
4. Secondary factors - The Accelerators for engagement with school and learning

The secondary factors or accelerators are used to describe more specific influences on students' engagement that have emerged through the consultation. In the survey and the group discussions, students identified a range of factors that influence their feelings towards school, their willingness to attend and their ability to engage in learning and achieve well academically.

The information gained from students in the consultation shows evidence of a complex interplay whereby foundations influence student engagement directly but also, and perhaps more critically, through a range of secondary factors that accelerate the level of students' engagement with school and learning. These secondary factors – or accelerators – have two sub-categories: firstly, factors that relate to the way that content is developed and delivered and, secondly, factors that relate to the student and the management of their physical and emotional health so that a focus on learning is maximised.

The data provided by students through the survey strongly supports two findings:

- 1) Students who have strong relationships with peers, teachers and their family are much more likely to do well against the range of accelerating factors identified through the consultation.
- 2) Students who rate highly on any of the accelerating factors are much more likely to do well against the selected engagement indicators of liking school, sense of belonging at school, attendance and academic achievement.

It is important to consider that not all accelerators weigh equally for all students and that some factors can compensate for others. Additionally, the list of factors described in the following chapters is not exhaustive and further research is recommended to explore possible other factors and their relation to each other.