



COMMUNICATION WITH SEPARATED PARENTS POLICY

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the Blue Gum Montessori School (BGMS) response to matters relating to separated parents and family law issues.

This policy relates to other BGMS policies/procedures and should be read in conjunction with these; including the Separated Parents Policy, Code of Conduct policies and child safety related policies/procedures.

2. Scope

This policy is for BGMS employees, visiting staff and parents/guardians 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 open, effective communication between all members of the school community. BGMS values are 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
- Children and families will be treated with respect and in accordance with the law

4. School Responsibilities

4.1 Primary and Alternate Contact Details

For practical reasons the School requires families to 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 relevant law, including any Court Orders.



4.2 General Information

Information regarding contact details will initially be drawn from the Application for Admission and thereafter from any School request for confirmation of student details.

Separated parents are required to update BGMS with any changes to contact details.

Separated parents are required to notify BGMS of any change in the status of enrolment. If the School is notified of a change of enrolment by one parent/guardian, the parent/guardian will be contacted; unless there is a Court Order or law that prohibits this. There is an expectation that parents will communicate with each other regarding the enrolment status of their child.

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

- Teacher emails (copied to both parents)
- Newsletters
- Any learning management system/platform used within the School
- Parent/Teacher Interviews
- Student Reports
- Parent Information Nights
- Events Information

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, if required.

School photograph arrangements will be communicated to both separated parents (if required).

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, unless otherwise stipulated in a Court Order or Parenting Plan.

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

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 forms are completed at the beginning of each school year; however, updates can occur throughout the year.

4.4 Absence

It is the responsibility of parents to contact the School if their child is 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.

4.8 Expectations 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 for providing an updated copy to the School.

In the event that a court order is not in place, but parents have separated, then a parenting plan/agreement is to be provided and signed by both parents. This will assist BGMS in meeting expectations and obligations.

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. BGMS will uphold any Court requirements and will endeavour to meet parent requirements where they are in the best interest of the child, and in accordance with School Policy and Procedure.

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 students, staff and the community.

5. Responsibilities

5.1 Compliance, Monitoring and Review: Principal or delegate.

5.2 Reporting: Principal or delegate.

5.3 Records Management: Principal or delegate.

Approval and Amendment History	Details	Date
Original Approval Authority and Date	Drafted by Principal	23/06/2016
Amendment Authority and Date		
Review		22/06/2017
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