

Custody Restrictions Policy

Rationale:

The Principal and staff of St. Brigid's Catholic Primary School encourage parents who are separated or going through the separation process to come and speak confidentially to their child's teacher and/or the Principal. It is our aim to handle such matters with sensitivity and compassion, and ultimately, our primary concern is for the well-being and overall development of the child/children involved.

Aims:

- To develop and implement clear and responsible processes for managing custody related issues at a school level.
- To clearly articulate the school's processes relating to the management of custody issues to parents.

Implementation:

Parents or guardians are required to:

- Complete and sign accurate enrolment forms for children for whom they have custody.
- Accompany enrolment forms with Birth Certificates or similar that proves a student's name and birth date.
- Declare any custody issues and supporting legal documentation – which will be photocopied and retained in the student's individual file and a copy kept locked in the Custody Restrictions folder at the office.

The school will:

- Only enrol a child under the name provided on a birth certificate or a more recent legally recognised document. This is the name the school will use.
- Assume a default position that both natural parents have equal access to enrolled students unless current Court Orders or legal documents dictate otherwise.
- Allow both natural parents or legal guardians access to school reports, newsletters, parent interviews, and their children at school unless Court Orders or similar legal documents dictate otherwise.
- Not allow parents or legal guardians, who claim custody restrictions but fail to provide documentation, to have their requests met until such time as supporting documentation is provided.
- Immediately direct parents or legal guardians, who have restricted access to students and whose presence at school or requests for information etc are in breach of Court Orders or similar legal documents, to leave the school.
- Contact the Police immediately if people refuse to comply with the Principal's lawful instructions or to obey Court Orders or similar.
- Report any breaches of custody restrictions to the parent or legal guardian who has legal custody of the child/children via the Principal.
- Comply with all Family Court Orders or similar legal documents relating to custody. The Principal will be responsible for ensuring this occurs.

Teachers:

- Must read students' personal details, and know their students with custody restrictions.
- Are encouraged to discuss custody restrictions of their students with the Principal or Assistant Principal.

We ask parents or legal guardians to consider the following:

- When a child spends time in two homes, it is requested that the school be provided with both sets of emergency/contact numbers.
- Regarding the collection of the child from school, it is requested that the Principal or their representative be informed of any changes to collection arrangements.
- It is school policy to offer the option of separate parent/teacher meetings, if so desired.
- School communication is frequently made with parents or legal guardians regarding their child's schooling. It is assumed that when we wish to communicate with parents or legal guardians, the parent or legal guardian who is contacted (ie. the parent or legal guardian with whom the child principally resides) will inform the other parent or legal guardian. Specific requests for separate communication can be accommodated.
- In the absence of custody arrangements, both parents or legal guardians will be treated as equal partners in terms of parenting rights and responsibilities.
- It is important that the Principal and the child's teacher are kept up to date with custody arrangements.
- The staff of the school will endeavour at all times to deal sensitively with children experiencing separation.

This policy was ratified by the School Board at the meeting held on 5 February 2013.