

## **Guidance and Procedure – Separated Parents**

### **Role of the School**

College Town Primary acknowledges that children from families with separated parents, or parents who are undergoing separation, may experience traumatic changes during their time at school.

Therefore, we will strive to work with parents to uphold the welfare of their children. The school will not make judgements about individual circumstances and both parents will be treated equally. Children's welfare and safety are paramount.

The school has a legal duty to work alongside families and to involve all those with parental responsibility in their child's education. In addition, as stated in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' *"All staff should receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training (including online safety) at induction. The training should be regularly updated"*. Guidance also states the requirement of staff to be aware of any child who is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as domestic abuse (amongst other examples).

Any person with parental responsibility must be treated equally, unless there is a court order limiting an individual's exercise of parental responsibility.

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.

Any person with parental responsibility is entitled to:

- Receive information (e.g. pupil reports, notification of school events, etc.).
- Participate in activities (e.g. elections for parent governors).
- Give consent (e.g. for school trips).
- Be involved in meetings concerning the child (e.g. participate in an exclusion procedure, appeal against admission decisions, etc.).

The school will maintain an open door policy with both parents and the class teacher will be available to discuss any issues.

There is no requirement for the school to inform one parent about individual communications with the other parent.

Parents will be encouraged to resolve any issues around estrangement, contact and access to information without involving the school directly. Issues of estrangement are a civil/private law matter and the school cannot be involved in providing mediation, helping an estranged parent to communicate with their child/ren, or using the school premises for purposes of contact.

### **Role of Parents**

- Parents are responsible for informing the school when there is a change in family circumstances
- Where there is a court mandated restraining order in place, a copy needs to be retained by the school, which will put measures in place to ensure the child is not released to named individuals.
- It is the responsibility of the parents to ensure Leave of Absence request forms have been agreed together. The school reserves the right to request a letter of consent from the non- resident parent.

- Where there are issues over access to children, the parent with whom the child would usually reside should contact the school immediately with any changes to regular collection arrangements. The school expects parents to communicate with each other regarding these arrangements.
- Disagreements between parents must be resolved between the parents and cannot be resolved by the school.
- Parents are expected to liaise and communicate directly with each other in matters such as the ordering of school photographs, tickets for performances and other school events and trips.

### **Guidance and Procedure – Separated Parents (cont.)**

#### **Progress reports and pupil records**

Any parent has the right to receive progress reports and review pupil records of their child. If the parents are separated or divorced, progress reports will be sent to the parent at the address noted in the school's records specifying where the child resides, with the expectation that they will share the report with the other parent.

If the child is subject to a joint residence order and the school's records formally capture that the child resides at two addresses, then progress reports will be sent to both addresses and/or emailed to both parents.

The school will send copies of the progress reports to a parent with whom the child does not reside only if that parent submits a written request.

#### **Collecting a child from school**

Where a separated parent has parental responsibility and needs to take the child during or at the end of the school day, the resident parent will be contacted in order to ensure that parents are in agreement, providing a non-contact order is not in place.

The Headteacher will use discretion on the decision to allow a child to leave the premises with a non-resident parent.

In the case of an accident or emergency, the school will telephone the parent with whom the child mainly resides, or the priority number held on our system, or the parent with whom the child is residing on that day if we hold that information. Depending on severity of need and other constraints on staff time, we would endeavour to contact both parents.

In extreme circumstances, if there is a belief that a possible abduction of the child may occur or if the parent is disruptive, the police will be notified immediately.

#### **Obtaining consent**

If parental consent is required for outings or activities, the school will seek consent from the resident parent, unless the non-resident parent has requested to be asked for consent in all such cases.

In cases where the school considers it necessary to seek consent from both parents, it is possible that one gives consent and the other withholds it. In such cases, the school will assume that parental consent has not been given.

### **Name changes**

Parents are responsible for resolving potential conflicts about the change of a surname. Any legal documents relating to a change of name must be submitted to Bracknell Forest Council School Admissions team. College Town Primary holds no authority regarding the change of legal names on school records.

As a school we understand that issues around family breakdown and separation can be fraught. However, we expect parents to be courteous and respectful at all times in their dealings with the school. This information will be made available to parents and published on our school website.

School Year: 2024/2025