

College Communication with Separated Parents Policy

Revised November 2019



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.

For practical reasons, the College will normally prefer to direct all correspondence to one address only. 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;
- 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;
- Where parents cannot agree on what is in the child's best interests, it is the role of the Court, not the school, to determine those interests;
- 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;
- 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 the 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. This information is confirmed each year via the Re-Enrolment Form. Any changes made during the year can be updated, with requests made in writing to the Principal.

The Re-enrolment Form (Enrolment Confirmation) is reviewed in November of each year and is a contract signed by all parents. Where new family arrangements arise during the year following separation, a new Re-enrolment Form will be signed establishing the contract between the school and the 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 daughter'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 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, detentions 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 2019
Australian Privacy Principles 2014

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