

4 Engaging with students' parents and guardians

As a school leader, you may have a well-developed relationship with the parents of your students – or they may already have a forum for discussion what happens at school. But there may be more that you could do as a school leader to promote this communication and support on a continuous basis. You should not see this as a threat to your authority or be worried about the criticism that may come back to you. Feedback from parents is more than likely fuelled by a desire to see their children learn.

Activity 11: Helping your parents to organise and support each other

Think about the parents who are least likely to come to school or have a conversation with you or the teachers. Why are they not engaged, and what might other parents do to enable them to become interested and feel comfortable? Do you have any more confident parents you could approach to help bridge the gap?

Case Study 6: Mrs Rawool helps parents with their own literacy

Mrs Rawool became the leader of a small rural primary school a few years ago. One of the problems that emerged during her first year was the fact that students in Class III and IV were not doing their homework. She decided to go out into the village and to talk to some of the mothers, explaining the importance of homework and how it provided the opportunity for children to practise their reading and writing. She suggested that perhaps they could help their children with their homework. But then she realised that many of the mothers could not read and write themselves, so they could not help their children.

One mother, Nisha, asked if Mrs Rawool could start a class for her and the other mothers, and agreed to talk to the other mothers to encourage them. Mrs Rawool organised a one-hour literacy class, once a week after school. The students stayed at school and played in the playground while their mothers had lessons with Mrs Rawool. Nisha did a good job in encouraging other mothers to attend and her husband was very supportive, encouraging other fathers to send their wives. Soon the mothers gained confidence to help their children with their homework and Nisha set up a little reading club in her neighbourhood so the mothers could help each other and learn together.



Pause for thought

- Are there any parents in your school who would be particularly suitable for connecting with certain parents – for example, because they come from the same village or speak the same dialect?
- Who might you approach initially and how you might explain what they might do?