



Clifton High School

co-educational nursery pre-school to sixth form

Policy applies from EYFS to Sixth Form	Divorced and Separated Parents
Date policy updated	10.12.2020
Date Policy to be reviewed	10.11.2021 or earlier to reflect any changes in legislation
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Clifton High School is committed to child protection and safeguarding children and young people and expects all staff, visitors and volunteers to share this commitment.

Rationale and legal position

Research and experience have shown that separated parents can become particularly estranged, especially during the initial stages of the split. This is very often traumatic for those children concerned. Inevitably, these personal family problems have an impact on the schools the children attend. This policy is an attempt to minimise this impact and clarify to all parties what is expected from separated parents and what can be expected from Clifton High School and its staff.

The definition of a parent for school purposes is much wider than for any other situation. The Education Act 1996 defines a parent as

- All-natural parents, including those that are not married
- Any person who has parental responsibility but is not a natural parent e.g. a legally appointed guardian or the Local Authority named in a Care Order
- Any person who has care of a child i.e. a person with whom the child resides and who looks after the child irrespective of the relationship

Parents, as defined above, are entitled to share in the decisions made about their child and are treated equally by schools. These entitlements include

- Completion of Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) and School based questionnaires
- Participate in any exclusion procedure
- Attend parent meetings and school events
- Have access to School records and receive copies of School reports, newsletters, invitations to School events, school photographs relating to their child and information about educational visits.

The Council of Governors recognise that while the parents of some pupils may be separated or divorced, they are entitled to the above and this entitlement cannot be restricted without a specific court order. The School does not have the power to act on the request of one parent to restrict another.

Parent contract, fees and bursaries

In accordance with the School's Admissions Policy, the signatures of both Parents are usually required on the Acceptance Form when an offer of a School place is accepted. Together with the School, both Parents are independently party to, and bound by, the terms and conditions of the Parent Contract.

Parent Contract terms and conditions continue to apply jointly to all parties, unless and until a Court Order stipulates otherwise.

In the majority of cases, the School will continue to issue a single invoice on a termly basis for each pupil's fees, and the School expects Parents whose relationship has broken down to resolve by agreement how these fees will be settled. The School is willing and able to issue duplicate invoices to both parents, or to allocate specific percentages, or specific elements of the fees, to each Parent separately. However, for the avoidance of doubt, both Parents remain jointly and severally liable for all School fees and charges. The School will not normally enter into any agreement that allows one or other Parent to opt out. If fees are overdue, the School reserves the right to contact both Parents as necessary.

All scholarships, School Assisted Places and Bursary Awards are subject to the Conditions of Scholarship, School Assisted Place and Bursary Awards. Where awards are subject to means-testing, the financial circumstances of both Parents will be considered. The School will not normally accept applications for means-tested awards based on the circumstances of one Parent alone, even if it is custom and practice for that Parent to settle fees.

Information provided to the School

The information provided to the School when each pupil is admitted detailing whether both parents have parental responsibility for the pupil will be presumed to be correct unless a court order or original birth certificate proving otherwise is provided to the School. Similarly, the information provided on all addresses where the child resides are presumed to be correct unless a court order proving otherwise is provided to the School.

It is the responsibility of the parents to inform the School when there is a change in the family's circumstances. The School acknowledges that relationships can break down suddenly or traumatically, even for a temporary period. Clifton High School's position is not to attribute blame but to support the pupil/pupils and to ensure their safety. If there is an emergency and you have safety concerns for your child, please contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately.

Clifton High School will need to have written confirmation and may need to meet with both parents to discuss the arrangements for the care of their child/children. To provide this information in writing, please complete the form in Appendix A and return to school signed by all those with parental responsibility.

Once on roll, Clifton High School must be kept up to date with contact details including current address, telephone number and arrangements for collecting their child/children including in emergencies. A minimum of two emergency contacts should be given but three is preferable in this situation. Changes can be made through Insight, which is accessible through the Parent Portal on the school website.

Court Orders

A copy of any existing court order should be provided to the School on admission. The School will follow the court order fully and will not allow any parent to overrule its contents. If there is a change in the court order, the School should be given a copy straight away so that it can be followed.

Communication with Parents

Clifton High School wishes to promote the best interests of the pupils, working in partnership with both parents, unless directed by a court order. If the School is not informed of such action, neither parent will have rights superior to the other.

Parents have access to the Secure Parent Area on the Clifton High School website. This includes the weekly parent bulletin as well as information on all the main events within School, including productions, sports days, parents' evenings, educational visits, etc. Parents are expected to share with each other as and when appropriate, items given directly to a pupil such as revision lists for examinations, textbooks and other educational resources. These are also published on the school website in the Secure Parent Area so a second copy can be obtained.

Clifton High School expects that parents should liaise and communicate directly with each other in matters such as the ordering of school photographs, tickets for performances and other instances.

Parents have access to the Parent Portal providing online access to Insight allowing parents to view individually school report, attendance, behaviour, SOCS sport, assessment and subject information.

Clifton High School expects that all parents, whatever the nature of their separation, will do all they can to communicate with each other and share information from and for the School, for the benefit of their child/children. However, if this causes difficulty and has a negative impact on the pupil and their learning, once parents and the School agree, direct letters and emails can be sent to both parents.

Meetings with staff

During the course of the academic year, it may be necessary for meetings with parents relating to their child/children. Both parents will always be invited to attend such meetings. The school will only consider separate appointments to discuss the same information if there is a court order in place restricting parents attending the same appointment.

Parents' evenings

Clifton High School will only produce one set of parents' evening appointments for each individual pupil, where all parents are welcome. We expect parents to communicate with each other regarding these arrangements and appointment times issued to both parents.

For Nursery to Year 6 parents, the School will arrange separate appointments if there is a court order in place restricting parents attending together and where the school has agreed to hold separate appointments due to known special circumstances.

In Years 7 - 11, the School will arrange separate appointments only if there is a court order in place restricting parents attending together.

Progress reports

Parents will have individual access to school reports in Insight through the Parent Portal on the school website. The exception to this will be if a court order states that a parent has sole custody.

Pupil records

Both parents have the right to access the records of their child/children. The exception to this will be if a court order states that a parent has sole custody.

Absences from school

The parent with whom the child is residing should notify the school, by 8.30 am that day, of the pupils' absence. The school will not notify the other parent of the absence as it expects the parent who has contacted the School to do so as necessary.

If one parent seeks to remove a pupil from school, and the other parent with responsibility for the pupil has not consented, the Head of School will meet with the parent seeking to remove the pupil. 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.

On-going disagreements between parents

It is the responsibility of the parents to inform the School when there is a change in the family's circumstances. In the event that the parents are unable to agree with one another on decisions regarding their child's educational programme, including, but not limited to, set placement, participation in extra-curricular activities, future schooling and consent to evaluation and services, the School will arrange a meeting with both parents (either together or separately). An attempt to resolve the situation and will be made but if it cannot be resolved their child's future at the School will need to be addressed.

Coronavirus (COVID-19), lockdown and separated parents

The NSPCC website provides clear guidance on what the Government has said, for families where parents have separated along with additional support for both children and parents during these difficult times.

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/support-for-parents/separation-and-divorce/>

Useful websites

<https://www.cafcass.gov.uk/>

https://www.cafcass.gov.uk/media/2843/separated_parents_information_programme.pdf

<http://www.separatedfamilies.info/>

<http://www.helpguide.org/articles/family-divorce/co-parenting-tips-for-divorced-parents.htm>



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Pupil Information to include Family Circumstances

This information must be as accurate as possible at the time of completion to ensure the School when operating in *loco parentis* can provide the best possible care for your child/children and for clarity of communication channels between all with parental responsibility.

Name of Pupil:		Year and Registration:	
Parental Responsibility: Please provide full details of those with parental responsibility	Parent A:		
	Parent B:		
Primary Residence of Pupil: Full Address			
Parent Residing at this Primary Residence:	Full Name:		
	Contact Telephone Number:		
	Email Address:		
Other(s) residing at this Primary Residence without parental responsibility:	Full Name:		
	Contact Telephone Number:		
	Email Address:		
Secondary Residence of Pupil: Full Address			
Parent Residing at Secondary Residence without parental responsibility:	Full Name:		
	Contact Telephone Number:		
	Email Address:		
Other(s) residing at this Primary Residence without parental responsibility:	Full Name:		
	Contact Telephone Number:		

	Email Address:

Residency Arrangements:		Please provide for each day of the week and weekend full details. Also in the week name of parent responsible for drop off and collection from School.						
Parent A/Parent B	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	
Dropping off								
Collecting								
Is there a Court Order in place?		Yes		If yes, please provide details and a copy of the Court Order arrangements to the School.				
		No						
Correspondence from School: All with parental responsibility will receive the same communications from the School unless indicated otherwise.		Please tick if you want to receive any of the following.		Parent A		Parent B		
				Yes	No	Yes	No	
		Email						
		School Comms						
Letters								
Parents Evening:		The expectation is that all those with parental responsibility attend Parents' Evening together with one set of appointments unless Clifton High School holds a copy of a Court order that states otherwise. By signing this form, you are agreeing that you have read and understood the details set out in the Divorced and Separated Parents Policy regarding attendance at your child's Parents' Evening.						
Additional information that would be helpful to the School:								

Signature of those with parental responsibility:

Signature of Parent A _____

Name of Parent A (please print) _____

Date: _____

Signature of Parent B _____

Name Parent B (please print) _____

Date: _____