



Communication and relationships are key for parents and students as they start or return to school.

As adults we role-model to children and young people, which makes it particularly important to communicate clearly and effectively and to form a positive relationship with the school.

Communication is a two-way street; we encourage schools to 'get to know' their families and to welcome open dialogue with them.

We also think it really helps if parents do their best to research and embrace opportunities to find out how the school works, so they can support their children on their learning journey.

Everyone's family situation may be different so it's important to:

- Have agreed methods of communication with the school, at the outset. And find out the rules regarding parent / student contact during school hours.
- Provide additional information to the school on any specific needs of your child, but be reasonable in those expectations. Some schools have more capacity than others when it comes to school support staff and services or other assistance may need to be explored.
- Always give your child clear instructions and strategies on how to navigate tricky situations.
- For example: agreed drop off and pick up points if your school suffers traffic and parking congestion **or** having an agreed 'go to' person at the school if your student has anxiety.
- Being familiar with the school environment and surroundings and navigating transport. For example, what will your child need to catch the bus? If they miss the bus, what's Plan B?

- Setting up a support network amongst your family and school friends in case of emergencies or being delayed to get your child to or from school. It's great to have a couple of reliable contacts in your phone.
- Getting to know school leadership and teachers at your school – for either primary or secondary the class or home-group teacher is critically important to establish a rapport and be able to exchange information as needed. It's good to know who the wellbeing staff are at the school and year level coordinators if you seeking any other help or advice throughout the school year.
- Students moving to new schools often worry about making new friends. You could equip them with some easy questions to get the conversation started and role play those opportunities to build their confidence.
- Some families may not be able to provide their child with a digital device, books or other materials required, so it's important they know what support is available from the school and local support agencies. A statewide organisation that may be able to help is [State Schools' Relief](#).

An important message to all of us is always to be kind and support each other to be happy and successful at school. Never be afraid to ask questions and seek help from others.

Parents Victoria (PV) is a not-for-profit statewide organisation advocating parent voice in government school education, and supporting and representing families at public schools.

[Our website](#) has loads of news, information and resources for parents and carers on school related topics.

We also publish a monthly email newsletter called *Parents Voice* – [subscribe for free](#) and keep informed about what's happening in public education.