COLLABORATION GUIDE
Reviewing School Policies

Introduction

School policies guide everyday life at school, from student wellbeing and behaviour to uniforms, communication, attendance, and more. School Associations have a formal role in shaping these policies to ensure they reflect the needs, values, and priorities of the whole school community.

Under the Education Act (Tas) 2016, School Association Constitutions, and the Secretary's Instructions No 7 for School Associations, are expected to collaborate with the Principal and school staff in the development and review of school policies. This collaboration helps ensure that policies are:

- Inclusive of family and community perspectives
- Aligned with student and staff needs
- Clear, consistent, and practical

What the rules say

According to Secretary's Instruction No. 7, the following expectations apply:

- The Principal must engage with the School Association in the development of school policies.
- The School Association Committee should participate in this process to support inclusive consultation.

This can include:
- Seeking the committee's input before drafting a policy
- Requesting feedback on a draft version

While the Principal retains the right to determine how a policy is implemented, including through procedures and guidelines, the School Association plays a key advisory role in shaping the content and direction.

Policies where School Association insight is especially valuable

The following school policies commonly benefit from School Association input:
- Communicating Learning Progress with Families Policy
- School Levies and Charges Policy
- School Student Dress Code and Uniform Policy
- Communication Strategy
- Respectful School Visitor and Volunteer Behaviour Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Sports Policy
- SunSafe Policy
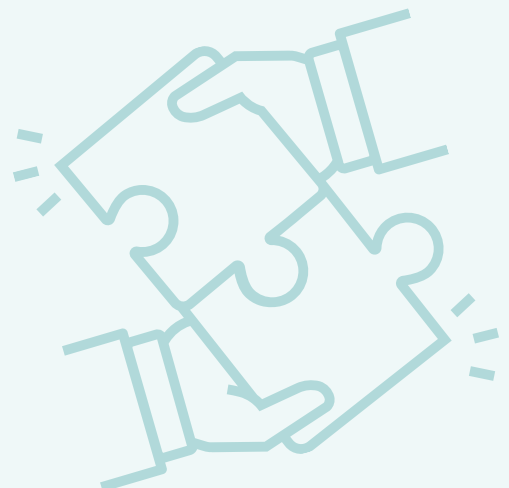
COLLABORATIVE POLICY REVIEW STEP BY STEP

Step 1: Understand the purpose

Start by exploring:
- What is this policy for?
- Why is it being developed or reviewed now?
- Is this an opportunity for feedback, or is it for information only?

The Principal or a staff member should provide background at a committee meeting or workshop. Sometimes this discussion may be informal; for example, a conversation about improving attendance might touch on the Attendance Policy.

Step 2: Review the policy together

Take a collaborative approach:
- Work as a whole group or in small teams.
- If a draft exists, review it. If not, brainstorm key elements.

Use these guiding questions:
- Is it clear and easy to understand?
- Does it align with other school policies and practices?
- Does it consider the diverse needs of students and families?
- Will families understand, support, and follow this?

Ask:
- Does this policy reflect our school community's values?
- Are there any unintended consequences?
- Have we considered different family circumstances?

Because policies can be wordy or legalistic, the committee may wish to create a plain-language summary to support wider understanding.

Step 3: Provide Feedback

Summarise the committee's input and:
- Send it to the Principal in writing (via email or shared document)
- Offer to meet again if needed

Keep feedback respectful, constructive, and focused on improving outcomes for students and families.

Step 4: Share the final policy

Once feedback is considered and the policy is finalised:
- The policy should be shared with the School Association and broader school community.
- It should be published on the school website or another family-accessible platform.

The School Association can help communicate the policy and any key changes to families.

Tips for ongoing Policy Engagement

You don't need to review all policies at once. Focus on one or two each term, or as they come up for renewal. Over time, this helps build a strong culture of collaboration and shared responsibility in your school community.