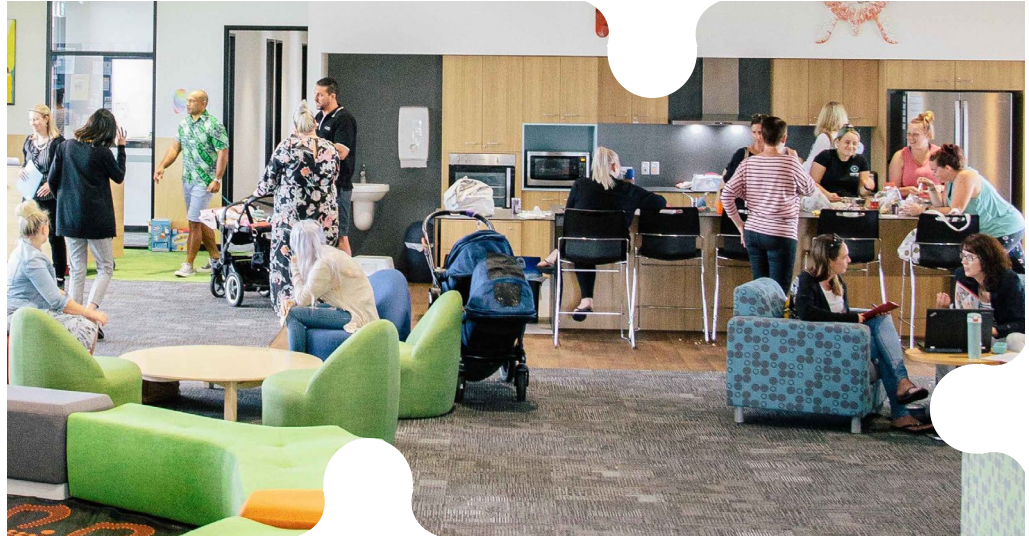


How to Hub Australia

Evidence and advice for policy makers, school leaders and designers involved in schools as community hubs




Building
Connections
Schools as Community Hubs





Building Connections

Schools as Community Hubs

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How to Hub Australia

Introduction, journey map & framework

Is your local school a community hub?

Could it offer more to students, families, and community members as critical neighbourhood infrastructure?

In the next decade, to match population growth, Australia will build hundreds of new schools and extend existing ones.

How can we improve the design of school facilities and extend their use to support stronger communities and better education?

Building Connections

Supported under the Australian Research Council's Linkage Projects funding scheme from 2019-2022, *Building Connections: Schools as Community Hubs* [LP170101050] has advanced understanding of how to design, implement and sustain **schools as community hubs** (SaCH).

A cross-disciplinary research team from architecture, education and urban planning collaborated with partners from government, the design industry, and the education sector to investigate how schools can operate successfully as 'more than a school', creating more resilient and connected communities.

The Building Connections team produced **How to Hub Australia**. This easy-to-read resource offers the latest evidence and advice for policymakers, school leaders, and designers involved in SaCH. The views expressed herein are those of the authors and are not necessarily those of the Australian Research Council.

Contributors

Contributors were based at The University of Melbourne, unless indicated otherwise.

- Dr Philippa Chandler, Research Fellow
- Rebecca Colless, Research Communications Coordinator
- Associate Professor Benjamin Cleveland, Lead Chief Investigator
- Sarah Backhouse, Project Manager
- Associate Professor Ian McShane, Chief Investigator (RMIT University)
- Professor Janet Clinton, Chief Investigator
- Hayley Paproth, PhD Candidate
- Natalie Miles, PhD Candidate
- Carolina Rivera Yevenes, PhD Candidate
- Robert Polglase, PhD Candidate (RMIT University)
- Dr Ruth Aston, Research Fellow
- Associate Professor Clare Newton, Chief Investigator
- Simon LeNepveu, Clarke Hopkins Clarke
- Laurence Robinson, Brand Architects



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Building
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Schools as Community Hubs



How we made this resource

With a broad research agenda, the multi-disciplinary Building Connections project employed mixed methods that enabled academics, industry partners, and other stakeholders to contribute their insights and expertise. Based on the following research activities, *How to Hub Australia* draws on perspectives from education, urban planning, architecture, evaluation, human geography, wellbeing sciences and educational facility planning.

International academic literature review

The project began with a literature review to create a bibliography of the most salient publications from around the world.

Case studies and site visits

The project team visited dozens of Australian examples of successful SaCH. These informed the case studies in *How to Hub Australia*.

International Conference

The *Schools as Community Hubs International Conference 2020: Building Connections for Community Benefit* explored wide-ranging issues relevant to the field of inquiry. 130 delegates from around the world attended. The published [conference proceedings](#) informed *How To Hub Australia*.

Workshops

Three workshops brought together over 70 international experts from schools, industry, government, and academia to identify the opportunities and constraints associated with SaCH. The published [workshop reports](#) informed *How To Hub Australia*, particularly the Journey Map and Development Framework.

PhD Research

Four PhD projects funded under Building Connections all informed *How to Hub Australia*. The literature reviews, interviews, focus groups, workshops, impact models, and other fieldwork activities undertaken by Carolina Rivera (lived experiences of schools as community hubs), Hayley

Paproth (evaluative thinking and schools as community hubs), Rob Polglase (policy settings for schools as community hubs) and Natalie Miles (schools and social infrastructure networks) and their supervisors all contributed to new understandings.

National Survey of Schools

The [Connecting Schools + Communities Survey](#) collected input from 600+ Australian schools on how and why they share their facilities with their community, or why they don't.

SaCH book

The Building Connections team authored and edited the book [Schools as Community Hubs: Building 'More than a School' for Community Benefit](#) with chapters by many other Australian and international experts, which have informed *How To Hub Australia*.

Value-focussed thinking

How to Hub Australia was also informed by a series of workshops with Dr Ruby Lipson-Smith about value-focussed thinking, a structured methodology suited to decision-making in complex settings where the needs of many different stakeholder groups must be considered. This helped the research team identify what is fundamentally important when developing, implementing, and sustaining schools as community hubs.

The SaCH journey

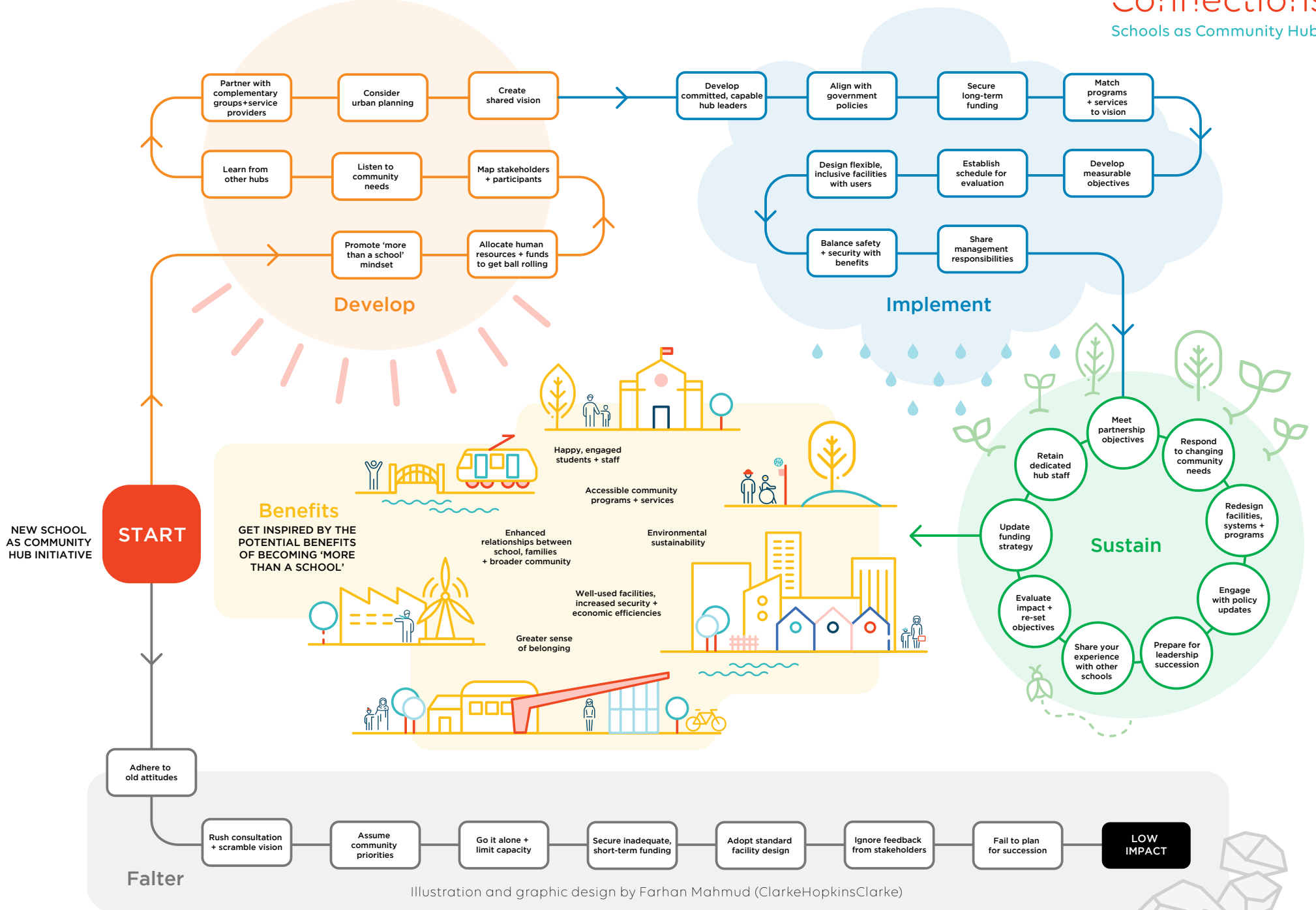
While each hub is uniquely shaped by the school's context and culture, our research has identified common choices and actions that help schools as community hubs survive and thrive (or falter) as represented in our **Journey Map for SaCH** (overleaf).

The benefits of a successful hub are shown at the centre of the map, to inspire new starters, or reinvigorate seasoned travellers. The path to low impact should be avoided. The ideal hub journey involves three phases: **Develop, Implement and Sustain**.

How to Hub Australia: A journey map for schools as community hubs

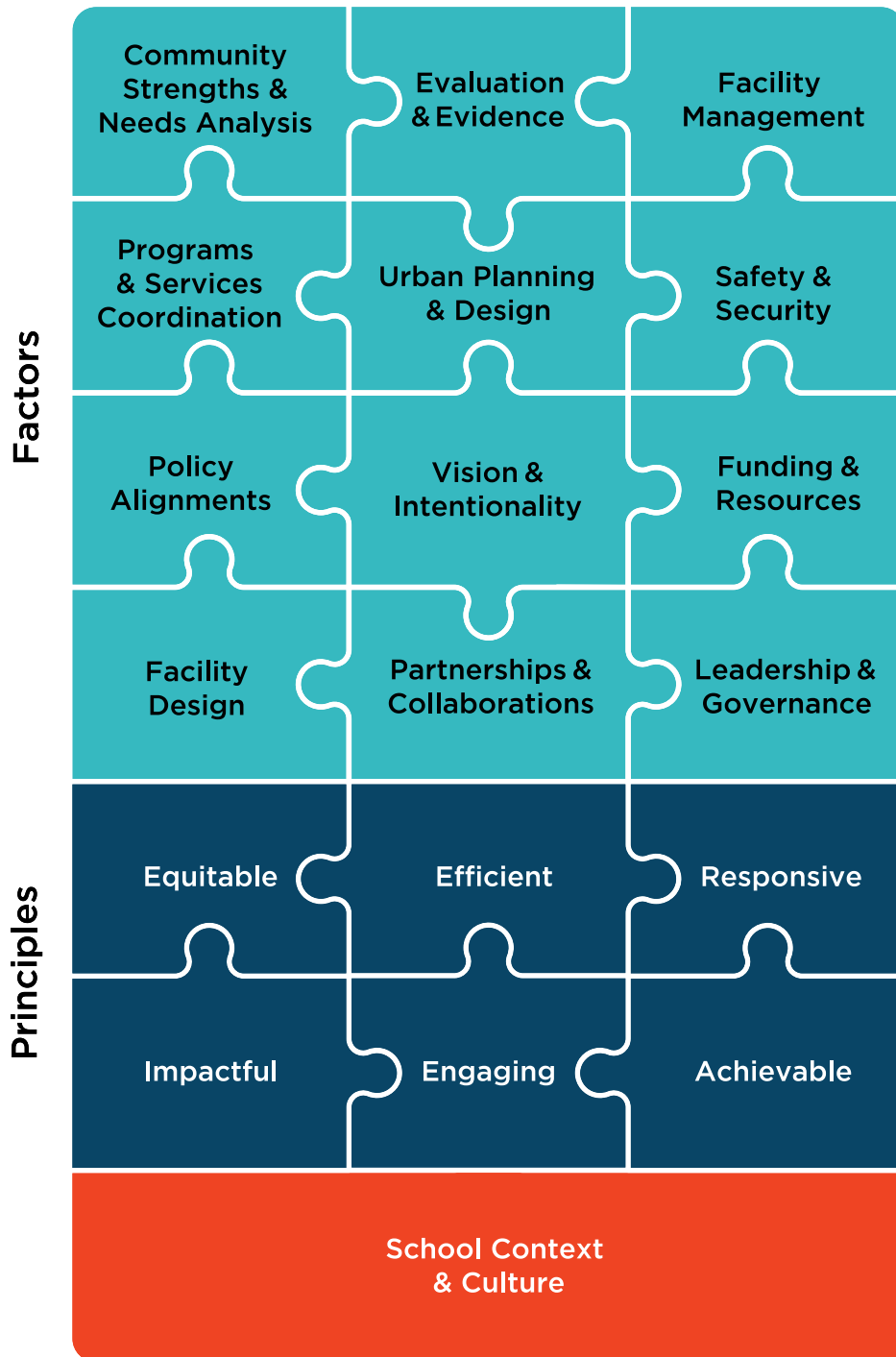
Click here for a larger version: <https://doi.org/10.26188/19669710>

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Schools as Community Hubs





How to Hub Australia: A development framework for schools as community hubs



See explanatory text overleaf.

Cleveland, B., Backhouse, S., Chandler, P., Colless, R., McShane, I., Clinton, J.M., Aston, R., Miles, N., Paproth, H., Polglase, R., Rivera-Yevenes, C. & Lipson-Smith, R. (2022). *How to Hub Australia Framework*. University of Melbourne. <https://doi.org/10.26188/19100381.v5>

Elaborated in Cleveland, B. (2023) *A Framework for Building Schools as Community Hubs: If It Were Simpler Would It Happen Everywhere?* In B. Cleveland, S. Backhouse, P. Chandler, I. McShane, C. Newton & J. Clinton (Eds.), *Schools as Community Hubs: Building 'More than a School' for Community Benefit*. Springer Nature.

Graphic design by Farhan Mahmud (ClarkeHopkinsClarke).



Development framework for schools as community hubs (SaCH)

School context & culture

The success of a SaCH depends on responding appropriately to its unique socioeconomic, geographic, and cultural situation.

Principles

Six overarching principles should shape SaCH initiatives:

Engaging

Maximising stakeholder engagement is critical to fostering initial interest, connection, and long-term contributions to hub operations. Developing and sustaining partnerships that promote a sense of ownership and belonging is foundational to ongoing success.

Achievable

Maximising the feasibility of SaCH initiatives requires diligence, with a view to the future. Hub initiatives and activities should be tangible, attainable, and based on a clear vision.

Equitable

Maximising access to hub activities, programs and services means providing equitable and inclusive opportunities supporting education, health, and wellbeing.

Efficient

Maximising the efficient use of hub resources means ensuring outcomes are assessed relative to the emotional investment, funding, labour, and spatial assets contributed. If intended investments or outcomes change, so should assessment of efficiency.

Responsive

Maximising alignments between hub offerings and community strengths and needs is essential when initiating new hub

projects. Adapting hub models to new locations requires close attention to local needs. Responding to changing contexts, such as demographic shifts, should keep hub activities, programs, and services relevant.

Impactful

Maximising the positive and lasting impacts of SaCH depends on regular patronage. This requires attention to the quality and long-term sustainability of activities, programs, services, and facilities.

Factors

Twelve factors guide the development of successful SaCH. Each factor is explored in a ***How to Hub Australia advice sheet***, linked below.

- [Community strengths & needs analysis](#)
- [Evaluation & evidence](#)
- [Partnerships & collaborations](#)
- [Vision & intentionality](#)
- [Urban planning & design](#)
- [Facility design](#)
- [Safety & security](#)
- [Leadership & governance](#)
- [Policy alignments](#)
- [Funding & resources](#)
- [Programs & services coordination](#)
- [Facility management](#)

Community strengths & needs analysis

Advice for schools as community hubs (SaCH)

In a nutshell

SaCH vary because they are shaped by different communities. Detailed insights into local community contexts, strengths, needs and priorities should inform SaCH objectives.

Place-based approaches that engage community members and other stakeholders in planning facilities, activities, programs, and services are critical because **one size does not fit all**.



Engage early

If you decide (D) on the plan for your SaCH behind closed doors with a few colleagues, announce (A) your plan to the community, and defend (D) it against any complaint, then you may spend so much time responding to opponents that implementation will be delayed, forcing you to abandon (A) the plan. Don't DADA!

Instead, develop an engagement approach that **involves the community early** in planning your SaCH, as this:

- is democratic and inclusive – the community should have a say in their future and how public funds are spent
- enables clearer vision, more informed decisions and targeted actions (refer to the '[Vision and intentionality](#)' advice sheet in this series)
- provides evidence of community need and support, which is vital for funding applications or partnership proposals
- ensures facilities, activities, programs and services are relevant to the community, increasing use and participation.



Based at The University of Melbourne, the Building Connections: Schools as Community Hubs project has advanced understanding of how to design, implement and sustain SaCH. Produced by the research team, this advice sheet is part of How to Hub Australia, a suite of resources for policymakers, school leaders, and designers.

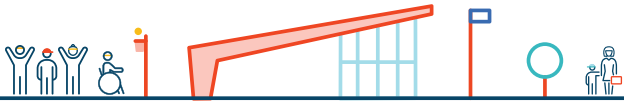
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What to explore

Focusing on community **needs or deficits** – such as low literacy, poor health, social isolation, or inadequate facilities – can be overwhelming and demoralising, making it hard to address these issues, or even to know where to begin.

Instead, explore community **strengths** as foundations for improvement. Ask local residents what services, activities, and facilities they value, what's working well, and what they would like to **improve or add**.

In addition, find out which members of the community might be able to assist with development or delivery of your SaCH and **invite them to collaborate**.

Think beyond your school

What other infrastructure and organisations exist in your local area? How could you collaborate to enhance education, health,

and social connection? (Refer to the '[Urban planning and design](#)' and '[Partnerships and collaborations](#)' advice sheets.)

How to gather information and opinions

You could:

- make an inventory or map of existing services or facilities
- measure community use of existing services or facilities
- administer surveys by post / door knocking / street stall / online
- conduct focus groups with invited community representatives
- facilitate public meetings and workshops.

Community priorities and opportunities can shift quickly, so maintain informal contact with community members beyond formal consultations to stay informed.





Ensure your consultation and collaboration are:

- **timely** – start early to allow the community time to consider and provide feedback before any decisions are made
- **inclusive** – make it widely accessible (e.g., provide childminding so parents can participate) and use skilled facilitators to encourage input and ensure everyone is heard
- **representative** – invite a cross-section of the community with proportional representation of all end-user and stakeholder groups, or use a random sample
- **community-focused** – ask people to consider the needs of others, as well as their own
- **interactive and deliberative** – avoid ‘yes/no’ questions; create space for lateral thinking, free expression, and discussion, so people can shape the process as well as their answers
- **flexible** – vary the mode of consultation to elicit rich responses from a wide range of people
- **cost-effective** – scale the consultation in proportion to the project and find efficient means of communication and feedback
- **productive and meaningful** – limit discussion time and create an action plan with majority approval if consensus is not possible
- **transparent** – share the results with all participants and stakeholders, using impartial and engaging language, and remain open to feedback and follow-up
- **iterative** – seek feedback during project or program implementation to ensure ongoing relevancy and justify continued funding.



Want to learn more?

- [Get to know your hub families](#) by Community Hubs Australia:
- [Pour a Foundation of Knowledge](#), Chapter 3 in [Building A Full-Service School](#)
- [Brokering School-community Partnerships: Cross-sector Advocacy and Hard Work](#) by Lynden Lauer, Shirley Watters, Kari Morris and Sandra Griffin in [Schools as Community Hubs: Building 'more than a school' for community benefit](#) (2023)

Evaluation & evidence

Advice for schools as community hubs (SaCH)

In a nutshell

Evaluation involves understanding what works by collecting, analysing and feeding back information on SaCH activities to make judgements and support better decisions about what to do next.

When leaders and staff adopt evaluative thinking, SaCH can adapt their activities based on evidence and are more likely to **achieve their goals**.

Are you an evaluative thinker?

Do you:

- set clear goals for projects and programs
- question assumptions
- observe and reflect
- collect and analyse relevant information
- invite and act on feedback
- compare implementation and outcomes with intentions
- adapt your design and delivery in response?

In SaCH, evaluative thinking and acting can be **constrained** by a lack of strategic planning, inadequate funding and

overburdening staff, or **supported** by a commitment to measurement, and transparent, structured reporting processes.

How do you define success?

School leaders, staff, students, families, the wider community and other stakeholders may define the success of SaCH in various ways. Refer to the '[Community strengths and needs analysis](#)' and '[Partnerships and collaborations](#)' advice sheets in this series.

Identifying **shared priorities** will help you find an agreed approach to evaluating your project's implementation, impact and value.

- Consider including measures beyond academic achievement such as belonging, engagement, satisfaction and tangible benefits to students, families and the wider community.
- Establish data sharing agreements with partners early to avoid disappointment.
- If possible, partner with trained evaluators and anticipate costs.
- Share your findings with other SaCH and your community, so they can benefit from your experience and celebrate success.



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What kind of evaluation should you do?

It depends on the stage of your project or program and the decisions you need to make. The table below outlines evaluation types relevant to developing and sustaining SaCH.

Note: A 'project' might be an entire SaCH, or just part of it (such as designing and building a community vegetable garden). A 'program' is an ongoing activity in a SaCH (such as a gardening club that meets weekly).

Thinking and planning for evaluation at the conception of a project or program is essential. Before you commence activities, establish the baseline or starting point for each selected measure (e.g., students' sense of belonging) so you can monitor any change.

Evaluation type	When to do it	What it is	What it informs
Needs and strengths analysis	Before a project or program is proposed.	Consulting or surveying school and community members and stakeholders to find out what they need to prioritise in general or concerning a specific issue. Consider what change is required and how long it will take.	The needs and aspirations of the school community, and the objectives and intended outcomes of the project or program.
Process or formative evaluation	During project or program implementation.	Monitoring project or program implementation to determine whether it is proceeding as planned, or roadblocks or risks have emerged.	Whether project processes, resourcing or timeframes need adjustment.
Outcome and impact evaluation	At the end of a project or at regular intervals during an ongoing program.	Examining how well a project or program has delivered the intended outcomes and achieved its objectives over an appropriate amount of time. This could include measures of effectiveness, efficiency and quality.	What's functioning and what's not, whether more work is needed – and if so, whether new approaches, resources or processes are required.
Economic evaluation	Before, during and after a project or program.	Assessing project or program feasibility, management or impact in terms of cost-effectiveness, cost-utility, cost-consequence, value for money, social return on investment, or cost-benefit.	Whether to start, adapt or discontinue a project or program.
Post-occupancy evaluation	After using physical facilities for some time.	Observing and understanding how well the facility design is supporting projects and programs.	Whether adjustments need to be made so facilities, projects and programs better align.





Case study: Doveton College

Evaluations at Doveton College demonstrated enhanced school-readiness of kids attending the on-site early childhood centre, increased school attendance, improved standardised testing results in years 7 and 9, and significant engagement by the community with adult learning programs.

Source: Paproth, Clinton & Aston (see below)



Timing matters

- Start by examining evidence from existing SaCH to steer new projects in the right direction, save time and avoid pitfalls.
- Plan your evaluation early and build information (evidence) collection into new projects and programs.
- Don't conclude outcome evaluation too soon: educational and social impacts take time and monitoring progress towards your goal/s is key.
- Choose your approach and measures carefully: once data collection begins, switching might be difficult even if a better method becomes obvious.
- Keep going – SaCH are constantly evolving and never 'finished'; neither is monitoring and evaluation.

Want to learn more?

Read the following chapters in [*Schools as Community Hubs: Building 'more than a school' for community benefit*](#) (2023)

- [*The Role of Evaluative Thinking in the Success of Schools as Community Hubs*](#) by Hayley Paproth, Janet M. Clinton & Ruth Aston
- [*Are Schools as Community Hubs Worth It?*](#) by Ruth Aston, Janet M. Clinton & Hayley Paproth
- [*An Evaluation Framework for Schools as Community Hubs*](#) by Janet M. Clinton, Ruth Aston & Hayley Paproth

Partnerships & collaborations

Advice for schools as community hubs (SaCH)

In a nutshell

There is growing interest in how schools and community members, organisations and service providers can collaborate more to enhance students' health, education, and social and emotional development, while extending their services and benefits to the wider community.

Such partnerships require significant investment and can dramatically expand the capacity of SaCH to have **lasting positive impacts**.

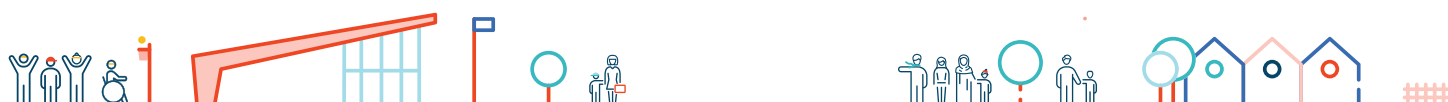
What school-community partnerships exist?

All schools partner with parents and carers in students' education and welfare. Some schools also partner with multiple agencies and organisations to offer integrated, wrap-around, community services and development activities.

In Australia, SaCH may provide any or all of the following, often in association with local government:

- Early childhood education and care.
- Student-focussed services such as allied health care.
- Parent- or community-focussed classes and groups.
- Sports and recreational activities.

Photo: Yarrabilba Family and Community Place by Department of State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning, Queensland Government



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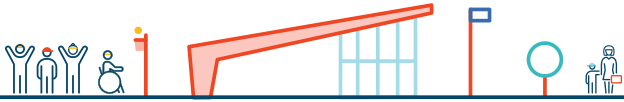
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What are the benefits for schools?

Through their partners, schools can access extra funding, materials or equipment and people with complementary knowledge and skills. Partnership activities and services can enhance the health, education, connection and engagement of school staff, students, and families.

And for community partners?

Co-location and integration of facilities and services with schools can reduce community partners' capital and operating expenses, extend their reach, and diversify their revenue sources.

Photo: Kurranjang Community Hub, VIC, by Brand Architects

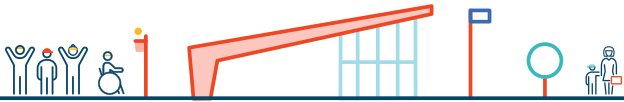


How to develop lasting, productive partnerships

1. Identify needs and goals for your SaCH or a specific program or service in consultation with school staff, students, families, and the wider community. Refer to the '[Community strengths and needs analysis](#)' advice sheet in this series.
2. Locate potential partners and initiate discussions about collaboration by exploring shared priorities. Refer to the '[Policy alignments](#)' advice sheet.
3. Appreciate that the diverse opinions of partners can enrich discussions and outcomes.
4. Negotiate formal agreements that benefit all partners. Many models for ownership, governance, funding, resourcing and operation of SaCH can guide you. Refer to the '[Leadership and governance](#)' and '[Funding and resources](#)' advice sheets.
5. Engage in collaborative activities.
6. Evaluate the extent to which activities are addressing your needs and goals. Refer to the '[Evaluation and evidence](#)' advice sheet.

Consider how you will:

- accommodate the varying priorities, funding cycles, and reporting requirements of local and state governments and private sector partners
- provide activities and services for adults while keeping students and other children safe – and how to demonstrate to stakeholders that you are doing so (refer to the '[Safety and security](#)' advice sheet)
- manage access to school facilities and determine who has authority over SaCH operations when the principal is not on-site after hours
- ensure users return school spaces to how they were found, ready for school use.



Avoid:

- territorialism (exerting excessive control over resources or information for fear of losing control)
- agendas developed without community input
- assumptions about community needs made by leaders with different life experiences
- mismatches between partners' expectations.

Do:

- involve school staff, students, and families in creating community partnerships to **promote their buy-in** for successful, long-lasting collaborations
- communicate the benefits of collaboration and a sense of **shared purpose** to potential partners, school staff, students, and families
- focus on **strengths** the community can bring to your SaCH, rather than on deficits
- consider using a **professional facilitator** or partnership broker to assist in establishing strong foundations for collaborations
- allocate partnership resources to employ a **SaCH manager** to monitor and maintain collaborative relationships
- keep **two-way communication channels** open with all partners
- stay **flexible**: even formal, contractual partnerships need room for re-negotiation, and SaCH activities and programs should adapt to the evolving needs of the school, partners, and community.

Photo: Ulumbarra Theatre, Bendigo Senior Secondary College, VIC.



Want to learn more?

Learn from the resources provided by the [Partnership Broker's Association](#)

Read the following chapters in [Schools as Community Hubs: Building 'more than a school' for community benefit](#) (2023):

- [School-community Collaboration: Insights from Two Decades of Partnership Development](#) by Catherine M. Hands
- [Brokering School-community Partnerships: Cross-sector Advocacy and Hard Work](#) by Lynden Lauer, Shirley Watters, Kari Morris, and Sandra Griffin
- [Nature as a Partner: How Schools Benefit from Ecological Connections](#) by Cynthia L. Hron

Vision & intentionality

Advice for schools as community hubs (SaCH)

In a nutshell

Having **vision** means planning with imagination and informed ambition. Developing a shared vision with stakeholders is essential to the success of SaCH. Clearly communicating and championing this vision will attract like-minded partners and collaborators.

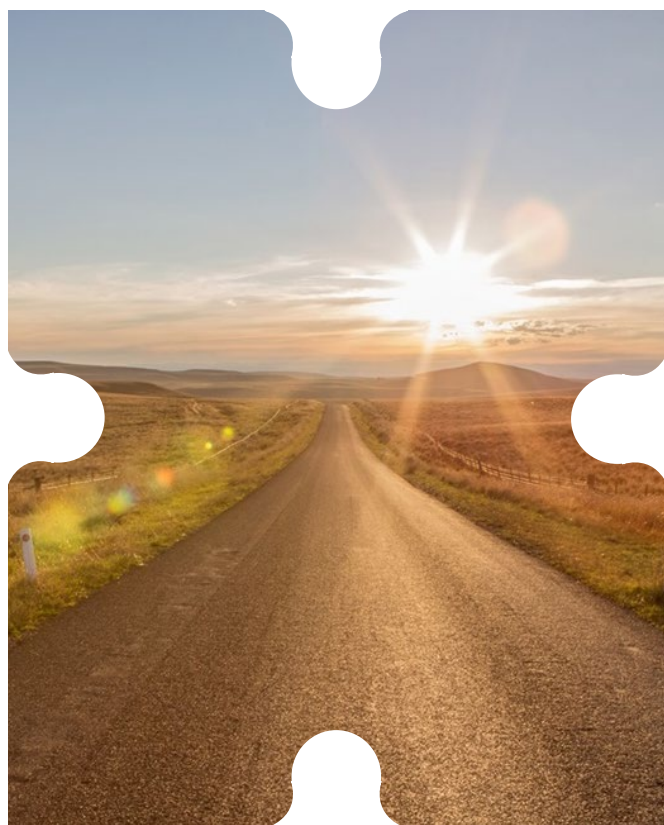
Acting with **intentionality** means all decisions and efforts are purposeful, helping to deliver your vision.

Where are you going and how will you get there?

Your **vision statement** is the big picture about where you're going and what you want to achieve. It defines your primary goal for the next 5 to 10 years in a single sentence, explaining: *What positive difference are you going to make, for whom?*

Your **mission statement** is about how you'll get there. It explains your strategy for achieving your vision in one sentence that answers the question: *How will you achieve meaningful and lasting change?*

Alternatively, you can combine your vision and mission in a single statement with the following format, creating a **value proposition**: *We help [whom?] to [what?] by [how and when?].*



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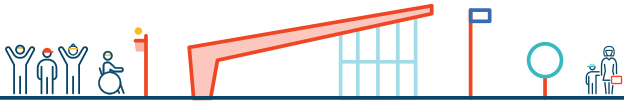
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Guiding principles

Clear **values** will help to keep your SaCH on track. As your core objectives, they describe the kind of hub you intend to develop.

Engaging, achievable, equitable, efficient, responsive, and impactful are the six overarching values or principles suggested for SaCH in the [How to Hub Australia Development Framework](#).

SaCH are diverse – they respond to the needs of different communities, in different ways – so develop a vision, mission and values that best suit your school's unique context and culture and **update them** as your hub and community evolve.

Do:

- set your vision, mission and values (VMV) **before** developing SaCH programs or activities, and ensure that they are aligned
- base your VMV on **community consultation** and **evidence of need** (refer to the '[Community strengths and needs analysis](#)' advice sheet in this series)
- make your VMV statements **inspiring**: think big and focus on success, create a vivid and specific mental picture, and use the present tense – refer to the examples at right.
- use your VMV statements in **funding applications** and **partnership proposals**
- **monitor and evaluate** your progress towards your VMV and whether they are still relevant, or need adapting as your hub and community evolve (refer to the '[Evaluation and evidence](#)' advice sheet).

Examples

1. [Our Place](#)

Vision

All children and their families succeed in life.

Mission

Form partnerships with schools and communities to improve educational achievement so children and families can flourish. Reshape the service system by influencing changes in policies and practices that address the structural causes of disadvantage.

2. [National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Plan 2021-2031](#)

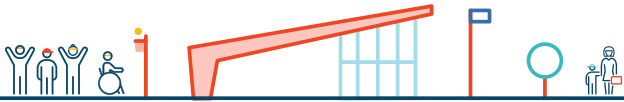
Vision

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples enjoy long, healthy lives centred in culture, with access to services that are prevention-focused, culturally safe and responsive, equitable and free of racism.

Mission

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health is viewed in a holistic context that recognises not only physical health and wellbeing but also the social, emotional and cultural wellbeing of individuals, families and communities throughout the entire life course.





SaCH need champions and champions need help

SaCH often need influential 'champions' who will strongly and consistently **advocate** for them.

Championing a SaCH project takes considerable time, energy, and commitment to change entrenched attitudes, manage and resolve conflict, and foster a shared vision. To avoid burnout, find several people who can **share the load**.

'It is the energy and evidence of advocates in the form of success stories that capture imaginations, allow partnerships to form, and encourage organisations and individuals to invest financially and emotionally in a project.'

'Shared vision is important in mobilising a community and keeping focus when problems arise.'

Simon Le Nepveu, ClarkeHopkinsClarke Architects (Building Connections Partner Investigator)

'A vision is not just a picture of what could be; it is an appeal to our better selves, a call to become something more.'

Professor Rosabeth Moss Kanter, Director, Harvard University Advanced Leadership Initiative.

'Collaborative efforts have a much higher probability of success if the participants start out with a common vision.'

Joy Dryfoos, American expert on full-service schools.



Want to learn more?

- [*Emotional Labour in Developing Schools as Community Hubs*](#) by Philippa Chandler and Sarah Backhouse (2023) in [*Schools as Community Hubs: Building 'more than a school' for community benefit*](#)
- [*A framework for designing inpatient stroke rehabilitation facilities: a new approach using interdisciplinary Value-Focused thinking*](#) by Ruby Lipson-Smith et al. (2019)

Urban planning & design

Advice for schools as community hubs (SaCH)

In a nutshell

Urban planning and design shape cities, towns and regions by managing development, infrastructure and services.

Good SaCH planning and design responds to community needs, context and culture; connects people, programs and places in an inclusive way; and generates human connections and social capital.

'We no longer build the town halls, the churches and the community health centres that we once did, so schools must play enhanced roles as hubs for community...

'Over the past 50 years, school designs have evolved to be bespoke, inclusive, learner-centred environments within a community context.

'They are a product of governments, communities and organisations that regard schools as important pieces of our urban and community fabric.'

Simon Le Nepveu, ClarkeHopkinsClarke Architects (Building Connections Partner)

SaCH: a potential solution to many problems

Interest in SaCH has grown with demand for infrastructure that increases **social equity, community connection, and environmental sustainability**. Formal agreements for shared or joint use SaCH, involving significant capital investment by two or more partners, are becoming more common. (Refer to the ['Partnerships and collaborations'](#) advice sheet in this series.)

Co-locating school and community activities and services can:

- maximise community benefit from publicly funded assets
- reduce travel distance between activities and services, which increases accessibility and promotes active transport (walking cycling, scootering)
- increase the security of facilities through community presence
- facilitate coordinated links between school and community services, and
- provide more opportunities for social connection.



Based at The University of Melbourne, the Building Connections: Schools as Community Hubs project has advanced understanding of how to design, implement and sustain SaCH. Produced by the research team, this advice sheet is part of How to Hub Australia, a suite of resources for policymakers, school leaders, and designers.

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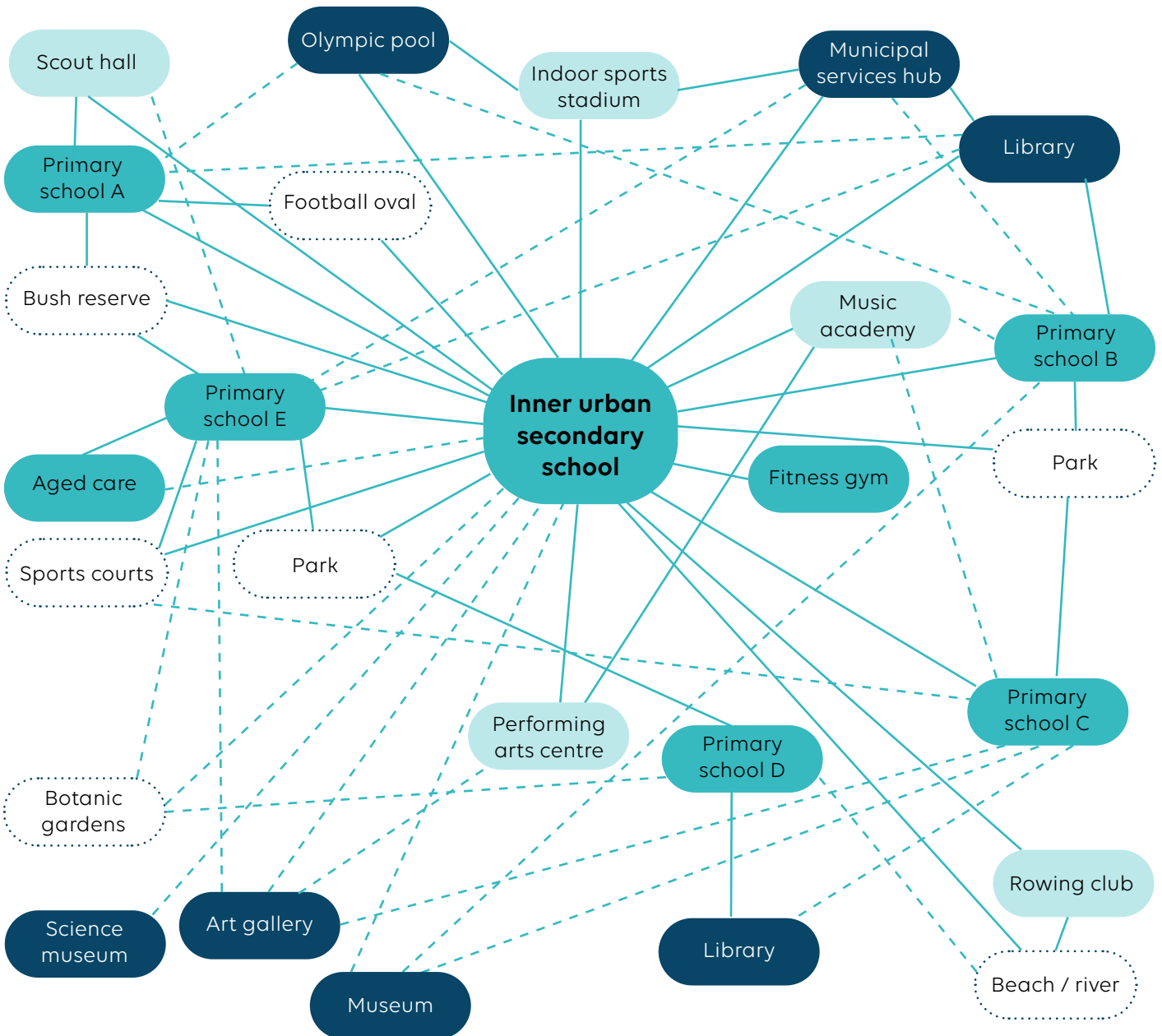


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Who's in your neighbourhood?

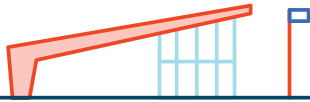
Consider your SaCH as part of a **network** of complementary community infrastructure. What other facilities and services are nearby? Who uses them? What's missing? Mapping your neighbourhood's assets, gaps, and relationships will make potential partnerships and opportunities clearer, and help you avoid unnecessary duplication of services or activities in your SaCH. An example of a community infrastructure network map is shown below.



Key:

Facility				Relationship	
Private access	Privileged access	Public access	Public access outdoor	Regular	Occasional

Source: Miles et al. (2023). See 'Where to learn more', below on the following page.



Case study: Hazel Glen College

The Victorian School Building Authority, Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools, Scouts Victoria and the City of Whittlesea collaborated on this greenfield development in a rapidly growing suburb, masterplanning to consider the broader context. It includes a secondary college, a primary school, a sports stadium, an early learning centre, a Scout hall, outside-school-hours care, and a performing arts centre that seats 350 and provides flexible space for school and community functions.

Source: Minx Architecture

Case study: Fraser Rise Community Precinct

This partnership between Springside West Secondary College, the Victorian Department of Education, local government and sports clubs is addressing population growth on the edge of Melbourne. Included in the precinct are: maternal and child health services; childcare; kindergarten; meeting spaces; adult education; fitness and arts classes for children and adults; community and professional sports facilities; and a commercial restaurant. Fences are limited and set back from the boundary to welcome in the community.

Source: Brand Architects



Want to learn more?

Read the following chapters in [*Schools as Community Hubs: Building 'more than a school' for community benefit*](#) (2023):

- [*Progressive Pedagogies and Community Connections: Lessons from Forty Years of Urban Planning and Architectural Design*](#) by Simon Le Nepveu
- [*Developing a School and Community Learning Hub: A Case Study from Regional Australia*](#) by David Tordoff and Julia Atkin
- [*School and Community Infrastructure Networks: What Might these Look Like?*](#) by Natalie Miles, Benjamin Cleveland and Philippa Chandler
- [*Valuing Urban Schools as Social Infrastructure*](#) by Jos Boys and Anna Jeffery
- [*Connecting Schools with Local Communities Through Walkable Urban Design*](#) by Christina Ergler and Melody Smith

Facility design

Advice for schools as community hubs (SaCH)

In a nutshell

SaCH design expertise is increasing around the world. Well-designed SaCH simultaneously promote learning and community: their buildings and outdoor spaces are **welcoming, inclusive and flexible**, accommodating core school activities and other uses by people of all ages and abilities.

Bespoke facilities aren't essential... but they help

SaCH are highly diverse. Many hubs make do (and do well) with existing school spaces, some retrofit school facilities for community use, and some SaCH are brand-new and purpose-designed. Consulting the community is prerequisite to good facility design – refer to the '[Community strengths and needs analysis](#)' advice sheet in this series.

Some architectural firms and other organisations have been working on SaCH for decades, developing innovative designs that can:

- make it simpler and safer for schools to share facilities with the community – refer to the '[Safety and security](#)' advice sheet in this series

- enhance community access to, and use of, shared facilities for education, health, and social services and activities, while meeting core school needs
- enable more environmentally sustainable and cost-effective operations for all users.

The [Sharing Schools, Building Communities exhibition](#) showcased 24 SaCH ranging from remote Western Australia to rural New Zealand, from regional NSW to inner Melbourne. Some are heritage sites, some are cutting-edge, all are 'more than a school'.

For SaCH design inspiration and information, download the [free e-book](#) of the exhibition.

'Can the full-service model work as well in an old building? Certainly it is a great benefit to be able to design a facility that can house all the requisite components. But... space can be renovated if the school "buys in" to the concept and the funds are available. The spirit and dedication of the innovators may be more meaningful than bricks and mortar.'

Joy Dryfoos, US expert on 'full-service' schools



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Universal design

US architect Ronald Mace coined this term in the 1970s. Since the 1990s, policymakers, planners, and architects have applied the following seven principles of universal design as standards for public infrastructure, including schools and SaCH:

- Equitable use – for people of diverse abilities.
- Flexibility in use – for a range of user needs and preferences.
- Simple and intuitive use – regardless of the user’s experience, knowledge, language skills, or concentration level.
- Perceptible information – regardless of ambient conditions or the user’s sensory abilities.
- Tolerance for error – to minimise hazards and the adverse consequences of accidental or unintended actions.
- Low physical effort – for efficient and comfortable use, with minimum fatigue.
- Size and spaces for approach and use – regardless of the user’s body size, posture or mobility.

Source: *Building Quality Standards Handbook*, Victorian School Building Authority (2022)



Case study: Eltham College blazes the trail

Opened in 1973, Eltham College was one of Victoria’s first purpose-built SaCH, designed by ClarkeHopkinsClarke (CHC) Architects. The Eltham College Community Association Centre comprised a games hall, gymnasium, swimming centre, squash court, licensed restaurant, and one of the first commercial childcare centres in the state. This combination was unique at the time.

'Ideas that were once seen as trail blazing are now part of the general design discourse.'

Simon Le Nepveu, CHC Architects

Source: ClarkeHopkinsClarke Architects

Case study: Doveton College makes an entrance

Doveton College (opened in 2012) has a single, family-friendly, shared entrance, through which school, early-learning, health and wellbeing services, adult engagement, education and employment services are all accessed. This ‘single front door’ (or ‘no wrong door’) design is replicated in all SaCH supported by NGO [Our Place](#) because it enables stigma-free access to support services, makes way-finding simpler, and promotes informal meetings that build social networks and a sense of belonging.

Source: *Our Place: Opening the School Gates to the Community* by Alexandra Fraser and Margaret Rutherford in the [Proceedings of the SaCH International Conference 2020](#)





Case study: Korayn Birralee builds on experience

Opened in 2020, Korayn Birralee Family Centre in Corio, Victoria, is a state-of-the-art facility housing a kindergarten, long day care, maternal and child health services, specialist family support services and consulting rooms, interconnected by a central thoroughfare.

It has administration areas, a toy library, commercial kitchen, community lounge, gathering spaces, an external play area, and a direct connection to the neighbouring school (Northern Bay College) for easier transitions. A large eel trap replica – designed in consultation with the local Wathaurong community – greets visitors at the building's entry and allows children to journey through it to and from the centre.

Source: Brand Architects



Want to learn more?

Read the following chapters in [Schools as Community Hubs: Building 'more than a school' for community benefit](#) (2023):

- [Progressive Pedagogies and Community Connections: Forty Years of Urban Planning and Architectural Design](#) by Simon Le Nepveu
- [Planning Doveton College: Holistic Vision, Innovative Design and Paving the Way for Others](#) by Laurence Robinson
- [Developing a School and Community Learning Hub: A Case Study from Regional Australia](#) by David Tordoff and Julia Atkin
- [Valuing Urban Schools as Social Infrastructure](#) by Jos Boys and Anna Jeffery
- [Safe yet welcoming: Alternative Design Strategies for Secure Schools](#) by Jamileh Jahangiri

Safety & security

Advice for schools as community hubs (SaCH)

In a nutshell

Design can assist or hinder community access to SaCH facilities and services. If safety and security concerns dominate SaCH design, you may create an unpleasant or hostile environment that keeps the community away.

Explore built, environmental and human-centred security solutions – or combinations of these – early in design. Feeling safe involves feeling welcome and **security can be achieved in an inviting environment**.

What risk will you tolerate?

School leaders, staff members, students' families, and community members will have varying perceptions and tolerances of risk. Changes in SaCH leadership or participants may alter risk weightings and mitigation strategies.

Different cultures and generations accept different types and levels of risk. For example, some Danish schools allow passing hikers to camp on school sites overnight and even light a campfire, which may seem unacceptable to Australian schools. It's useful to reflect on your attitude to risk and where it stems from.

Balance risks and benefits

Inviting adults from the wider community onto school sites when children are present raises concerns that should be addressed in balance with other risks and community needs. Safety and access challenges are surmountable, if there is willingness – and funding – to collaborate on solutions.

Appropriate safety and security measures (see overleaf) should be determined **early in the design process** so they can be built in, rather than retrofitted, enabling convenient, efficient, and elegant solutions. Refer also to the '[Facility design](#)' and '[Facility management](#)' advice sheets in this series.

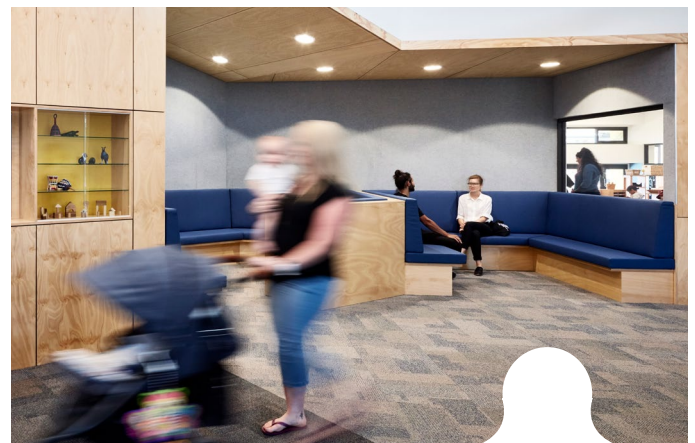


Photo: Bridgewood Primary School by ClarkeHopkinsClarke Architects



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Think beyond fences

As publicly-funded infrastructure that can promote community education, health, and connection, schools should carefully consider if they need to be surrounded by high fences and strictly 'gated'.

There are other ways to ensure safety and security while maintaining accessibility and aesthetic appeal. For example, to prevent children running into traffic, you could slow or discourage motorised vehicles around your SaCH, and promote active transport like walking, scooting and bike riding. If fencing is essential, setting it back from the site boundary can reduce the visual impact.

Get to know your community

Trained staff who make the effort to get to know community members can provide an important layer of security. The 'single front door' design of [Our Place](#) SaCH makes it easy to monitor who's on-site, provides a welcoming space for the community and connects access to early learning, school, health services and community facilities.

Photos: (below) bike library at Margaret Hendry School, ACT; (right) Officer Secondary College, VIC, by ClarkeHopkinsClarke Architects.



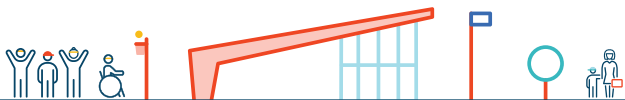
Design for environmental security

You can create a welcoming and safe SaCH using principles of 'crime prevention through environmental design', including:

- **surveillance** – provide good lighting and clear lines of sight throughout your SaCH, including windows onto areas immediately outside entries
- **community ownership** – engage the community in co-design to foster a sense of stewardship and community protection of SaCH facilities and users
- **access control** – well-designed entries and transition areas can define and enforce private (staff/student-only), privileged (invitation-only) and public zones (including areas accessible outside of school hours).

Explore these security options alongside technology such as alarms, security cameras and coded or card-reader locks. Well-defined access protocols for different user groups during and outside school hours should guide your security measures.





Case study: Adelaide Botanic High School

Adelaide Botanic High School used environmental design and digital security technology to create a completely keyless campus with an open, fenceless facade.

Adjacent to the University of Adelaide, the Botanic Park and Frome Park, the bottom level of the six-storey school is about 1.5m off the ground, with steps and ramps creating a fence-free boundary. The design also prioritised visibility and clear lines of sight with extensive use of glass.

Campus security is controlled from one central management platform. The school can be locked down within seconds, creating secure zones and alerting staff, students, and visitors via SMS and broadcast notifications. Staff can activate a lockdown from their phones.

The project won an Australian Security Industry Award for Excellence in 2019.

Sources: [Cox Architecture](#), [Gallagher Security](#), and [ABC News](#)

Case study: Sandy Hook Elementary School

The redesign of Sandy Hook Elementary School exemplifies best practice, being security conscious while remaining welcoming, calm and connected to nature.

The school was the site of a shooting in 2012 that killed 20 students and six adults, traumatising the community. The original building was demolished.

The new school, co-designed with the community, applies environmental design concepts like openness and clear sightlines for security, as well as subtle and concealed safety features.

'Buildings and public spaces must be designed for many goals, and the most important are to encourage compassion, prosperity, collaboration and joy,' said Jay Brotman, managing partner of architects Svigals + Partners.

'Nature, art and accessibility are just as important as security features.'

Source: [Dezeen](#)



Want to learn more?

- [*Schools as Community Hubs Development Framework: Workshop 1, Emerging Themes & Insights from Australia*](#) by Philippa Chandler and Benjamin Cleveland
- [*Schools as Community Hubs Development Framework: Workshop 2, Insights from Canada and the USA*](#) by Philippa Chandler and Benjamin Cleveland
- [*Safe yet Welcoming: Alternative Design Strategies for Secure Schools*](#) by Jamileh Jahangiri in [*Schools as Community Hubs: Building 'more than a school' for community benefit*](#) (2023)

Leadership & governance

Advice for schools as community hubs (SaCH)

In a nutshell

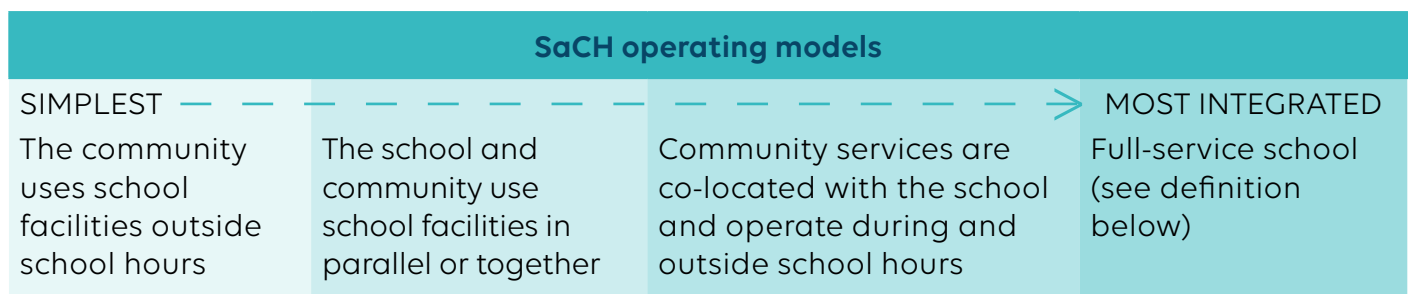
Your SaCH needs the school principal's support and should harness the strengths and passions of partners, especially in the early planning phase. Clear leadership and governance is essential from the beginning.

To help your SaCH succeed, collaborate with external organisations, adopt **a distributed leadership model with a clear governance structure and decision processes**, and – if resources allow – appoint a dedicated hub leader employed by the school or partners.

Which operating model suits your school and community?

SaCH are as diverse as their communities. To some extent, they all engage with their social networks and share facilities to meet community needs and improve outcomes for students. They vary in funding, partners, leaders, facilities, activities, stage of development and scale of ambition.

Before launching a new SaCH initiative, explore the range of operating models to determine the best for your context.



Source: [Clandfield & Martell, 2010](#)

As conceived by pioneer Joy Dryfoos in the 1990s, a **full-service school** provides all health and social services required by its students and their families, and offers them to the wider community too. **Collaboration** between the school and wrap-around services is key to ensuring that all students meet their learning potential.



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Who's steering the ship?

The **governance model** defines the key roles, responsibilities, rules and reporting structures that will keep your SaCH sailing smoothly. Think about who will set and oversee your SaCH's targets, strategies, policies and resourcing. If something goes wrong, who should be first to know? If an important decision is needed, who should make it?

Agreeing on the governance model can be challenging in non-traditional collaborations. Focus on the mission and viability of your SaCH. Refer to the '[Partnerships and collaborations](#)' advice sheet in this series.

'Getting the partnership governance framework right has been critical. While a high-level partnership can be agreed in principle, there is always the need for a clear process for reaching agreement on collaborative activities on an ongoing basis.' Source: McKenzie (see below)

'There's always going to be leadership change, there's always going to be new funding and funding that stops. [The challenge is maintaining consistency] through those inevitable changes, ebbs and flows.'
Building Connections workshop participant.

Case study: Our Place

Our Place is 'a holistic place-based approach to supporting the education, health and development of all children and families in disadvantaged communities by utilising the universal platform of a school.' It is being implemented at ten Victorian school sites.

Governance is formalised by the Department of Education and Training (DET) and Colman Education Foundation Partnership Agreement.

Chaired by the DET Secretary, an Inter-Departmental Committee develops strategic direction across State Government portfolios and helps to integrate services at Our Place sites.

A Partnership Management Group sustains and enhances the effectiveness of the partnership over the long-term by sharing lessons, identifying system-level barriers, supporting issue resolution, facilitating access to expertise and resources, fostering accountability, and monitoring outcomes.

A Site Partnership Group coordinates and supports implementation at each Our Place site. Chaired by a senior representative nominated by DET and supported by the site team, the site partners co-design long-term work plans and share ownership for actions and outcomes.

Source: [Our Place](#)

Photo: By Clarke Hopkins Clarke Architects. Bridgewood Primary School was an Our Place site, but has transitioned to a different governance model.





Case study: Community Hubs Australia (CHA)

CHA is a non-profit organisation supporting hubs across Australia. Embedded in primary schools, the hubs offer health, training and immigrant settlement support to parents/carers and the wider community, and are a gateway to other services and employment opportunities. Each hub's Coordinator creates a welcoming environment and provides hands-on assistance to participants.

The hubs are funded by the Australian Department of Home Affairs in partnership with the Scanlon Foundation. State and local governments, and private and community organisations provide additional financial and in-kind support.

At the grassroots, a local leadership group decides on how to best respond to the unique circumstances and needs of each community. At the policy level, a National Advisory Committee with specialist academic and sectoral expertise oversees the operation and development of the hubs network. Providing high-level strategy and business acumen, the CHA Board guides the sustainability, direction and evolution of the organisation.

Source: [Community Hubs Australia](#)

Photo: The Building Connections team with an English language class at Mount Ridley Community Hub, Victoria.



Want to learn more?

- [What to think about before you start a hub](#) by SA Department For Education
- [What it means to walk alongside: Exploring the Our Place partnership](#) by Fiona McKenzie

Read the following chapters in [Schools as Community Hubs: Perspectives on building 'more than a school' for community benefit](#) (2023):

- [Emotional Labour and Developing Schools as Community Hubs](#) by Philippa Chandler & Sarah Backhouse
- [Brokering School-Community Partnerships: Cross-Sector Advocacy and Hard Work](#) by Lynden Lauer, Shirley Watters, Kari Morris & Sandra Griffin

Policy alignments

Advice for schools as community hubs (SaCH)

In a nutshell

SaCH inhabit complex policy environments that cross jurisdictions and funding agencies. Seek early insights into stakeholder policies to guide your hub's development and monitor policy updates that may impact your resourcing and operations. Through regular, meaningful **engagement with policymakers**, you can advocate for policy change and foster ongoing support for your SaCH.

What is policy?

Policies are values-based guidelines for the decisions and actions of a government or organisation. A policy document usually states an objective and defines a procedure/s to achieve matching outcomes.

Why does it matter?

Government policy is the foundation for law. Governments create public policies to address issues that they, lobbyists, and/or voters prioritise. Policy guides the writing of any bill presented to the Australian Parliament. If passed, a bill becomes an Act of Parliament (i.e., law) that is administered by government departments or local councils. To ensure that

your SaCH meets all **legal responsibilities**, seek advice from these administrators as you become 'more than a school'.

Policy is also the basis for SaCH funding.

Policy alignment (i.e., shared objectives, processes, and intended outcomes) with governments or other organisations will help your SaCH secure grants, investment, or partnerships.

Clear organisational policy is essential for good governance of your SaCH – refer to the '[Leadership and governance](#)' advice sheet in this series.

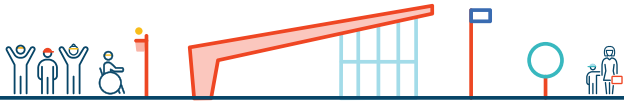
Photo: Hymba Yumba Independent School, Queensland



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Brace for policy collisions

SaCH exist at the **intersection of portfolios** including urban planning, infrastructure, education, health and community development, so policy can impact SaCH from many angles.

Interested policymakers may include local, state and federal governments, and private sector partners and stakeholders.

Some of these intersecting policies can influence the initial design and development of your SaCH while others shape day-to-day operations.

Expect imperfection

It's nice to imagine that policies are always thoroughly researched and logical, but because humans develop them, policies are never perfect and can be messy, confusing, abstract, absurd, or 'mix, meld, grate and contradict' (Stephen J. Ball, UK policy scholar).

Some policies are enacted top-down, others are developed collaboratively from the ground up. Policies can fall stagnant, evolve gradually or change suddenly.

Photo: Marist College, Bendigo by Y2 Architecture

Seek guides and make friends

It's challenging to engage with multiple agendas, determine which policies your SaCH must follow, and stay alert to policy updates. You could spend days on online research and still be unsure that you are implementing all relevant policies correctly.

If you **build relationships** with the policymakers, then policy becomes much more tangible, navigable, and helpful. You'll quickly learn which policies are prioritised, which are adhered to, and which are dormant or due for change.

Identify the key people in relevant organisations and request a briefing or conversation over coffee to explore policies related to your SaCH. The local council is a good place to start. Other potential SaCH partners – e.g., community health service providers – should also be able to explain which policies influence their work.

Begin informally, develop understanding and trust through several conversations, then explore a partnership with common goals. If you find at least one potential partner, you could set up a working group to develop the **policy framework** for your SaCH.





Respect the planning process

To build a long-term, productive partnership with your local council, take an interest in their strategic plans and planning processes. Councils generally follow a four-year planning cycle, as well as producing decadal strategic plans. They also have emergency management plans, which are becoming more important with the increasing frequency of natural disasters.

It's helpful to understand where the council is in their planning cycle and how this could affect the development of your SaCH.



Case study: Working with Children

Working with Children Checks (WWCCs) exemplify how policies can have multiple tiers. In addition to the National Standards for WWCCs, each state's education department has a policy for implementing the standards. Furthermore, each school will have its own policy for administering WWCCs.

Photo: Rebecca Colless

Case study: NSW policy

The NSW Department of Education encourages the community to use school facilities for appropriate purposes when they are not required by the school or the department. This is backed-up with a suite of policies and guidelines, to inform schools operations.

Source: [Using School Facilities](#)

Photo: CathWest Innovation College salon (open to the public), NSW, by Alleanza Architecture.



Want to learn more?

- [Policy for Schools as Community Hubs: Insights into a Fragmented Environment](#) by Robert Polglase, Ian McShane and Benjamin Cleveland in [Schools as Community Hubs: Building 'more than a school' for community benefit](#) (2023)

Funding & resources

Advice for schools as community hubs (SaCH)

In a nutshell

Reliable, long-term funding and sound financial management are essential to sustain an impactful SaCH. Blending, braiding, or layering funding from different sources – usually tied to reportable outcomes – is often required. Upfront agreements or contracts defining who's paying for what help avoid disputes later.

Seek long-term funding

Short-term grants may be easier to win, but strive to secure ongoing funding so you can:

- continue hub programs and activities
- retain knowledgeable, networked staff
- build strong relationships with your community and partners – refer to the ['Partnerships and collaborations'](#) advice sheet in this series
- reduce time spent re-applying for funding
- demonstrate positive impact – which takes time and helps to justify existing funding and win more. Refer to the ['Evaluation and evidence'](#) advice sheet.

'The idea that you can design a solution on a 12-month funding arrangement is unrealistic.'

Our Place – see reference on p.3

'Ongoing support for the school in terms of funding and operating community hubs is vital, so that the ongoing operation is not seen as a burden over time.'

Building Connections workshop participant

'One principle has been firmly established: all programs require new funds... The idea that comprehensive programs can be created... by moving existing funding from one program to another, has not been demonstrated.'

Joy Dryfoos, US expert in 'full-service' schools

'Funding streams shift like sand on a beach, so think in terms of change. Remember, trust between people lasts longer than money from any funding source. People are your major resource.'

Calfee, Wittwer & Meredith – see reference on p. 4



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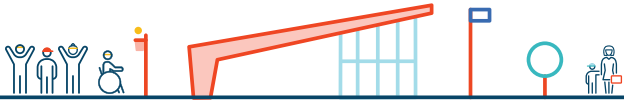
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Combine funding sources

Your SaCH will probably need to draw on multiple funding sources: federal, state, local, public and/or private. Different funders usually have varying objectives and reporting requirements, and meeting these will take significant effort and skilled financial administration. But combining streams of funding can support more diverse SaCH programs and broader community engagement.



Photo: Cathwest Innovation College by Alleanza Architecture

Funding type	What it is	When it's used	Key challenge/s
Blended	Multiple funding streams are combined, and overall expenditure is tracked.	When funders have the same goals.	Achieving consensus on funding goals.
Braided	Multiple funding streams are combined and expenditure from each source is tracked separately.	When funders have varying priorities and reporting requirements.	Managing more complex administration and determining collective progress towards the SaCH vision.
Layered	Separate funding streams for optional activities are added to a base layer of reliable funding for core operations.	When supplementary funding is short-term or unreliable.	Determining which activities are optional and managing disappointment if they are discontinued.

Photo: Armidale Secondary College





Case study: Philanthropy

[Our Place](#) is 'a holistic place-based approach to supporting the education, health and development of all children and families in disadvantaged communities by utilising the universal platform of a school.'

In partnership with the Victorian Government, Our Place is being implemented in ten school sites across Victoria, with the support of philanthropic partners: the Colman Foundation, Dusseldorp Forum, Paul Ramsay Foundation, Ray and Margaret Wilson Foundation, Sabemo Foundation, RM Ansett Trust, and the William Buckland Foundation. Each organisation understands that only long-term support will achieve lasting change.

Source: Our Place – see reference below.

Photo: Doveton College



Want to learn more?

- [Brokering School-Community Partnerships: Cross-sector Advocacy and Hard Work](#) by Lynden Lauer, Shirley Watters, Kari Morris and Sandra Griffin in [Schools as Community Hubs: Building 'more than a school' for community benefit](#) (2023)
- [What it means to walk alongside: Exploring the Our Place partnership](#) by Fiona McKenzie
- Chapters 4 & 5 in [Building a Full-Service School: A Step-by-Step Guide](#) by Carol Calfee, Frank Wittwer, and Mimi Meredith (1998)

Programs & services coordination

Advice for schools as community hubs (SaCH)

In a nutshell

'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.

Key people your SaCH needs

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

1. A supportive school principal

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.

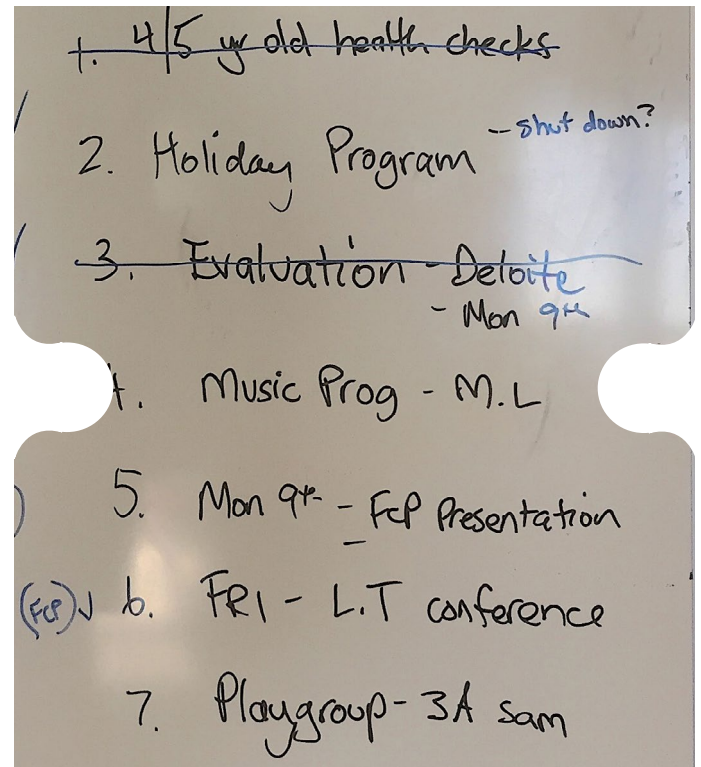
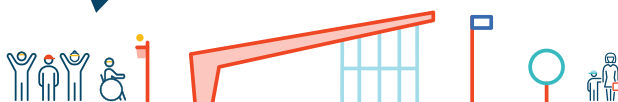


Photo: Yarrabilba Family and Community Place, Qld
Quotes from Building Connections workshop participants

'Being a principal... Running a school of two thousand kids is a big job! But am I now responsible for drug rehabilitation or domestic violence counselling?'

'The appointment of a principal who connects and supports the vision is critical. The best plans, design, construction, programming can come undone if the school culture doesn't support the community hub.'



Based at The University of Melbourne, the Building Connections: Schools as Community Hubs project has advanced understanding of how to design, implement and sustain SaCH. Produced by the research team, this advice sheet is part of How to Hub Australia, a suite of resources for policymakers, school leaders, and designers.

This research is supported under the Australian Research Council's Linkage Projects funding scheme [LP170101050]. The views expressed herein are those of the authors and are not necessarily those of the Australian Research Council.



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 M. Hands



Designed for sharing

Thoughtful design can help schools share their facilities efficiently and safely.

For example, cleaning and storage facilities can be designed with out-of-hours access in mind. A school could be divided into sectors (e.g., cooking and eating areas, rooms for classes and meetings, sports courts, and performing arts facilities) that are each secured separately, so community users can access just the area they need.

Refer to the '[Facility design](#)' and '[Safety & security](#)' advice sheets in this series.



Photo: Hazel Glen College, VIC, by Minx Architecture

Hired, shared or jointly used?

To maximise community benefit from publicly-funded infrastructure, state governments generally encourage the use of school facilities by the community for appropriate purposes. Community use of school facilities is always subject to requirements that protect school students, staff, property, and other users.

Various terms are used to describe different sharing arrangements – refer to the table below.

SaCH facility sharing models	
SHORT-TERM HIRE	Community members, groups or organisations can arrange access to school facilities outside school hours for special events, which may incur a hiring fee.
SHARED USE	Businesses or organisations can negotiate a long-term lease agreement for regular (e.g., weekly) exclusive use of school facilities, when not required by the school. This usually incurs rent to cover facility cleaning, management, and maintenance costs.
JOINT USE	The school and one or more partners from the community, private or government sectors share the use and management costs of an existing facility.
JOINT DEVELOPMENT	The school and one or more partners from the community, private or government sectors co-fund new or upgraded facilities, which they jointly use.





Case study: Sharing

Marist College Community Centre was created by the Marist Brothers Bendigo in partnership with the City of Greater Bendigo. It has facilities for football, cricket, netball, tennis, and basketball, with a kitchen, kiosk, and bar. It's home to the Maiden Gully YCW Eagles Football Netball Club and the Maiden Gully Cricket Club. The sports facilities are available for hire outside of school hours, and this income helps pay for management and upkeep.

Source: [City of Greater Bendigo](#)

Photo: Y2 Architecture

Case study: Outsourcing

In 2017-18, Victoria's Department of Education and Training delivered 12 new schools across some of the state's fastest growing metropolitan and regional communities.

The private sector financed, designed, and constructed the schools, and will maintain them for 25 years. The private company Spotless was contracted to manage the school facilities.

Source: [Victorian Department of Treasury & Finance](#)

Photo: Mernda Central P-12 College by Clarke Hopkins Clarke Architects



Want to learn more?

- [Shared use of school infrastructure](#) – NSW Department of Education
- [Community Use of Schools – Community Joint Use Agreements](#) – Victorian Department of Education and Training

Read the following chapters in [Schools as Community Hubs: Building 'more than a school' for community benefit](#) (2023):

- [Developing a School and Community Learning Hub: A Case Study from Regional Australia](#) by David Tordoff and Julia Atkin
- [Planning Doveton College: Holistic Vision, Innovative Design and Paving the Way for Others](#) by Laurence Robinson