

Park End Primary School



Approved By: *D. Jackson*

Date: 18.11.2024

POLICY FOR WORKING WITH SEPARATED PARENTS

Review Date	Type of Review	Comments	Initials
Nov 2017		New Policy	LR
March 2019	Update	Updated in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2018 and GDPR regulations	LR
March 2020	Review	Reference to KCSIE Sept 2019	LR
March 2021	Review	Reference to KCSIE Sept 2020	LR
Dec 2021	Review	Reference to KCSIE Sept 2021	LR
Nov 2023	Update		LR
Oct 2024	Review	No changes	LR

Policy for Working with Separated Parents

Introduction:

1. This policy aims to set out how staff at Park End Primary School will work with families, in the best interests of children, in some specific, and potentially challenging circumstances; for example, after parents separate.
2. This policy has been developed with reference to the current legal guidance for school

For the purposes of education law, the Department for Education (DfE) considers a 'parent' to include:

- *all biological parents, whether they are married or not*
- *any person who, although not a biological parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person – this could be an adoptive parent, a step-parent, a guardian or other relative*
- *any person who, although they are not a biological parent and do not have parental responsibility, has care of a child or young person*

A person typically has care of a child or young person if the child lives with them either full or part time and they look after them, irrespective of what their biological or legal relationship is with the child.

[Understanding and dealing with issues relating to parental responsibility - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

Principles:

3. School must uphold the current legal situation that applies to that child. In matters where interpretation is unclear the decision of the headteacher is final.
4. A person with parental responsibility can make decisions about the child's upbringing and is entitled to information about the child. For example, they can give consent to their medical treatment and make decisions about their education. They also have the right to receive information about their health and education.
5. We expect all members of the school family to treat everyone with care, courtesy and respect. We see education as a partnership between parents/carers and school and will work to promote this view.

Aims:

6. Park End Primary aims to work in partnership with families. We aim to involve all those with parental responsibility, who have requested that they be involved in their child's education. (see Appendix A- Guidance on Parental Responsibility).

Evidence of parental responsibility

7. Parents of children joining the school are required to provide the school with their child's birth certificate, or other evidence of parental responsibility, for example a child arrangement order, to school. This helps the school ascertain who has parental responsibility. At this stage the school will discuss the contents of this policy if required.
8. Separated parents i.e. those with parental responsibility who do not live with the child, are required to inform the school and to return a form (Appendix B) indicating ways in which they would like to be kept informed.
9. See Appendix A for guidance upon parental responsibility.

Working with separated parents:

10. Park End Primary School accept that the partnership between school and home continues even when family circumstances change, for example, when relationships between parents break down.
11. It is generally in the best interests of the child if parents and schools can work together.
12. Below is a list of the ways in which we will work with separated parents - those who have parental responsibility but who do not live with the child, to continue to involve them in their child's education.

Separated parents are invited to open an account on parent pay.

Newsletters – sent via parent pay

Separate appointments offered for parent's evenings at mutually convenient times.

Additional copies of school reports provided in the post.

13. Under the [Education and Inspections Act 2006](#), governing bodies of maintained schools must also have regard to any views expressed by parents of registered pupils.
14. Under the [Education \(Pupil Information\) \(England\) Regulations 2005](#), all parents can also receive information about the child, even though the school's main contact is likely to be the parent with whom the child lives on school days.

Safeguarding

15. It is the responsibility of everyone working with a child to safeguard and promote the welfare of that child (Keeping children safe in education DFE). Children's welfare and safety are paramount.

16. Where there are issues over access to children, the parent with whom the child resides should contact the school immediately.
17. Where there is a court restraining order in place, the school will put in place measures to ensure the child is not released to individual named on the court restraining order. A copy of the restraining order should be brought to school and placed in the child's confidential file.
18. Where a separated parent has parental responsibility and there is no court order in place, the school has no option but to allow the child home with that parent. However, if it was felt that there was any safeguarding or child protection concerns, the head teacher can use their discretion to prevent access to the child and seek further clarification and advice.
19. The welfare of the child is at the heart of all we do and the head teacher and governors of Park End Primary School maintain the right to discontinue any of the above if it is deemed to be significantly against the child's best interests.
20. The school will remain impartial with parents at all times.
21. The school will not get involved in parental disputes by providing any information to either party or to their legal representatives unless ordered to by a Court of Law. Where there are any safeguarding concerns, the safeguarding and child protection arrangements will apply in the normal way.

National Policies, Guidance and Documentation

- **Understanding and dealing with issues related to parental responsibility: guide for schools and local authorities (DFE)**
This document sets out guidance for local authorities and schools dealing with adults who have legal rights and responsibilities for children at their school.
- **Keeping Children Safe in Education
Statutory Guidance for schools and colleges (DFE)**
This document sets out the responsibilities placed on schools and colleges to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- **Working together to safeguard children (DFE) July 2018**
This document applies to organisations and professionals who provide services to children.

Guidance on Parental Responsibility

This guidance follows [Understanding and dealing with issues relating to parental responsibility - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

For the purposes of education law, the Department for Education (DfE) considers a 'parent' to include:

- *all biological parents, whether they are married or not*
- *any person who, although not a biological parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person – this could be an adoptive parent, a step-parent, a guardian or other relative*
- *any person who, although they are not a biological parent and do not have parental responsibility, has care of a child or young person*

A person typically has care of a child or young person if the child lives with them either full or part time and they look after them, irrespective of what their biological or legal relationship is with the child.

1. In order to help us to look after your children whilst they are in our care, we are required to ask you to provide certain information, such as name of parents, address, contact details etc. We are also required to ask who has Parental Responsibility for your child. This is important because it allows us to be sure who has the right to make decisions about your child's education and medical treatment. However, we are aware that this is a very specific legal term and many of you may be unaware of how it is applied. This guidance aims to provide you with an explanation of who has parental responsibility so that you are able to provide us with accurate information.
2. **All mothers automatically have Parental Responsibility.**
3. If a child's parents were married at the time of the birth, both parents automatically have Parental Responsibility.
4. For children born from the 1st December 2003, (all children currently attending Park End Primary School), where the father's name is on the birth certificate, the father and mother will both have Parental Responsibility.
5. If the parents have not been married and the father is not named on the birth certificate, fathers are required to officially obtain Parental Responsibility.

They can do this

- by registering the child's birth jointly with the mother (their name will then be on the birth certificate)
- by subsequently marrying the child's mother

- through a 'parental responsibility agreement' between him and the child's mother that is registered with the court
 - by obtaining a [court order](#) for parental responsibility
6. Parental Responsibility cannot be lost, except by legal adoption, although it does not guarantee contact.
 7. People other than biological parents can be granted parental responsibility through a child arrangements order, or by being asked to be a legal guardian of a child.
 8. **If you would like further guidance, there is clear information on the government website www.direct.gov.uk**



Form for separated parents when the child is not living with you as a main residence.

Evidence of parental responsibility will be sought by school.

Name of Child:

Name of Parent:

Address:.....

.....

.....

Telephone number/s:

Email:

Please confirm the information you would like to receive:
Appointments offered for parents' evenings at appropriate times.

Additional copies of end of year reports.

Other – Please state

Please circle the best way to send the above information to you:

Via your child:

By email

By post

By text

Signed Date.....

Name.....

To be completed by School - Evidence Check:

Type of evidence

Birth Certificate Date seen.....

Child arrangement order Date seen.....

Signed (school).....

Name