

Advice for schools as community hubs (SaCH)

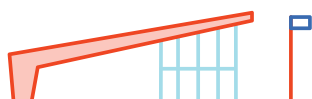
'Scatter-gun' programming won't deliver impact. Strategic planning ensures day-to-day SaCH activities, programs and services achieve the desired outcomes. This requires effective governance and partners whose objectives align with the hub vision. Training and retaining skilled leaders is critical.

Coordinating and sustaining a SaCH is challenging, time-consuming and emotionally taxing, so you'll need...

Ideally, the principal will champion the SaCH initiative to funders, partners and the wider community. Some principals are more ready for this challenge than others who may have excellent teacher and educational leadership training but lack skills or enthusiasm for stakeholder liaison.

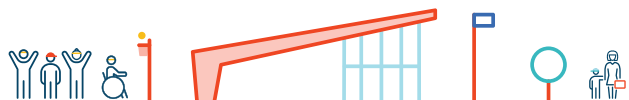
1. ~~4/5 yr old health checks~~
2. Holiday Program -- shut down?
3. ~~Evaluation - Deloitte~~
- Mon 9th
4. Music Prog - M.L
5. Mon 9th - FCP Presentation
6. Fri - L.T conference
7. Playgroup - 3A sam

Quotes from Building Connections workshop participants



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Key people your SaCH needs

2. A partnership facilitator

A skilled facilitator can bring community organisations together to collaborate in your SaCH and form enduring partnerships. This could be a school staff member, or an experienced volunteer. Consider engaging a professional facilitator if possible. Refer to the '[Partnerships and collaborations](#)' advice sheet.

3. A hub coordinator

If possible, your SaCH should fund and develop a dedicated coordinator with the organisational and communication skills to oversee day-to-day operations of community-facing programs and services. Refer to the profile of a hub leader overleaf.

Volunteers are cherries on top

While enthusiastic community members can help deliver SaCH programs and create an inclusive culture, don't count on volunteers for core operations; consider their input a bonus.

Plan for smooth succession

To minimise disruption caused by loss of key personnel, develop succession plans early – including recruitment criteria and process, handover and training – and nurture potential new hub leaders in your school and community ahead of any staff turnover.

Quotes from Building Connections workshop participants

'A primary school doesn't usually have the resources to implement [a major community hub]. They need help from other organisations who have a long-term interest.'

'Architects play an important role in identifying some of the spatial opportunities. But it's not wholly within the architect's control to broker those negotiations and those deals.'

'We see schools that have tons of programs happening in them, but it's chaos. We call it "random acts of programming"... Is there any value coming from it? Are those partners being set up for success?'

'There has to be someone who wakes up every day thinking "How can I support the principal? ... Investing in that capacity is really important.'

'The next principal comes in who hasn't been in a school with shared facilities and thinks, "Who are these people wanting to use my oval on Tuesday nights?"'

Students' artwork, Doveton College, Victoria





Profile: A hub leader

Caroline Menassa has worked at St Dominic's Catholic Primary School in Broadmeadows, Victoria, for 21 years. She started as a parent helper and later became a Learning Support Officer in the classrooms. For the past 10 years, she has been the school's Community Hub Leader, fostering a sense of belonging, trust and understanding in all members of the school community.

The Community Hub is an integral part of the school, purpose-built in a prominent position on school grounds. Caroline is employed by the school, but her role is supported with funding from Community Hubs Australia.

Caroline liaises with community agencies to plan and facilitate hub programs and activities for children from early years to the end of primary school, their parents, carers, and grandparents. She strives to build long-lasting connections with all families, but especially with those newly arrived in Australia.

Her busy program includes breakfast club, homework club, playgroup, men's and women's groups, parenting education, cooking classes, water familiarisation and swimming lessons, information sessions about community issues, English and IT classes.

Caroline hosts a Coffee Club at the hub, where the school newsletter is discussed and interpreted into Arabic, Assyrian, Vietnamese and Cantonese.

Formal training such as Certificate Three and Diploma in Early Childhood Education and Care is also provided.

'At St Dominic's, we don't just enrol the child into our school, we enrol the whole family,' says Caroline.

Photo:

Caroline represented her school and hub in a panel discussion supplementing the Sharing Schools, Building Communities exhibition at The University of Melbourne in 2022.



Want to learn more?

- [Schools as Community Hubs Development Framework: Workshop 1, Emerging Themes & Insights from Australia](#) by Philippa Chandler & Benjamin Cleveland
- [Schools as Community Hubs Development Framework: Workshop 2, Insights from Canada and the USA](#) by Philippa Chandler and Benjamin Cleveland
- [Schools as Community Hubs Development Framework: Workshop 3, Insights from Europe and the UK](#) by Philippa Chandler and Benjamin Cleveland
- ["Why collaborate? The differing reasons for secondary school educators' establishment of school-community partnerships."](#) By Catherine Hands