

COMMUNICATION WITH SEPARATED PARENTS POLICY

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline Blue Gum Montessori School's (BGMS) response to matters relating to family law issues. This policy related to other School policies and should be read in conjunction with these, including the Separated Parents Policy.

2. Scope

This policy is for those employed by BGMS and parents of children at BGMS.

3. Policy Statement

At BGMS we are committed to providing a safe, inclusive and supportive environment which promotes open communication, respect, fairness and positive relationships. We believe that the relationship between home and school is a very important part of ensuring that children are happy, secure and open to learning. As a school community we are committed to working together to meet the various needs of our school community. Central to achieving this is trust and open, effective communication between all members of the school community. BGMS values form the basis for a proactive approach to communication and problem solving.

BGMS is committed to taking all reasonable steps to ensure that communication with separated parents is conducted in a sensitive and fair manner, both as a matter of justice and in the interest of the child. In order to facilitate and support this process, the following policy applies.

This policy is based on the general presumption that except when it would be contrary to a child's best interests:

- Children have the right to know and be cared for by both of their parents
- Children have the right to spend time on a regular basis with both their parents
- Parents jointly share duties and responsibilities concerning the care, welfare and development of their children
- Parents should agree about the future parenting of their children
- Children have a right to enjoy their culture

4. School responsibilities

4.1. Primary and Alternate Contact Details

For practical reasons the School requests that families nominate one parent as the Primary Contact (usually the Parent with whom the child mostly resides) and the other parent will be listed as the Alternate Contact. Where the Application for Admission for the School is only signed by one parent, by default that parent will be treated as the Primary Contact. The provision of personal student information by the School will be subject to any legal considerations including the wishes of the specific student, family arrangements, the School's Privacy Policy and the Commonwealth Privacy Act.

4.2. General Information

Information regarding contact details will initially be drawn from the Application for Admission and thereafter from the Confirmation of Student Details Form which is updated at the commencement of the academic year. Only the Primary Contact will receive the Confirmation of Student Details Form. Upon request at the beginning of each year, a separate Confirmation of Student Details Form can be sent to the Alternate Contact to confirm information currently on the database regarding communication.

A Notice of Intent (Confirmation of Enrolment Status for the following year) is distributed in June and addressed to the Primary Contact. If there was a change in status of the enrolment, then the Alternate Contact would be contacted. There is an expectation that parents will communicate with each other regarding the enrolment status for the following year.

COMMUNICATION WITH SEPARATED PARENTS POLICY

Both the Primary and the Alternate Contact will be provided with the following:

- Teacher emails (copied to both parents)
- Newsletters
- KeptMe and other technology used within the School
- Parent/Teacher Interviews
- Student Reports
- Parent Information Nights

For those communications that are delivered to the home by the student (including camp forms and excursion notices), it is the responsibility of the student to inform his/her parent of such information and it is the responsibility of the parents to share this information with each other. Separate copies will be distributed. School photographs will be sent home with the student. It is up to the parents to communicate with one another.

Where parental consent is required, the School will accept the signature of either the Primary or the Alternate Contact, if both signatures appear on the Application for Admission. Where only one parent has signed the Application for Admission, consent will only be recognised by the signature of that person.

If communication to parents is via email, those emails will go to both parents. A response to a query will go to both parents. It is expected that parents communicate with each other to give a consistent response to the teacher.

4.3. Illness

If a student requires medical treatment or needs to be sent home from school due to illness, the designated Primary Contact will be contacted in the first instance. If they are unavailable, the Alternate Contact will be contacted. In the event of a serious illness or injury, it is expected that the parent contacted will communicate with the other parent. For serious medical conditions, management plans will be sent to the Primary Contact for completion.

It is the responsibility of the Primary Contact to share this information with the other parent. Normally these are completed at the beginning of each school year.

4.4. Absence

It is the responsibility of parents to contact the School if their child will be absent. In the event of such an explained absence, the School will not notify the other parent and it is expected that parents take responsibility for sharing this information with each other. In the event of an unexplained absence, the designated Primary Contact will be the person contacted.

4.5. Disciplinary Matters

In the event of a serious disciplinary matter that may involve suspension or expulsion, both the Primary and the Alternate Contact will be contacted.

4.6. School Fees

Payment of School fees will remain the legal responsibility of all parents/guardians that sign the Application for Admission unless otherwise agreed in writing with the School.

4.7. Exception

If any parent requires specific communication arrangements outside of this policy, a request must be made in writing to the Principal detailing the reason behind the request.

COMMUNICATION WITH SEPARATED PARENTS POLICY

4.8. Expectation of Parents

Parents are required to notify the School of the terms of any Court Order, including a Family Court parenting order, that contains residence or specific issues orders that may affect the manner in which the School is to communicate with either or both parents. If any order changes, parents are responsible to provide an updated copy to the School.

In the event you do not have a court order in place but have separated, then a parenting plan/agreement is to be provided and signed by both parents. This will assist the school to meet your expectations.

Any dispute between parents in relation to matters affecting the educational welfare of their child should be resolved between the parents or by the appropriate Court. The School will endeavour to meet the requirements in its responsibility towards the child as a student of the School.

The School will not act as an intermediary between parents. The School is not to be drawn into custody battles and court hearings.

The School has the right to alter this policy in the best interests of its students.

5. Responsibilities

5.1. Compliance, Monitoring and Review

5.2. Reporting

5.3. Records Management

Approval and Amendment History	Details	Date
Original Approval Authority and Date	Drafted by Principal	23/6/2016
Amendment Authority and Date		
Review Date		22/6/2017