

How you as parents can help the school

- ▶ Treat all members of the school community with dignity and respect.
- ▶ Keep the school informed of important changes that are affecting your child and your family that may impact upon your child at school and upon the school's interactions with your family members.
- ▶ Provide the school with up-to-date parenting agreements and court orders including any AVOs.
- ▶ Work collaboratively with the school to resolve any issues that arise.
- ▶ Understand that the school must communicate and consult with both parents and provide each with opportunities to attend school events unless a court order restricts the rights of a particular parent to interact with the school.
- ▶ Providing the school with an agreed position about how step-parents, grandparents or other family members will interact with the school can be helpful.
- ▶ Ring the school and make an appointment with the principal if you have a concern about the way the school is interacting with family members. These matters are best dealt with in a confidential way with the principal.
- ▶ Keep family disagreements away from the school site.
- ▶ Understand that except in rare, clearly defined situations, the school must enrol your child in the name shown on their birth certificate.

Useful Contacts

Family Connect and Support Barnardos:
1800 066 757

Catholic Care: catholiccare.org/family-and-individual-services/

Relationships Australia:
relationships.org.au - (counselling and support)

Family Relationships Online:
familyrelationships.gov.au

Family Court of Australia:
fccoa.gov.au/

Uniting Counselling & Mediation:
uniting.org/services/counselling-mediation

Vinnies: vinnies.org.au
(financial aid and assistance)

Legal Aid: legallaid.nsw.gov.au/

Services Australia:
servicesaustralia.gov.au/
(general information on raising children, domestic violence and living arrangements)

Inter-relate: interrelate.org.au - 1300 473 528
(family counselling, mediation & dispute resolution)

Manly Warringah Women's Resource Centre:
9971 4499 (family Welfare, Domestic Violence)

Manly Adolescent & Family Counselling Service:
womensrefuge.org.au - 9976 1486



Schools and family breakdowns

Guide for Parents



FAITH



JOY



WITNESS



COMPASSION



COURAGE

VALUES



CATHOLIC SCHOOLS
Broken Bay

Supporting our students and our families

Catholic Schools Broken Bay (CSBB) strives to support every student and every family within its school community. We understand that some family relationships can be complex and our school endeavours to be sensitive to these. As a Catholic community our starting point is the understanding that each of us is made in God's image and we hold deep respect for the innate dignity and uniqueness of each person. A Catholic school community immersed in the Gospel of Jesus and filled with his Spirit is committed to the values of compassion, tolerance, forgiveness, and reconciliation. We affirm the rights of all members of the school community to feel safe and be safe at school.

The ways in which people interact with each other in the daily life of the school significantly affects each person's sense of well-being, identity and self-worth and contributes to the culture of the community. Everyone in the school community has a responsibility to foster quality interpersonal relationships amongst teachers, students, parents, support staff, priests, and parish communities.

The place of parents as prime educators of their children is respected and affirmed. The school's prime concern is always to act in the best interests of your child. Feeling safe and supported at school is essential for student wellbeing and a pre-requisite for effective learning. Most particularly in situations of family breakdown, school needs to be a safe place for its students.

What the school can do for you as parents who do not live together

- ▶ Provide both of you with school reports, newsletters, invitations to parent/teacher interviews, concerts, assemblies, etc. unless court orders require otherwise.
- ▶ Act consistently with court orders.
- ▶ Respond to requests for information about your child's academic performance, attendance, or social interactions at school, unless court orders require otherwise.
- ▶ Respect your privacy and comply with the requirements of the Privacy Act.
- ▶ Offer counselling for students or referrals to external counselling services.
- ▶ Offer fee discounts for families in a position of genuine financial hardship.
- ▶ Provide opportunities for both of you to volunteer at school if, but only if, your child is comfortable with this.

The school cannot:

- ▶ Become involved in the interpretation or enforcement of court orders. If you are not clear about the meaning of an order or as parents interpret it differently you need to take legal advice. Similarly, if you disagree about an important decision about your child's education you need to seek help from the court. It is not appropriate for the school to become involved and risk interfering with the processes of the court.
- ▶ Favour one parent over the other. In the absence of court orders requiring a different approach, the school will endeavour to treat both parents equally and to consult with each of you about any significant issues relating to our child irrespective of who is paying school fees.
- ▶ Provide information about one parent to the other parent in the absence of their consent or a subpoena from a court.
- ▶ Respond to daily requests about students' arrival, departure, lunch box contents, transport arrangements, etc. The school community contains large numbers of families, many of whom will need to interact with the office, the principal, or teachers on any given day, so it may not always be practicable to respond to requests of this nature.
- ▶ Arrange or allow a parent to visit a student on the school premises during the school day.
- ▶ Become actively involved in the hand over process for students who spend time living with each parent during term time. Where possible, hand overs should take place away from the school.