

College Communication with Separated Parents Policy

April 2023



Rationale

The College sees fair dealing with separated parents as important. In the best interests of the child, and subject to any Court Order to the contrary, the College will take all reasonable steps to ensure that communication with separated parents is conducted in a sensitive and fair manner.

The College requests families to nominate one parent as the Primary Contact and one address as the Primary Mailing Address. The College will provide other parents with information relating to their daughter's education, as outlined below.

The provision of personal student information by the College will be subject to any legal considerations, including the College's Privacy Policy.

Guiding Principles

In meeting its obligations to students and parents, the College, while committed to the underlying philosophy of the Family Law Act, relies on the following principles:

- The education of a child is the primary responsibility of the child's parents;
- The College will proceed and act on the basis that each parent has equal rights and responsibilities in relation to the student and will rely on the authority of either parent in connection with matters concerning the student unless either:
 - the College is supplied with a court order or written authorisation signed by the Parent which provides otherwise or
 - Statutory declarations of an informal Carer which will apply for 12 months
 - the Principal in her sole discretion is satisfied in all the circumstances that there is a good reason to vary the arrangement and has advised the Parent in writing of his/her intention to do so or
 - the College is satisfied in all the circumstances that there is reason to act on one parent's instructions and not the other
- Generally, it will be assumed that both parents are involved in any decisions made concerning major long-term issues impacting on the child and College, including but not limited to subject selection, enrolment, school fees and any educational assessments;
- The College is not the appropriate place for family disputes to be resolved, nor is it appropriate for the College staff to resolve such issues;
- The wishes of a parent prevail in the event of a dispute between a parent legally responsible for a student and an informal carer
- Any College-based decisions regarding parent issues will be made in an unbiased manner and, as far as reasonably practicable, without favour to either parent;
- Where doubt arises in resolving any issues, the educational interests, safety and welfare of the student will be paramount to the College's consideration.

Procedures

Court Orders

The College requests that a copy of any court orders in place concerning a student or her parents is provided to the College at the time of enrolment. If any orders are subsequently made by a Court during the period of a student's enrolment at the College, the College should be promptly provided with a copy of these orders. It is noted that these court orders will only be used by the College to ensure that the educational interests, safety and welfare of the student are properly addressed. Please note it is not the role or responsibility of the College to enforce the orders.

Enrolment

Information regarding family arrangements will be drawn from the Enrolment form. Any changes made during the year can be updated, with requests made in writing to the Principal.

Where new family arrangements arise during the year following separation, the new arrangements will be confirmed in writing and signed by both parents.

Communications

All parents will be provided with the following information:

1. Parent Access Module (PAM)

Access to the Parent Access Module (PAM) is via a password. PAM presents a broad range of information about what is happening at the College.

2. College Calendar – Dates and Special Events

This publication lists all important events for the year. Parents can use it to stay abreast of College activities and, by contacting their child's pastoral or Year Level Coordinator, ahead of time, can arrange appointments/visits to the College on occasions such as Parent/Teacher/Student Interviews and Performance evenings

3. OLMC Newsletter

The OLMC Newsletter is published once a fortnight (generally Friday). It is posted on the College website, PAM for ease of access, with an email link sent to parents advising of the latest edition.

4. Photograph Order Form

Photographs are taken at the beginning of each year. The electronic order form is provided prior to the day of photographs.

5. Student Reports

Student Reports and continuous assessment reports are accessible in PAM.

6. Parent/Teacher/Student Interview Appointments

Bookings are made via PAM

Information that will only be sent to the designated primary contact includes:

- **Requests requiring a parental consent and/or signature**

Communications that are emailed are generally permission forms for activities and only require one signature. Examples of such communications are: excursion permission forms, Failure to Submit forms, rescheduled task forms, Community Service notices and VCE, VCAL, VET and tertiary placement information. It is an expectation that families will establish appropriate methods of communication to ensure both parents are aware of such communications.

- **Illness alerts**

The designated primary contact will be the first person contacted if a student requires medical treatment or needs to be sent home from school due to illness.

References

MEL-OLMC PRIVACY Policy 2021
OLMC Child Safety Policy 2022
Australian Privacy Principles 2018
Ministerial Order 1359

Policy Updated: November 2019, March 2023, April 2023
Approval Authority: College Leadership Team
Person Responsible: Principal
Next Policy Review: April 2025