

# **Action Research: Engaging Community for Learning and Wellbeing**

## **Salwan Public School, Gurugram**

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‘When schools, families and community groups work together to support learning, children tend to do better in school, stay in school longer, and like school more’.

- Anne Henderson & Karen Mapp

### **ABSTRACT**

This action research paper aims to highlight the benefits of community engagement in promoting student learning and wellbeing at Salwan Public School, Gurugram. Through various initiatives, the school has endeavored to involve the community in the student's learning process, fostering academic, social, and psychological development.

Recognizing the pivotal role of parental engagement, the school acknowledges the persistent challenge of low parental attendance at school programs. This necessitated a comprehensive analysis of underlying factors and the implementation of targeted interventions.

Before implementing community involvement strategies, educators undertook a comprehensive analysis to understand the advantages and effective methodologies. Teachers actively participated in designing the framework, aligning it with the needs of students and society. The technological shift from pre-COVID to COVID era provided an opportunity to explore diverse strategies, facilitating a stronger connection between students' learning and the community. Observations during the COVID period were documented and further refined to enhance schooling with community engagement in the post-COVID era.

Research findings illuminate the effectiveness of community engagement strategies in addressing low parental attendance. By leveraging innovative approaches and fostering meaningful connections between the school and the community, Salwan Public School successfully increased parental involvement in school activities.

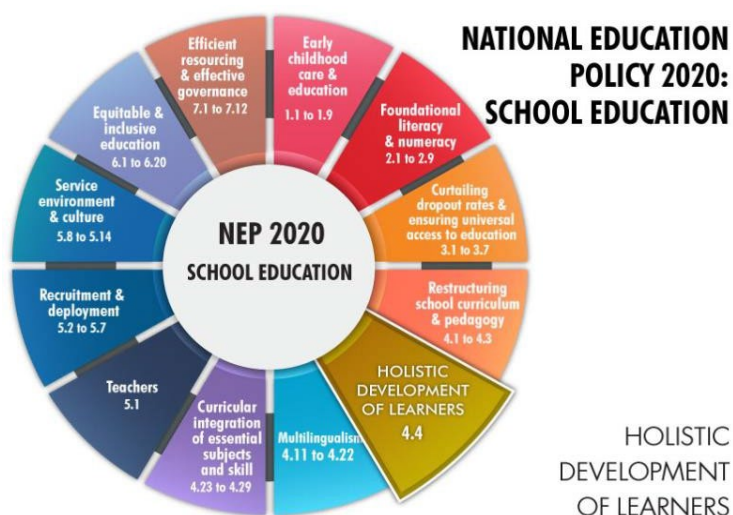
The paper emphasizes on the importance of proactive measures to promote parental engagement in school programs. It highlights the transformative impact of community involvement on student learning outcomes and stresses the need for ongoing efforts to strengthen the partnership between schools and families. Through continued collaboration and strategic initiatives, Salwan Public School aims to create a supportive educational environment where all stakeholders actively nurture student success and well-being.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Community engagement is a cornerstone of student success, facilitating collaboration

between schools and their surrounding communities to create a conducive learning environment. Recognizing the importance of establishing strong relationships with the community, successful schools prioritize engagement efforts, as highlighted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Through community involvement, schools can enhance access to learning opportunities, bolster student retention rates, instill optimism among teachers, and improve children's attendance.

The National Education Policy (NEP) emphasizes the importance of community engagement in transforming the Indian education system. According to the NEP, community participation is essential for creating inclusive, equitable, and quality education opportunities for all learners. The policy encourages schools to collaborate closely with local communities, including parents, elders, and other stakeholders, to ensure that education is relevant, culturally sensitive, and responsive to the needs of diverse learners.



NEP advocates for the establishment of School Management Committees (SMCs) comprising parents, teachers, and community representatives to facilitate community engagement in school governance and decision-making processes. These committees are tasked with fostering collaboration between schools and communities, promoting transparency, and ensuring accountability in the education system.

Furthermore, NEP elaborates on the role of community resources in enhancing educational outcomes, encouraging schools to leverage local expertise, facilities, and knowledge to enrich teaching and learning experiences. By actively involving communities in education planning, implementation, and evaluation, NEP aims to foster a sense of ownership, pride, and responsibility among stakeholders, ultimately contributing to the holistic development of learners and the advancement of the education sector as a whole.

As aforesaid, schools serve as central hubs for community involvement, fostering interactions between families, children, and educators. Within a school's community, formal committees such as School Management Committees (SMCs) and Parent and Teachers Associations (PTAs) work alongside informal groups to contribute to the school's growth and development. These community groups bring diverse perspectives to the table, combining insights from within the school and the broader community.

Community engagement initiatives yield numerous benefits for students, parents, and educators alike. Beyond allocating time, active participation in school activities fosters stronger bonds between children and parents, enhancing their relationship and enriching

the learning experience.

### **Community involvement in schools offers several advantages:**

-Improves Academic Engagement: By actively participating in school events and programs, students demonstrate increased engagement with their academics.

- Encourages Lifelong Learning: Community involvement promotes a culture of lifelong learning, where individuals of all ages are encouraged to pursue knowledge, explore new interests, and contribute to their communities. By exposing students to a variety of learning experiences beyond the classroom, schools instill a love for learning that extends beyond formal education.

- Facilitates Higher Education Programme Selection: Engaging with professionals and attending workshops exposes students to various career paths, empowering them to make informed decisions about their academic and professional pursuits.

- Increased average attendance of the students: Active involvement in school activities has been associated with the habit of regularity, as students feel a sense of belonging and purpose within the school community.

- Enhanced Social and Emotional Development: Active participation in community-engagement activities fosters social skills, emotional intelligence, and empathy among students. By collaborating with peers, parents, and educators, students learn to communicate effectively, resolve conflicts, and develop positive relationships.

- Promotes Cultural Diversity and Inclusion: Community involvement provides opportunities for individuals from diverse backgrounds to come together, celebrate their differences, and foster a sense of belonging. By embracing cultural diversity, schools create inclusive environments that value and respect every student's identity and heritage.

- Strengthens Parent-School Partnerships: Engaging parents in school activities strengthens the partnership between home and school, creating a supportive network that reinforces student learning and wellbeing. By involving parents in decision-making processes, schools ensure that families feel valued, respected, and included in their children's educational journey.

- Fosters Civic Responsibility: Engaging in community service projects and civic activities instills a sense of civic responsibility and citizenship among students. By participating in initiatives that address local issues and contribute to the welfare of their communities, students develop a sense of agency and empowerment, becoming active contributors to society.

- Strengthens Community Resilience: Community involvement in schools fosters resilience and collective problem-solving skills, empowering communities to overcome challenges and adapt to changing circumstances. By working together to address common goals and concerns, schools and communities build resilience, cohesion, and

mutual support networks.

Community involvement in schools offers a myriad of benefits that extend beyond academic achievement, enriching the lives of students, families, educators, and communities alike. By fostering collaborative partnerships and creating inclusive environments, schools play a vital role in nurturing well-rounded individuals who are prepared to thrive in an interconnected world.

### **Examples of community involvement activities generally adopted by the schools:**

- Parent Education Workshops: Hosting workshops on parenting skills, child development, and academic support empowers parents to actively engage in their children's education and wellbeing.
- Volunteer Opportunities: Providing opportunities for community members to volunteer at school events, mentor students, or participate in classroom activities fosters a sense of ownership and investment in the school community.
- Community Service Projects: Collaborating with local organizations and charities to organize community service projects instills values of empathy, compassion, and social responsibility in students while addressing community needs.
- Cultural Exchanges: Arranging cultural exchange programs, language classes, or heritage celebrations promotes diversity appreciation and intercultural understanding among students and community members.
- Environmental Initiatives: Partnering with environmental organizations or implementing sustainability projects within the school community educates students about environmental stewardship and fosters a sense of environmental responsibility.
- Career Fairs and Internship Programmes: Hosting career fairs, inviting guest speakers, and facilitating internship opportunities expose students to various career pathways and industry professionals, helping them make informed decisions about their future careers.
- Health and Wellness Programmes: Organizing health and wellness workshops, fitness challenges, or mental health awareness campaigns promotes overall well-being and encourages healthy lifestyle choices among students and families.
- Art and Cultural Exhibitions: Showcasing student artwork, performances, or cultural exhibitions provides opportunities for students to express themselves creatively and celebrate their talents while engaging the wider community.

By implementing these diverse community involvement activities, schools create inclusive environments that prioritize student learning, holistic development, and meaningful connections with the broader community.

## **Community involvement benefits teachers by providing:**

- **Better Understanding of Children's Needs:** Active participation from families allows teachers to gain insights into students' backgrounds, needs, and learning preferences, facilitating tailored support and instruction.
- **Shared Responsibility and Accountability:** Involving parents in supporting student success fosters shared responsibility between educators and families, enhancing academic outcomes.
- **Improved School Reputation:** Schools with robust community engagement initiatives cultivate positive reputations, attracting families seeking collaborative and supportive educational environments.
- **Enhanced Professional Development:** Collaborating with parents and community members provides opportunities for teachers to exchange ideas, share best practices, and access additional resources, contributing to their ongoing professional growth and learning.
- **Increased Parental Support:** Active engagement from parents in school activities fosters a supportive network of families who advocate for their children's educational needs, creating a conducive environment for teaching and learning.
- **Personalized Instruction:** Building strong relationships with families enables teachers to better understand students' strengths, challenges, and individual learning styles, allowing for more personalized and effective instruction.
- **Expanded Classroom Resources:** Community involvement often leads to donations, volunteer support, and partnerships with local businesses or organizations, enriching classroom resources and enhancing learning opportunities for students.
- **Greater Classroom Diversity:** Involving community members from diverse backgrounds enriches classroom discussions, broadens perspectives, and promotes inclusivity, creating a more dynamic and culturally responsive learning environment.
- **Positive School Culture:** Schools with active community engagement initiatives cultivate a positive and supportive school culture where collaboration, communication, and mutual respect are valued, contributing to a more conducive teaching and learning environment.

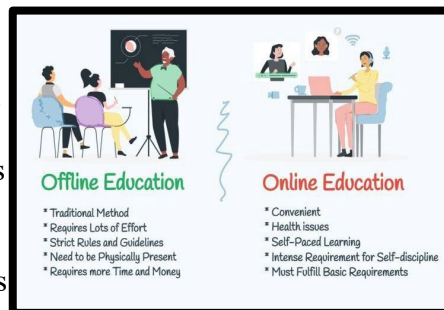
By leveraging community involvement, teachers can enhance their effectiveness, create meaningful connections with families, and contribute to the overall success and wellbeing of their students.

## IMPLEMENTATION

Salwan Public School in Gurugram has undertaken a mission to foster robust community engagement, recognizing its pivotal role in enhancing student learning outcomes and overall wellbeing. The school acknowledges the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly in terms of parental attendance and involvement in school activities. In response, the school has implemented a series of innovative strategies to increase parental participation and strengthen ties between the school, parents, and the wider community. These efforts reflect the school's proactive approach to addressing the evolving needs of its diverse parent body and underscore its commitment to creating an inclusive and supportive educational environment. Through collaborative initiatives and effective communication channels, Salwan Public School aims to cultivate meaningful partnerships with parents and community members, ultimately enriching the educational experience and promoting student success.

### Post-COVID Attendance Challenges and Event Calendar Design:

In response to low parental attendance at school meetings and events post-COVID in 2022, Salwan Public School initiated various strategies to improve participation. A team of teachers designed an event calendar for 2023, featuring weekly morning assemblies in the Primary Wing. However, due to the challenges faced by working parents, the initial assemblies did not garner significant attendance.



### Adjustment of Timings and Hybrid PTMs:

To address the issue of low attendance, the timings of the assemblies were modified from 8:30 am to 9:30 am, allowing working parents to take short leave from work and attend school events. Additionally, the timings for workshops and orientation sessions were tailored to accommodate the majority of parents' availability. Furthermore, changes were implemented in the mode of Parent-Teacher Meetings (PTMs), adopting a hybrid approach to increase parental connectivity and participation. PTM was converted into PTI (Parent Teacher Interaction), offering parents the option to interact physically or through online platforms, based on their preferences and schedules.

**Salwan Public School**  
**Sector – 15 (II), Gurgaon**  
**Session 2023-24**  
**Interaction with the Teachers (Classes-III to V)**

**Thursday, 26<sup>th</sup> October 2023**

Dear Parent,  
Greetings from Salwan Public School, Gurugram!

In our constant endeavour to provide opportunities to parents to work with teachers and support their child's learning, the school is conducting the Interaction of Parents with Teachers in the forthcoming days. The agenda of the interaction will be to discuss the academic performance of the students. For the convenience of all, the interaction has been divided into three phases. Phase-I will be online interaction, phases-II & III will include on-campus interaction during the working days and Saturday. Parents can choose their preferable mode of interaction by filling in the form given below. Based on the responses, the meeting schedule and details will be shared shortly.

Google Link: <https://forms.gle/5BL43vGsDLg5P7VBS> (to be filled by Friday, 27<sup>th</sup> October 2023, 5:00 pm)

Regards  
Team SPS (Primary)

### Involvement of Parents in Various Capacities:

Salwan Public School actively engaged parents in various roles, including as Parent Representatives attending Policy and Teacher Resource (PTR) meetings to discuss school policies

and foster a collaborative environment. Parents were also invited to conduct career guidance sessions for senior wing students and provide internship opportunities at their workplaces. Moreover, the school facilitated connections between current students and alumni through a common platform, enabling mentorship and guidance.

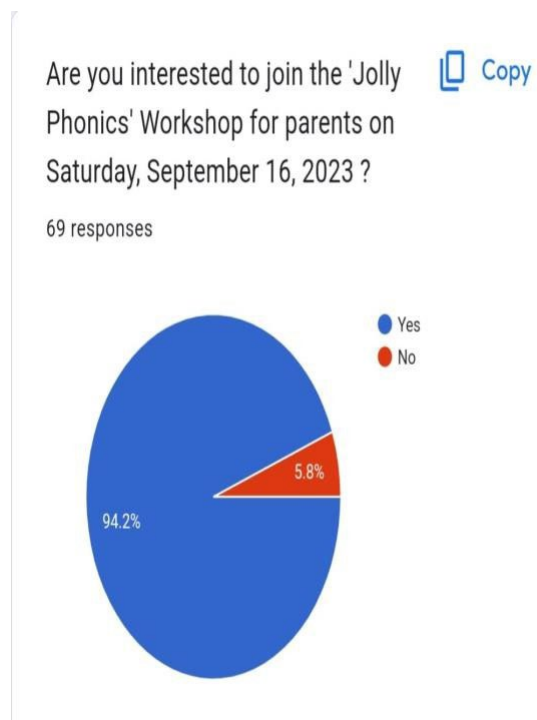
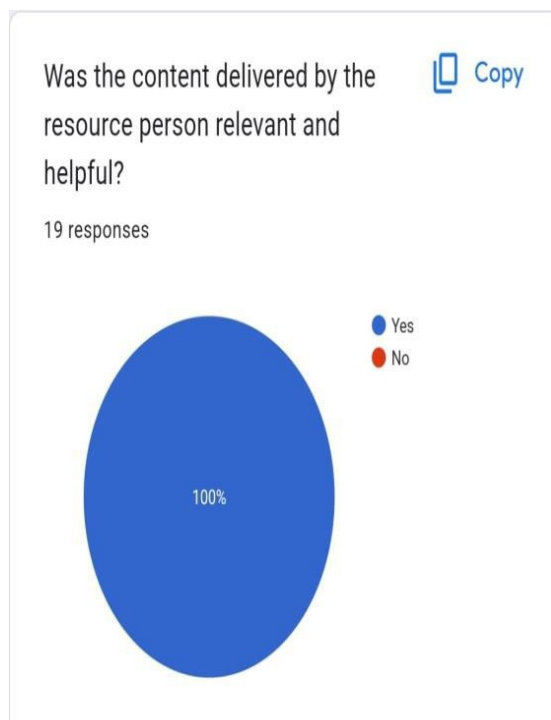
### Utilization of Communication Channels and Social Media:

To enhance communication and information sharing, class-wise Whats App groups were established for after-school hours communication among teachers, parents, and students. Additionally, social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter were utilized to share student learning progress and receive feedback from parents.

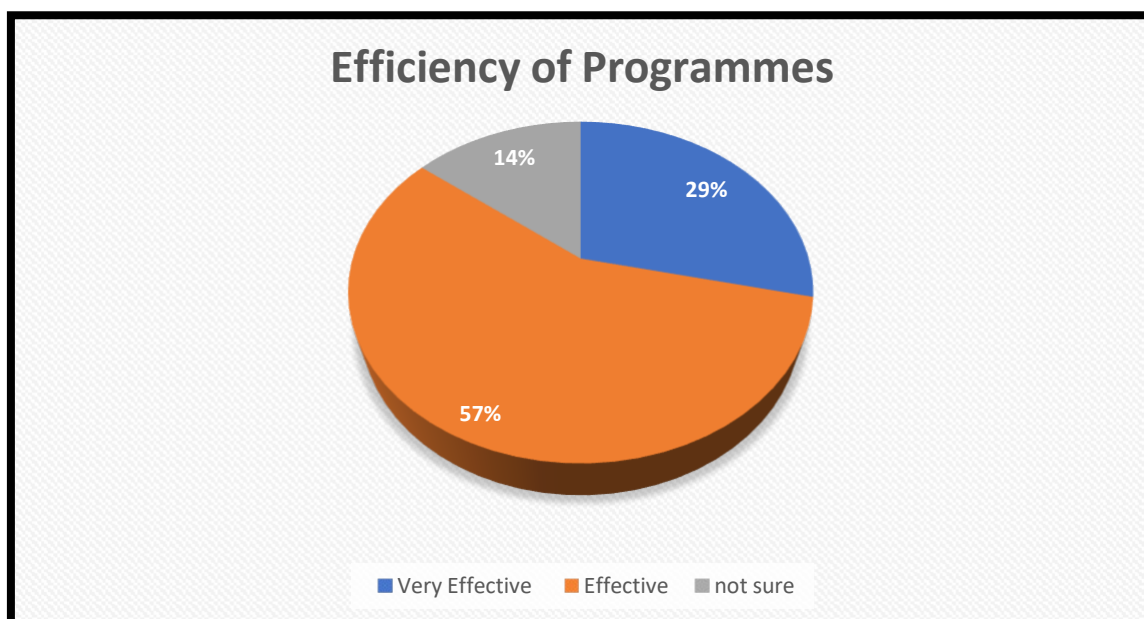
These implemented initiatives aim to strengthen the partnership between the school, parents, and the community, ultimately enhancing student learning outcomes and overall well-being.

## EVIDENCES

- **An orientation programme** was organized where parents were given a brief about the new strategies and flow of work that would be followed throughout the session.
- **Themed based class assemblies** were conducted on different themes, special days and festivals which helped the students to learn in an involved environment where parents were also invited to witness their learning journey and their feedbacks were also taken in a positive stride.
- **Phonics Workshop** was conducted on 16<sup>th</sup> September,2023 for the parents of Mont-I class. This workshop helps the parents to understand the importance that **Phonics** is a method to teach reading and writing by focusing on the sounds that letters and letter combination makes. It helps learners to understand the relationship between the sounds and written symbols, enabling them to decode words accurately and fluently.



- **Ek Tareekh, Ek Ghanta, Ek Saath (Cleanliness Drive)** – On the occasion of Gandhi Jayanti a special cleanliness drive as a part of the nationwide campaign ‘Swachhata Hi Seva’ was conducted. It was planned to pay homage to Bapu and his vision to promote and practice cleanliness and hygiene in the surroundings. The event was executed with the active participation of dedicated students, teachers, parents and community members.



- **The 19<sup>th</sup> Saman Diwas** was organized by Salwan Education Trust on 2<sup>nd</sup> December, 2023 to honour the indomitable courage, duty, dedication, selfless spirit and strong resolve of our brave soldiers in the armed forces. The Chief Guest for the event was General Manoj Pande, Param Vishisht Seva Medal, Ati Vishisht Seva Medal, Vishisht Seva Medal, Aide De Camp and Smt, Archana Pandey, President of Army Wives Welfare Association, graced the event. Sir paid homage to the sacrifices of the martyred heroes for the nation’s security and peace at the replica of the war memorial. Different cultural performances and **Rakt Daan Shivir** was conducted where PTR (Parent Teacher Representative) wholeheartedly participated and made it a success.
- **Fun Fit Fiesta-** the Junior Athletic Meet for the students of classes Mont-Ito Grade II was organised in the school playground. With an impressive presence of approximately 550 participants and a heartwarming turnout of 1300 parents and grandparents, the event held on 25<sup>th</sup> February, 2024 was a celebration of fitness, agility and sportsmanship.
- **Grandparents Day** was celebrated on 14<sup>th</sup> March, 2024 which helped to increase the bond between the students and their grandparents, also it acted as a great opportunity for students to interact with the old generation and learn from their experiences.



Grandparents shared their feedback and expressed their elation and joy at watching their beloved grandchildren performing with such fervour and passion.

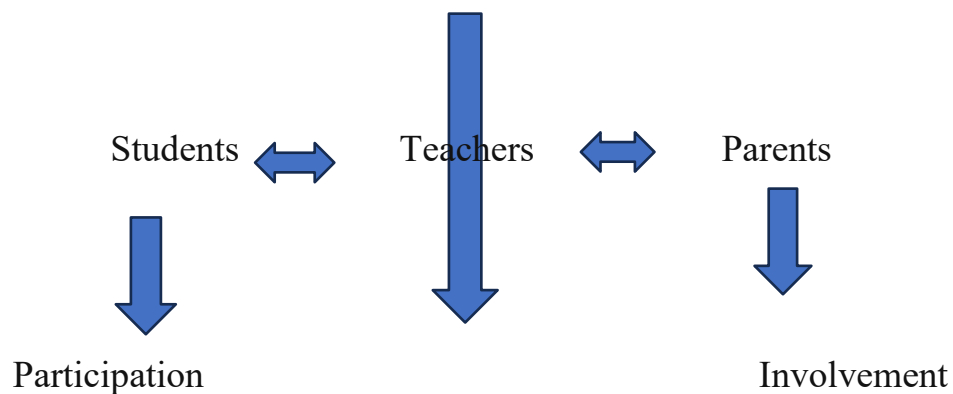
- **Open Day (Mont I – Grade II)/Achievers Day (Grade III – V)** was organized to facilitate the students for their achievements and remarkable improvement throughout the session.
- **A Session by BK Sister Shivani (International Motivational Speaker and Spiritual Mentor)** was organized on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2024 by Salwan Education Trust. It was an interactive session on Feel, Full, Fly for parents where she focussed on **Self-Empowerment**. Sister emphasized that our inner strength should be so strong, that the outer world cannot reflect us.
- **Mypeegu Programme** was an initiative in the school that catered many workshops for students, teachers, and parents. This programme hosted an insightful workshop for parents which delved into the importance of understanding how children express and receive love through acts of service, words and affirmation, quality time, etc. Different workshops explored attachment styles in children, the unique emotional needs of each child, leaving parents equipped with valuable tools to enhance their relationships with their children.

## **IMPACT**

### **According to National Education Association (NEA)-**

“When schools, parents, families, and communities work together to support learning, students tend to earn higher grades, attend school more regularly, stay in school longer, and indulge in higher level programs.”

Because of the community involvement programs, students can be more successful and engaged in their school life. This leads to higher achievement both for them as well as the school.



### Different workshops on wellness

	Pre Covid	During Covid	Post Covid
<b>Involvement of Parents</b>	40-55%	60- 70%	85 -95 %
<b>Learning of students</b>	70-75%	76-85%	90-95%
<b>Enhancement in the method of teaching</b>	54 -56%	68-76%	85- 92%

## CONCLUSION

Community engagement is essential for fostering the holistic development of students. The case study of Salwan Public School, Gurugram, exemplifies the transformative impact of collaborative partnerships between schools, families, and communities. Moving forward, the school remains committed to expanding its community engagement efforts and fostering inclusive educational environments that prioritize the involvement of all stakeholders. By leveraging the collective wisdom and experiences of the broader community, the school aims to nurture future-ready individuals who thrive academically, emotionally, and socially.

Looking ahead, Salwan Public School, Gurugram, plans to further enhance its community engagement initiatives. The school plans to expand its community engagement efforts by incorporating initiatives such as the Human Library and the Centre for Spiritual Learning. By leveraging the collective wisdom and experiences of the broader community, the school aims to continue nurturing future-ready individuals who thrive academically, emotionally, and socially.. By fostering inclusive educational environments and nurturing collaborative partnerships, the school strives to create a supportive ecosystem where every student can thrive and reach their full potential.

## **Reference-**

- NEP 2020
- NCFSE 2023 (National Curriculum Framework for School Education 2023)
- Section 1.3- Constituent Elements of School Culture.
- 1.3.1.1- Mutual Trust and Respect
- 1.3.3.5- Engaging with Parents and Community
- School Records