

## OSD VISION: WHAT, WHO and HOW

# Why become involved?

**All parents want the best for their children, just like you. Becoming involved in school and learning is for the best interest of your most beloved one. If all parents are involved, school will serve children best**

If you become involved, your child will learn more and will also be happier to study. If you are more involved, teachers can also build more on what your child is learning at home and other places outside of school.

Being involved is also good for your personal lifelong learning journey, you are becoming a better parent of your child.

### What to be involved in?

#### Become more involved in the learning of your child

The teacher may be an expert of his/her subject and teaching, but you are the expert of your child. Work together more closely for better learning outcomes.

Ask your child's teacher(s) to explain why and what they do in school.

Reflect on it, and tell them about your own experiences with the given topic/subject. **DON'T BE SHY TO ASK** questions, if you don't understand

something. Seek opportunities to discuss things you don't agree with or you see your child is struggling with.

#### Become involved in school activities

You know a lot of things that teachers do not. Offer your help in teaching children about your own culture, passion, profession or hobby. If you cannot join during school hours, find other ways to help. You may manage social media, raise funds or give advice. Find occasions to participate in activities at or related to school.

All parents in your child's school can be elected as representatives and also to choose who should represent them. Take part.

### Who to turn to

#### Teachers

Your child's teacher is an expert of certain school subjects, the teaching of these subject and the age group of your child. You can expect him/her to be able to answer your questions in his/her field of expertise. You can also expect them to treat you as an equal partner. Their role is to support you as the person responsible for the education of your child.

#### Other parents

All schools have elected parent representatives. They are there to raise the voice of parents in front of school leadership and/or teachers,

be it general or special issues. You will always find other parents who are happy help you in case you find it difficult to navigate in a new school. Feel free to **ASK QUESTIONS** and **EXPRESS YOUR OPINION**, you are equal. If you don't feel comfortable about talking to the teacher on your own or accompanied by a parent representative, invite your partner, a relative or a friend along. If you go together with somebody who is not the other parent, make sure you have your child's consent first.

#### School Structures

You need to know which teacher is responsible for the class of your child when it comes to administrative or other general issues (class head or form teacher). There are also elected representatives of parents in each class. Be aware who they are. You can turn to them if you have questions or a problem.

You should also find out who are the members of your child's school leadership or management, and what their roles are. In many schools there are also others to support you: eg. social worker, psychologist, nurse.

### How to be involved?

#### Rights and Responsibilities

Parents are responsible for the education of their children. You are the primary educator of your child –

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not only the first one, but also the one who has the biggest impact on their learning.

You are also the primary protector of their rights. This means that you have the right to raise your voice in school, to ask questions, get answers, and to be asked for permission when something new is about to happen to your child. You can also become a parent representative if you are a candidate and get elected.

### Use of social media and data protection

Nowadays we often use digital tools and especially social media for communication.

You need to find out what means are used in the class/school of your child. General communication channels must be accessible for all parents, so you have to inform the school if you have problems. If digital communication is used for official communication, the school is

obliged to help you if you do not have access.

Get acquainted with the digital tools used. Be aware how to communicate safely. Make sure only people you targeted read your posts or comments, adjust your settings to that.

Be conscious of what you share on social media, avoid over sharing (sharing too many photos or too much information about your child) and oversharing in general.

Children's data need to be protected more than that of adults. You are the guardian of your child, so it is your job to guard what is shared about your child online, even if it is only shared with a small group or the teacher.

### How teachers will help you?

You should work with teachers as a team. You are educating your child together. You need to consider that while you only educate one child or

a few children, they work with several who are equally important to them.

Teachers will help you in ways and at times you have agreed on. You can expect them to provide answers, but you also need to consider their other responsibilities in and outside of school as well as their right to relax. This means the answer may not come instantly.

You can expect teachers to be aware of diversity in their class and to act considering it. In case of any misunderstandings and problems, they should be available for you to DISCUSS with them. You may not have a common language with the teacher or may not have a high enough level of majority language to directly communicate with them. In this case you can expect the school to offer a solution. Digital means are especially suitable as more and more platforms offer instant translation.

## OSD Final Conference - 12<sup>th</sup> October 2019, Athens, Greece

Co-organised by the **Institute of Education Policy (Greece)**, **Ellinogermaniki Agogi (Greece)** and **Computer Technology Institute and Press (Greece)**, in the context of European initiatives such as Open Schools for Open Societies, Open School Doors, Promoting Intercultural Science Education of Adults, Democracy through Drama, Frontiers the aim of the **Open Schooling Day** is to explore the idea of "Open School" as an engaging environment that effectively introduces novel methodologies, tools and content by re-designing learning to accommodate and include difference and by bringing together families, community groups, local businesses, experts, universities, into an innovation ecosystem.

### Open School Doors for Parental Involvement

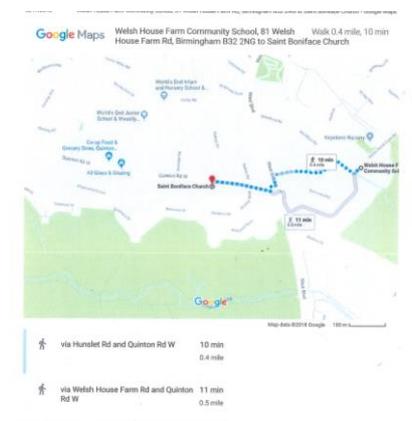
The seminar presented the outcomes of the Open School Doors (OSD) project. In order to establish suitable school and parent partnerships, a training framework for educators has been developed in the context of the "Open School Doors" project, which supports them in organizing the integration process of migrant students at school and, indirectly, triggers the parents' support for that integration process as well. The training program provides teachers with a comprehensive guide onto how effective collaboration between parents and teachers may be promoted and how integration can emerge as a shared design process, overarching all respective stakeholders. Motivation, knowledge and competences of any teacher involved is strengthened together with the respective pupils and their parents in order to shape their active integration.

## Implementation of Practices in schools

### Spaces and Places

#### Digital Mapping

The school has started using digital maps to support parents in the local community. A map was formulated and used by the Family Link worker for a parent who was new to the area, showing them where the local foodbank was and how to get there. The school are also working on a digital map for new student admissions in which they will include a printed map in their induction pack.



The use of the digital map activity was also shared with the Community Development Worker who was looking to develop a map showing all the community venues. The map finally transferred to the school website.

#### Interkulturelles Elterncafé / Intercultural Parents Café (Austria)

"Be yourself the change that you desire for this world." (Mahatma Gandhi)

Almost all of the participating schools offers the so called activity „Intercultural Parents Café“. This project is a parental education program aimed at empowering parents in their educational and educational skills, as well as the dialogue between the school and parents. The parents as well as the educational institutions are guided and supported by trained parents' café coordinators. In the process, experts will discuss certain topics relating to the school, such as: e.g. Austrian education system, learning to learn, language weaknesses, social media, health, bullying, pocket money, etc.

The individual parent cafés take place from October to June, once a month (2 hours each), mainly in schools but also in other educational institutions and cultural associations in Austria. This multi-dimensional program takes into account the development of children in relation to their environment and their family, with parents, educators and principals becoming partners for the promotion of children in Austrian education.

### Literacies and Digital Literacies

#### Mama lernt deutsch!

An implemented activity of the participating schools is „Mama lernt Deutsch!“ (“Mum learns German!“). They organise and provide courses on basic skills including childcare, conducted by the NGO „Station Wien“.



The basic skills classes are mostly held in kindergartens and schools in Vienna. Mothers get to know their children's institutional environment and make new contacts at school or in kindergarten. The classes focus on educationally disadvantaged women whose first language is not German. Mothers, who need to expand their basic skills, have the opportunity to learn German in this class with everyday topics such as kindergarten, school, education, work, health, authorities, and housing. Lectures and excursions on these topics are also included in the class. If women have originally learned reading and writing in a different alphabet, they have the opportunity to learn the Latin alphabet in this class. Childcare is provided throughout the classes.

#### Working Online with the VLE

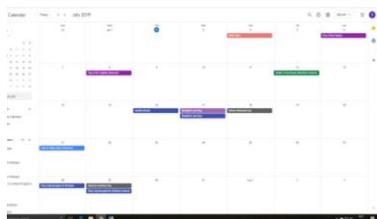
A virtual learning environment (VLE) in OSD trainings was used based on the web platform for the digital aspects. Online tutorial on XOODLE was presented. Participants got the opportunity to explore the platform either on the digital whiteboard or by using their own laptops. VLE as a best virtual learning allows access to and use of learning resources from other OSD partners. As some teachers mentioned it helps to the lesson planning and activate the

participants of parents at the school life. Participants of the OSD training had also chance to watch videos and to learn more about neighbors.

### Communities and Culture

#### Cultural calendar

A British college have created their own idea - a cultural calendar in collaboration with their ESOL students (English to Speakers of Other Languages). The calendar has now been made a college-wide focus and will be embedded across the whole college and has so far been used as a planning tool for the whole year in the ESOL department.

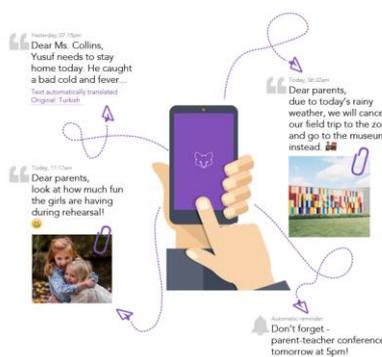


Therefore, it has completely changed their overall practice and approach.- e.g. not just acknowledging 'Refugee Week' but rather making refugee cultures embedded within whole curriculum and teaching. They have strived to raise awareness with both students and staff to ensure that they do not miss anything when planning (for example: ensuring appropriate food is available for all students; that relevant displays highlight cultural activities throughout the academic year). The college are using their cultural calendar as a learning tool for all students and staff. The college have taken lots of initiatives of their own following their participation in OSD including: a Ramadan football event on a Friday night which brought together a wide variety of people from the college; cross-

cultural Friday prayers which are open to everybody. They talked about the way their cultural calendar has made them think about refugee issues in a broader way and not tokenism (e.g. not just Refugee Week....they are making it Refugee Year on a continued basis). Overall they spoke of working to create an atmosphere where students can come and make requests in terms of what they want to see acknowledged and what activities they want to happen and to raise awareness across the college of real issues.

#### SchoolFox

One of several inspiring practices was SchoolFox which is already implemented in many Austrian schools. SchoolFox is an app for mobile phones, which facilitates sending sick notes, school information, photos, documents and parent letters the digital way, directly on the smartphone or computer in 40 languages. This tool has been chosen to be implemented in all compulsory schools in one of the federal provinces of Austria (Lower Austria).



Subsequently representatives of SchoolFox together with head of schools and teachers developed an action and implementation plan for their schools tailored to their

individual needs and daily activities at school.

#### Networking with intercultural initiatives – the Cafe Halva Partnership

The intercultural project "Cafe Halva" was founded August 2016, 16 women - Afghanistan, Chechnya, Syria, Georgia and Algeria - bake sweet and savory delicacies from their various countries of origin. The majority of women have a refugee background and no school and / or vocational qualification recognized in Germany. This complicates integration in the primary labor market. The "Café Halva" gives women an appreciation of their work and, at the same time, an opportunity to prepare for possible employment, to gain practical experience and to gain experience in reconciling work and family life.



Participants are very happy to taste some cookies made by women of the project and have the chance to share their experiences.

#### Please stay tuned

##### OSD Website

[openschooldoors.westgate.gr/](https://openschooldoors.westgate.gr/)

##### OSD Training Framework

[opendoors.org/](https://opendoors.org/)