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The British School of Gran Canaria

Separated Parents

Policy Document



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THE BRITISH SCHOOL OF GRAN CANARIA

SEPARATED PARENTS POLICY

1. Scope

At BSGC, we endeavour to promote the best interests of the child and to work in partnership with our parents where possible. This policy attempts to clarify expectations for separated parents and what can be expected from the school and its staff.

2. Parental Responsibility

In order for the school to safely and appropriately care for the children in our care we require, on a child's admission to the school, personal details of parents, such as name of both parents, address, contact details etc. 'Parental responsibility' for the child also needs to be identified. This is important because it ensures the school is clear as to who has the right to make decisions about a child's education and medical treatment. Similarly, specific information about adults authorised to collect children from school is required, and can be added and amended through the school's Parents Portal. All data must be maintained and updated, through the portal throughout the duration of the student's time at BSGC.

Parents, as identified on school admission, are entitled to share in the decisions made about their child and to be treated equally by the school. In particular, these entitlements include:

- Attendance at parent meetings/school events;
- Access to school records and copies of school reports, newsletters, invitations to school events, school photographs relating to their child and information about school trips.
- School Inspection questionnaires;
- Participation in any exclusion procedure.

This entitlement cannot be restricted without a specific court order. The school does not have the power to act simply on the request of one parent to restrict another.

The school will not seek to make judgements about individual circumstances but will treat both parents equally unless there is a specific ruling in existence. Staff will never pass judgement on either parent to the child.

Disagreements between parents must be resolved between the parents and cannot be resolved by the school.

BSGC maintains an open door policy for all parents, and teachers and/or head are available by appointment to discuss issues. The school is under no obligation to inform the primary caring parent

or the other parent of such meeting or contact with the school. Any such information will be shared at the discretion of the Head.

3. Court Orders

Court Orders defining parental rights and responsibilities are extremely important for the school and having copies of such papers is essential. Upon receipt of a court order restricting access to a parent, the school retains the right to consult its legal advisor before taking immediate action. The school is only obliged to comply with an order if it is properly notified, has received a copy of the order and only to the extent that it relates to the school. In the event that the school is not informed of the existence of such an order, neither parent will have rights superior to the other. Only a Court Order is deemed a valid document; a letter from a legal representative is not sufficient.

4. Shared Custody

Many separation agreements will involve shared custody. At start of school year, basic daily arrangements must be shared with the school by the parents and, once this information is collated, a screenshot of the final arrangements is sent to both parents.

Parents with shared custody, who wish make changes to set routines, must inform the school via email, copying the other parent. The school will assume that copying the other parent signifies previous agreement by both parties. For transport and collection arrangements, this information must be sent to oficina@bs-gc.net and received by Thursday of week before the change.

5. School communications

The school recognises that, while the parents of some pupils may be divorced or separated, both have a right to be informed of, and involved in their child's education. However, we expect that parents, whatever the nature of their separation, will do all they can to communicate with each other and share school information, for the benefit of their child. It is assumed that the parent with whom the child principally resides will keep the other parent informed.

However, we do recognise that communication between parents is not always possible. Therefore, the school will provide the same information and level of communication to both parents, unless otherwise stated in a Court Order.

The registration for Enrichment Activities takes place via the school's Parents' Portal. After registration, a screenshot of selected activities is sent to both parents for information. Additionally, parents can easily monitor enrichment activities, as well as other school information, via the BSGC App.

6. School Requested Authorisation

When parents are separated and unless otherwise stated in a Court Order, the school will ask both parents for authorisation for residential trips, activities that incur a cost and other school events where parental permission is sought.

7. Collecting a child from school

The school will release children to parents in accordance with arrangements notified to the school. If one parent seeks to remove the child from school in contravention of the usual arrangements, and the parent to whom the child would normally be released has not notified the school of any change, the following steps will be followed:

- Where a separated parent, who has parental responsibility and no court order in place, wishes to take the child during or at the end of the school day, the resident parent will be contacted in order to ensure that they are in agreement with the arrangement.
- If the parent, to whom the child would normally be released, agrees and sends a confirmatory email, the child will be released and the school records will reflect that the permission was granted.
- If the parent opposes the other parent's request to collect the child, then the school will advise that without a court order we cannot prevent this refusal of collection.
- In the event that the parent who would normally collect the child cannot be reached, the Head and/or staff member dealing with the issue will make a decision based upon all relevant information available.
- During any discussion or communication with parents, the child will be supervised by an appropriate member of school staff in a separate room/area.

In extreme circumstances, the *Policia Nacional* will be called, and their guidance and intervention sought.