



Additional Policies & Guidelines

FAMILY LAW DISPUTES GUIDELINES

The purpose of this document is to reinforce the principle that family law disputes should not be carried out at schools. Schools are meant to provide a safe, secure learning and teaching environment for students and staff. Schools are not the place to resolve matters that can more properly be resolved privately between parents with the assistance of the Australian Government's Family Relationships Service², a dispute resolution service or in the Family Court. To this end all parents are expected to maintain appropriate behaviour while on school premises.

It is not the school's role to act as referee in such disputes. State schools have standard processes for dealing with certain matters in circumstances where both parents retain parental responsibility, there is no Court order prohibiting a matter and there is no need to intervene as part of our duty of care. For example:

- Collection from and access to children at school: school staff will not enforce collection arrangements or prevent either parent from attending or picking up a child from school, as long as the school routine is not unreasonably interrupted and compulsory schooling requirements are met.
- Access to scholastic information: Subject to some exceptions, each parent will be entitled to the same schooling information about their child. Parents who are not recorded on school records may not receive such information until they have school records amended to reflect their status.
- Consent for student participation in school excursions: The school requires only one parent signature on the permission form. As long as one parent signs a permission slip the student can participate in the activity in question.
- Student access to the school's appointed Guidance Officer (GO) for purposes of counselling support: Should a student request to speak with a GO for counselling support, the school will allow the student to speak to the GO. Parent permission is not required for counselling support to students. In the case of a parent requesting a GO referral (for counselling) then one parent's consent is sufficient. Learning referrals to the GO are different from counselling support offered by GO's. A learning referral involves the collating of student data (by classroom teacher) and may include a cognitive assessment of the student. Such referrals require consent from only one parent.
- Student's diet at school: Students will be permitted to eat food provided by a parent. Students will also be permitted access to the school tuckshop with one parent's permission.
- Parents volunteering at school: Unless a court has ordered otherwise and subject to the school principal's discretion about general suitability, parents who do not live with their children are acceptable applicants to be volunteers at the school their children attend. Parents who seek to volunteer in these circumstances should understand that if they are accepted as volunteers it is not for the purpose of facilitating contact with their child.

² <http://www.familyrelationships.gov.au>



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Parents involved in dispute are encouraged to seek the assistance available through the Australian Government's Family Relationships Service, a dispute resolution service or the Family Court to resolve any differences with each other over matters like those outlined above and your respective compliance with relevant court orders.

At BMSS we acknowledge that each family is different and we appreciate that individual circumstances may apply. Should you have any questions relating to your specific circumstances, please contact the school office to make an appointment with the Principal.