Dealing with Family Law Issues and Students at PCW Melbourne

In Lieu of a Victorian equivalent, the College has relied on DEALING WITH FAMILY LAW RELATED ISSUES IN SCHOOLS AND TAFE NSW (© State of New South Wales, Department of Education and Training, Legal Services Directorate) Implementation date: 2007. Reference has also been had to the ACT Government publication Dealing with Family Law Related Issues in Schools – Guidelines for School Staff.

Information for Teachers:

- Parents have a responsibility to provide the school with copies of any court orders that impact on the relationship between the family and the school. In the absence of specific court orders, each parent is entitled to:
  - Know where their child is enrolled
  - Participate in school related activities
  - Have access to documentation relating to his or her child
- Except in specifically defined circumstances, staff should not give permission to parents or other people to remove students during the course of the school day
- The school is not the appropriate place for family disputes to be resolved nor is it appropriate for school staff to attempt to resolve such issues
- Decisions pertaining to the child’s education should be made in an unbiased manner and as far as reasonably practicable, without favour to either parent;
- Where doubt arises in resolving any issues, the educational interests, safety and welfare of the child are to be the paramount consideration.
- Where court orders have not been made, both parents may attend school organised activities. Each parent maintains parental responsibilities and is able to visit the school, access the College portal, receive all correspondence regarding their child and speak to the principal and teachers about their child’s education and participate in activities in which parents are normally involved.

Information for Parents & Students:

The College recognises that some families are subject to family breakdown.

Where court orders are in place concerning any child attending the School, parents are, at the time of enrolment, required to provide the College with a copy of all court orders (and other relevant documents) relevant to the students.

Policy: Dealing with Family Law Issues
Parents must also update the school immediately if any changes in family circumstances occur which have the potential to impact on the relationship between the school and a student and/or her family.

In the absence of any notification to the contrary (such as a court order), 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 in relation to matters involving their children's education at the school. Each parent will be given the opportunity to participate in school related activities, including teacher/parent interviews and can have access to school documentation relating to his or her child.

Where the College makes a decision regarding a child, it will as far as reasonable practicable:
- Be made in an unbiased manner, without favour to either parent;
- Take into account any court order in place concerning the child;
- Be based on what is considered to be in the best educational interests and safety and welfare of the child; and
- Take into account obligations imposed by legislation including privacy legislation.

Where parents cannot agree between themselves 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 parents to involve school staff in an attempt to resolve such issues;

Unless specifically authorised by a residential parent, children will not be permitted to leave school during the course of a school day.