

Communication with Separated Parents

1. The Staff of St Michael's N.S. encourage parents experiencing separation to speak confidentially with the Principal and/or teachers. It is our aim to handle such matters with sensitivity and compassion; ultimately our primary concern is for the well-being and overall development of the child. The school will also operate on the assumption, unless there is evidence to the contrary, that both parents are equally committed to the child's welfare and education and therefore equally entitled to be informed directly about significant issues relating to the child. This policy was drafted 2019 and will be ratified by BOM 2019/2020.

2. In order to ensure that the school can support a child whose parents are separated, the following procedures which involve active co-operation between the parents affected and the school are required:
 - i.) Parents of a pupil are asked to inform the school if they are separated. In particular the school needs to know with which parent the child normally resides.
 - ii.) If a child is experiencing difficulties related to the fact that his/her parents are separated, the school should be informed, so that it can endeavour to assist in helping the child to deal with them.
 - iii.) In the absence of clear evidence to the contrary, the school will treat both parents as equal partners in terms of parenting responsibilities and rights.
 - iv.) The school cannot be asked to withhold a child from either parent in the absence of a custody arrangement to that effect. The same applies to significant information relating to the child.
 - v.) When a child spends time in two homes, it is requested that the school be provided with both sets of contact/emergency details.
 - vi.) If changes are made to normal collection arrangements for children, the school should be informed in writing.
 - vii.) If a separation /custody order is in place which limits contact by either parent with the school, the school should be informed in writing to this effect. This can be done by either a letter from a solicitor or by providing the school principal with a copy of the relevant part of the order. The school commits to ensuring that such

information will be held in the strictest confidence and will be used on a "need to know" basis only.

- viii.) The school will assume, unless otherwise instructed, that consent for school trips, routine medical examinations or vaccinations can be given by the parent with whom the child principally resides.
- ix.) It is school policy to offer separate parent/teacher meetings to both parents, if so desired.

- x.) Standard school communications which are normally transmitted via school bags/Homework folders will be expected to be communicated by the parent with whom the child principally resides to the other parent.
- xi.) Communication in regard to academic reports, significant disciplinary issues and health and safety issues will be communicated by the school to both parents separately, unless there is a compelling reason not to do so. Such reasons must be given in writing to the school (see point iv above)
- xii.) The Board and staff of St Michael's N.S. will endeavour at all times to deal sensitively and caringly with children experiencing parental separation and with both parents.