caregivers/guardians and the community (Jensen & Sonnemann, 2014).

Description: Perception of the school's efforts to continually improve

Framework factor: School Improvement

Parent items
This school has a clear understanding of its strengths and areas for improvement
This school always aims to improve the quality of education it provides

School pride and confidence

“Growing pride and confidence in our government schools is part of our work to see the whole school community engage with students and support them to fully and proudly participate in school life. To this end, we are also working to build the best possible learning environments for all students” (VIC DET Factsheet: Pride, 2012). Description: Parents/Caregivers/Guardians feel confident

Description: Parents/Caregivers/Guardians feel confident and trust that the school, and the Victorian Government more broadly, is achieving the best outcomes for their child.

Framework factor: School pride and confidence

Parent items
I feel confident that this school provides a good standard of education for my child
I have confidence in the government school system in Victoria (“Government Schools” are also known as the state or public schools. “Confidence” means confidence that schools provide a good education for students, prepare students for the next phase of their life.)

Special needs (only for parents/caregivers/guardians of students in specialist schools)

A positive school environment and supportive services are arguably more important for children with additional needs. Research suggests that parent/caregiver/guardian involvement leads to a host of positive outcomes for children with special needs, including greater continuity and outcomes in intervention programs (Bailey & Wolery, 1989), and higher levels of parent/caregiver/guardian satisfaction (Stancin et al., 1984).

Description: Parent/Caregiver/Guardian satisfaction with school support services for children in specialist schools.

Framework factor: Special needs

Parent items
The therapy services my child receives are of a high quality
I am satisfied with the way my child's Program Support Group is working

Community Engagement in Learning

Domain: Student cognitive engagement

Studies have found that parents/caregivers/guardians rated their child’s school teachers and how engaging the learning may be, based on their beliefs about whether the teachers care about their child, and about their child’s academic progress (Thompson, 2003).

High expectations for success

Teachers’ high expectations for their students has been linked to motivational, behavioural and academic performance outcomes (Wentzel, 2002). Higher student aspirations lead to increased social engagement and post-school study and impact life choices (Hazel, Vazirabadi & Gallagher, 2013).

Description: Teachers and students have high expectations for success

Framework factor: High expectations for success

Parent items
Teachers at this school expect my child to do his/her best
This school celebrates student achievements in all areas

Student motivation and support

Classroom social environment is an important factor for student motivation and engagement, and student’s perceptions of teacher support, teacher promoting interaction and mutual respect positively impact the classroom environment (Ryan & Patrick, 2001).

Description: Students are supported and feel motivated by the ways they are learning

Framework factor: Student motivation and support

Parent items
My child gets extra help with learning from teachers when needed
My child feels motivated by his/her teachers to learn

Stimulating learning environment

While creating a positive learning climate involves students’ readiness to participate in learning by using the necessary cognitive and metacognitive strategies, it is important that learning opportunities are provided at the appropriate level of learning difficulty (Fredrick, Blumenfeld & Paris, 2004).

Teachers can use clarity and immediacy behaviours in class to improve students’ cognitive and emotional interest. Stimulated interest levels have been found to deepen student engagement both in-class and out-of-class (Mazer, 2013).

Description: Parents/Caregivers/Guardians perceive that teachers create a conducive learning environment and make learning stimulating.

Framework factor: Stimulating learning environment

Parent items
This school provides diverse programs for my child's interests and abilities
The academic standards at this school provide adequate challenge for my child
The teachers are very good at making learning engaging

Effective teaching

Effective teaching practice and quality teaching is characterised by teachers that are caring and supportive, recognise improvement, provide useful feedback, are enthusiastic and positive, and responsive to the different learning needs of their students. They understand that it is important to provide curriculum and instruction tailored to the needs and abilities of students and engage effectively – maximising the time during which students are actively and appropriately engaged (Aronson, Zimmerman & Carlos, 1999; Hattie, 2012).

Description: Parent/Caregiver/Guardian’s perceptions of the effectiveness and quality of teaching in the school.

Framework factor: Effective teaching

Parent items
Teachers are enthusiastic and positive about teaching
Teachers provide useful feedback and respond to the learning needs of my child
My child can explore their own interests when it is related to their class work
I understand how my child is assessed

Domain: Student development

Finn and Rock (1997) found that development of responsible behaviours, such as coming to class on time, being prepared for participating in class work, spending the effort needed to complete assignments in school and completing homework, and avoiding being disruptive in class, influences students’ resilience and wellbeing. The development of enterprise skills, also known as non-cognitive skills, 21st -Century skills, soft skills and social-emotional skills, are recognised as being of increasing important for children’s future prospects (FYA, 2014).

Student agency and voice

Research confirms that capacities and skills not directly captured by tests of academic achievement predict a broad range of life outcomes, even when taking into account differences in cognitive skills. Both intra-personal skills (such as the ability to solve problems and persevere toward goals) and interpersonal skills (such as the ability to communicate ideas) are key (FYA, 2014; West, 2016).

Description: Parent/Caregiver/Guardian perceptions of the opportunities for students to develop agency and voice.

Framework factor: Student agency and voice

Parent items
This school provides opportunities for my child to make decisions and solve problems
This school provides opportunities for my child to develop a sense of responsibility
My child is taught organisational skills to help him/her with managing homework or schoolwork load

Confidence and resiliency skills

Resiliency is a multi-faceted concept with critical contextual and perceptual dimensions and research has identified the importance of positive and supportive relationships between children and their teachers as a key protective factor in children's lives (Dryden, Johnson & Howard, 1998). It has been found that everyday life at school is a source of significant resilience promoting influences and these everyday interactions have a significant impact on students' wellbeing and, potentially, the school processes and structures (Johnson, 2008).

Description: Parent/Caregiver/Guardian perceptions of the opportunities for students to develop confidence and resilience.

Framework factor: Confidence and resiliency skills

Parent items
The school provides my child with opportunities to build his/her confidence
This school encourages my child to persist when learning is difficult

POSITIVE CLIMATE FOR LEARNING

Domain: Student safety

Research suggests young people’s likelihood of feeling safe, individually and collectively cared for, trusted, and respected at school have been found to be influenced by a diverse set of exchanges, experiences, pressures, and opportunities at school (Whitlock, 2006) and reinforces a positive sense of belonging to school (Ma, 2005)

Managing bullying

Peer victimisation or bullying have been found to cause poor wellbeing, greater emotional difficulties as well as, loneliness, low self-esteem and lower academic competence (Lester & Cross, 2014; Lester, Cross & Shaw, 2012; Campbell et al., 2012).

Description: Parents/Caregivers/Guardians perceive the school handles bullying and harassment appropriately.

Framework factor: Managing bullying

Parent items
My child feels safe at school
My child feels confident about the skills and strategies he/she has learnt at school to address bullying behaviours
My child has been bullied recently at school

Promoting positive behaviour

The time taken to correct one student’s behaviour negatively impacts the allocated instructional time of the teacher and the academic engagement of other students, who are distracted by the interruption (McEvoy & Welker, 2000).

Description: Parent/Caregiver/Guardian perception about the schools’ effective promotion of positive behaviour

Framework factor: Promoting positive behaviour

Parent items
This school has a consistent approach to promoting positive student behaviour
Teachers at this school model positive behaviour

Respect for diversity

To cultivate a feeling of inclusion, researchers suggest that teachers need to be culturally responsive and demonstrate values which respect children from all backgrounds (Richards, Brown & Forde, 2007). It has been also found that higher classroom diversity is connected with feelings of safety and social satisfaction, and ethnically diverse students felt safer in school, were less harassed by peers, felt less lonely, and had higher self-worth when their classrooms were more ethnically diverse (Juvonen et al., 2006).

Description: Parents/Caregivers/Guardians perceive that people are treated fairly and diversity is respected.

Framework factor: Respect for diversity

Parent items
The school respects and values my family's beliefs and wishes
This school communicates the importance of respecting all cultural beliefs and practices
This school treats my child with respect

Domain: Connection and progression

A large component of schooling is the social engagement opportunities it offers through feeling connected to the school and during times of transition.

School connectedness

A sense of belonging and connection to school has been found to be a significant predictor of academic resilience (Gonzalez & Padilla, 1997). School connectedness is a protective factor against risk-taking behaviours (Catalano et al., 2004).

Description: Parent/Caregiver/Guardian perceptions about their child's sense of belonging and connection to the school.

Framework factor: School connectedness

Parent items
My child feels accepted by other students at school
My child enjoys the learning they do at school
This school gives my child opportunities to participate in school activities

Positive transitions

Transitions have the potential to be disruptive to a child's wellbeing and achievement (Blyth, Simmons & Carlton-Ford, 1983; Akos & Galassi, 2004; West, Sweeting & Young, 2010). School transition often displaces a student from the people and environment they are used to, which if not done well, can be intimidating (Wigfield et al., 1991; Seidman et al., 1994).

Description: Students feel prepared for each year of schooling and for the pathway they will take next.

Framework factor: Positive transitions

Parent items
My child has been supported this year to adjust to his/her new year level
I feel confident that this school prepares students for the next phase of their life
I feel confident that the Victorian public school system prepares students for the next phase of their life

Domain: DEMOGRAPHICS

Demographics

Description: These questions help with analysis of Parent/Caregiver/Guardian Opinion Survey data

Framework factor: Demographics

Parent items
<p>(This question will be presented at the beginning of the survey instrument along with instructions on which child to select (ie the one that most recently had a birthday).</p> <p>Please select your child's year level: [if more than one child select most recent birthday]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foundation • Year 1 • Year 2 • Year 3 • Year 4 • Year 5 • Year 6 • Year 7 • Year 8 • Year 9 • Year 10 • Year 11 • Year 12 • Ungraded
<p>What is your highest level of educational attainment?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Postgraduate Degree • Graduate Diploma/Graduate Certificate • Bachelor Degree • Advanced Diploma/Diploma • Certificates III/IV • Year 12 • Year 11 • Year 10 • Certificates I/II • Year 9 and below • Prefer not to say