Separated Parents Policy

Policy No:	1.11	Version: 3	May 2025
Responsibility:	School Chair	Scheduled Review Date:	May 2027

1.0 Purpose

To outline Tarremah's enrolment and communication processes, parent involvement in school activities and release-to-parent protocols with parents who have separated.

2.0 Policy Statement

The School recognises that some families will be subject to parent separation for various reasons. In the absence of any notification to the contrary, it will be assumed that both parents retain a shared and equal parental responsibility for their children. This means that the School will recognise that each parent has equal duties, obligations, responsibilities and opportunities concerning matters involving the School.

The term "parent" in this policy includes carers, guardians and those with parental responsibility.

Tarremah Steiner School follows all court directions, respects individual parents' rights to confidentiality and works to support the child's best educational outcomes. Staff strive to make all communications between Tarremah Steiner School and separated parents transparent and fair to all parties involved.

The School has an obligation, as far as practicable, to ensure that every child is provided with an opportunity to achieve their educational potential. In meeting this obligation, the School relies to a significant degree on the cooperation and assistance of parents.

Integral to the cooperation between the School and parents is an expectation that if parent separation does occur whilst the child/ren are enrolled, parents will reach agreements regarding those issues which are likely to have an impact on the School. To ensure that there is clarity, it is a requirement that separated parents are to complete a Custody Arrangement Form, available from the School Office.

In the event that a custody order is sought, the School must be provided with a copy of any orders obtained.

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 School is not the appropriate place for family disputes to be resolved nor is it appropriate for school staff to resolve such issues.

Where doubt arises in resolving any issues, the educational interests, safety and welfare of the child are to be the paramount considerations. Decisions made by the school will be made in an unbiased manner and as far as reasonably practicable, without favour to either parent.

The School will support compliance with a private (binding) agreement between parents, a court order, and/ or assessments under the Child Support (Assessment) Act.

3.0 Policy Elements

- Student Enrolment
- School Fees
- Participation in School Activities
- Care of students
- Communications

4.0 Procedure

4.1 Enrolment

- If court orders are obtained by one or both parents, a copy of the orders should be provided to the School as soon as possible. In the absence of Court Orders, parents must complete a Custody Arrangement Form (provided by the School).
- In the absence of any court order to the contrary, we would expect that either parent can enrol a child in the School.
- In the absence of any court order to the contrary, the School requires both parents' details to be included in the enrolment forms, as each parent is entitled to know where their child is enrolled and will, therefore, have access to information about their education.
- Both parents are expected to sign the Enrolment Form and the Enrolment Acceptance Agreement, this confirms that both parents have agreed to abide by the School's policies.

4.2 Fees

- Separated Parents are required to complete a Separated Parents Payment Agreement, indicating the percentage of fees they are responsible for *.

- *Should one parent be unable to pay their portion of the fees the other parent may be liable for the entire account, depending upon the school's discretion, and subject to any court order, agreement or assessment in place regarding payment of school fees.

- Where only one parent signs the above-mentioned forms, that signatory is singularly responsible for full payment of the account.

- Any unpaid portion of fees will be sought by the school through fee/ debt recovery processes with the relevant parent.

- If payment of fees is not received, the student's enrolment may be terminated.

4.3 Participation in School Activities

- In the absence of any court order to the contrary, we would expect that either and both parents would participate in School related activities, including parent/teacher interviews.

4.4 Care of Students

- In the absence of any court order to the contrary, we expect that parents have amicable care arrangements. With that in mind we would expect that either parent may collect their child from school.

- If there is an Order in place we would expect that parents would abide by that order. If a parent wanting to pick up a child in contravention to an order we would contact the relevant parent and the police if necessary. The School would not be able to physically stop a parent from picking up their child.

- The School will not monitor a child for a parent on days when they are in the care of the other parent.

4.5 Communications

- In the absence of any court order to the contrary, initial communication to parents from the School will be addressed to both parties.

- If staff are responding to a query from one parent, they will respond to that parent only. Their communications will be confidential between those parties.

- A parent may elect not to receive communications. To do this they must notify the School in writing.

- A parent cannot request that the School stop communicating with the other parent without the other parent's written consent, or court orders.

- Parents have a responsibility to advise the School immediately of any changes in family circumstances that may occur which have the potential to impact the relationship between the School and the parents and/or students.
- Parents are able to request that hard copies of notes and forms are sent to both parents.

5.0 Responsibilities

- School Chair
- Business Manager
- Administrative Staff
- Teaching Staff
- Parents and Carers
- Enrolment Officer

6.0 Related Documents

- Parent Community Code of Conduct (Tarremah Community Framework)
- Fees Payment Policy (Fee Schedule)
- Confidentiality and Privacy Policy
- Enrolment Policy
- Enrolment Acceptance Agreement
- Delivery and Collection of Children Policy
- Custody Arrangement Form
- Enrolment Application Form

7.0 Reference/Legislation

- Family Law Act 1975
- Privacy Act 1988
- Children, Young Persons and their Families Act 1997

8.0 Contact Point

School Chair

9.0 Authorisation

Executive:	Council:
Name:	Date:
Signature:	