

Frequently Asked Questions: Community Engagement Program

1. Program Transition Overview

Why is the Family Involvement Program ending?

Over the past 37 years the needs of our families have evolved. After conducting an in-depth review, including feedback from families and consulting experts, it became clear that the mandatory nature of the Family Involvement Program posed challenges for many. To better meet the needs of our modern families, we have decided to end the program at the conclusion of Term 4, 2024.

What will replace the Family Involvement Program?

Starting in 2025, the College will introduce the new Community Engagement Program, which will include volunteer opportunities, without mandatory requirements. This program is designed to allow families and community members to engage in a way that is meaningful and flexible for them.

What is the timeline for these changes?

The Family Involvement Program will conclude at the end of Term 4, 2024. The new Community Engagement Program will be launched in 2025.

2. Key Features of the Community Engagement Program

What are the key pillars of the new Community Engagement Program?

The new program is built on four key pillars: **Volunteerism**, **Fundraising**, **Advocacy**, and **Growth**. Each pillar offers various ways for families to contribute to and engage with the College community.

- **Volunteerism** - Unifying in service, our entire community shares time, expertise and commitment to foster collective growth and excellence.
- **Fundraising** - Inspiring deep connections, our community gives tangible, meaningful gifts to enhance our College, our projects and our vision for the future.
- **Advocacy** - Fostering strong bonds and connected communications to enhance engagement within our entire community, amplifying advocacy and driving advancement.
- **Growth** - Drive growth to expand our community's strength, reach and impact.

What changes will be made to volunteer opportunities under the new Community Engagement Program?

The new Community Engagement Program will offer inclusive and meaningful volunteer opportunities for all community members. Families will have the freedom to choose how and when they contribute, without mandatory hours.

The College will work closely with the Parents and Friends Committee to develop a revised range of volunteer opportunities. These changes will include adjustments to existing working groups and the introduction of new areas for involvement, ensuring a broad scope that aligns with the needs of the College and our wider community.

A detailed list of specific volunteering opportunities will be available through the new volunteer interface, which will be launched in 2025. This will allow parents, past students, past parents, and our wider community to explore and choose meaningful ways to contribute to the College.

How does the College plan to promote fundraising under the new program?

The Fundraising pillar encourages our community to give tangible, meaningful gifts that enhance the College's projects and vision. The focus will be on embedding a culture of giving that supports both our strategic goals and charitable causes, fostering a spirit of generosity within our community.

What are the specific benefits of the new Community Engagement Program?

The new program is designed to better meet the needs of modern families by offering flexibility, choice, and a broader range of opportunities to engage with the College community. Our families will no longer be bound by mandatory requirements, allowing them to participate in ways that align with their interests, availability, and skills.

The Community Engagement Program also allows for an expanded range of people to connect with, and serve the College. Rather than being exclusively about current families, this Program will invite Old Collegians, guardians, past families, engaged community members, neighbours, and friends of the College to connect with us.

3. Communication and Support

How will the new Community Engagement Program be communicated to families?

We will be launching the new platform in 2025 and will communicate all changes via the Principal and Chair of the Parents and Friends Committee through Compass and our eNewsletter platform, Whispers.

What support will be provided to help families transition from the Family Involvement Program to the Community Engagement Program?

We will work closely with the Parents and Friends Committee to ensure we meet the needs of families during this transition. Families can register their feedback with the Committee [here](#) or contact communityengagement@overnewton.vic.edu.au if they have specific questions regarding participation.

4. Impact and Participation

Will there be any financial impact on the College with the end of the Family Involvement Program?

The College Board has carefully considered the financial implications of this change. Volunteers continue to play a crucial role in minimising financial impact by supporting key College activities. The expanded opportunities for engagement are expected to help sustain the College's community spirit and operational success.

Is there still a requirement for families to fulfill volunteer hours for the remainder of 2024?

Yes, the College has planned for the 2024 year based on the current level of volunteer support. We are relying on families to continue their participation and fulfill their commitment through to the end of Term 4, 2024. Family involvement is essential in ensuring a smooth transition to the new program.

Will the focus of the Parents & Friends Committee change?

Yes, the focus of the Parents & Friends Committee will shift as we transition to the new Community Engagement Program. Previously, the Committee played a key role in the operational management of work groups within the Family Involvement Program. Moving forward, the Committee will be crucial in the successful implementation of the new Community Engagement Program. Their focus will evolve from operational tasks to strategically supporting the broader goals of the Community Engagement Program, ensuring the program aligns with the College's vision and meets the needs of our community.

Who can participate in the new Community Engagement Program?

The program will be open to all members of the Overnewton community including parents, stepparents, aunts, uncles, grandparents, neighbours of the College, past students, and past parents. Everyone who wishes to connect with and contribute to the life of the College will be welcome to participate.

Will there still be opportunities for parents to be involved in their child's education?

Yes, absolutely. While mandatory volunteering hours will no longer be a condition of enrolment, parents will continue to be provided with many opportunities to engage in their child's education through the Volunteerism pillar and other aspects of the Community Engagement Program.

What will participation look like in 2025 and beyond under the new Community Engagement Program?

Starting in 2025, the new Community Engagement Program will offer more flexibility and choice, without mandatory volunteer hours. However, we are not forecasting a significant change in participation. Many of our families value the opportunity to contribute to their child's school, and with the expanded pool of volunteers—including past students, parents, and other community members—we expect strong and meaningful engagement to continue across the Overnewton community.

How will this change affect the sense of community at Overnewton?

The new Community Engagement Program is designed to strengthen our community bonds by offering more opportunities for meaningful engagement. By respecting the modern family unit and offering choice and flexibility, we believe that this change will foster an even more inclusive and supportive environment for everyone.

How will the College measure the success of the new Community Engagement Program?

The College will evaluate the success of the program by monitoring participation levels and gathering feedback from community members. Our goal is to ensure that the revised program meets the evolving needs of our College and community.

5. Additional Information

How can I learn more about the new Community Engagement Program?

More information will be provided as we approach the launch of the new program in 2025. We also encourage families to attend the Parents and Friends Committee Annual General Meeting on 14th November 2024.