The Slough and East Berkshire C. of E.

Multi Academy Trust

Colnbrook C. of E. Primary School

Separated Parents Procedure

Owner:	SLT
Date Reviewed:	March 2025
Date Procedure to be reviewed:	March 2027

"Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go." **Joshua 1:9**

Our Vision Statement

At Colnbrook we want to grow young people who believe in themselves so they are confident and courageous and not discouraged from their path. They are resilient when faced with challenge. We want our pupils to believe in each other and to feel supported; never alone on their journey.

Our pupils will have the strength of character to set themselves aspirational goals in learning and life. They will achieve their best and create their own inspirational story and memories.

These values are at the heart of everything we do here at Colnbrook Church of England Primary School. They reflect the qualities that staff and governors want the children to develop and display in all that they do.

Aspiration, Resilience, Respect, Responsibility, Community, Compassion.

This policy is designed to ensure effective contact and liaison with separated families to ensure the best outcomes for the family are achieved in line with our Christian ethos.

Introduction
The policy aims to demonstrate how staff at Colnbrook C of E Primary School will continue to work with families, in the best interests of children, after parents separate. Schools have a legal duty to work in partnership with families and to involve all those with parental responsibility in their child's education (see Appendix Guidance on Parental Responsibility). Schools must treat all parents equally, **unless a court order limits an individual's exercise of parental responsibility. (DfE guidance).**
This obligation on schools continues even when family circumstances change, for example, relationships between parents break down. It is generally in the best interest of children if parents and schools can work together.

Everyone who has parental responsibility has a right to receive information about the child. This is the case whether they live with the child or not. There is no requirement to inform one parent about communications with the other parent.

Rights of those with parental responsibility
The DfE's guidance on parental responsibilities, referred to above, explains that individuals who have parental responsibility for a child have the right to:

- receive information, such as pupil reports
- participate in activities, for example voting in elections for parent governors
- be informed about meetings involving the child; for example, parent consultation evenings and a governors' meeting on the child's exclusion
- timely information about upcoming events provided
- newsletters sent electronically or by post to non-residential parents

Guidance for Headteachers on managing parental responsibility
The DfE's guidance also provides advice for Headteachers, who should:

- ask parents or guardians for the names and addresses of all parents when they register a pupil
- ensure that names and addresses of all parents, where known, are included in the admission register and also in pupil records and are available to the pupil's teachers
- ensure that names and addresses of all parents are forwarded to any school to which the pupil moves
- ensure that details of court orders are noted in a pupil's record
- where the address of a non-resident parent is unknown, tell the resident parent that the non-resident parent is entitled to be involved in their child's education and ask that information is passed on to them.

Name changes for child/ren
There must be the consent of both parents after divorce or separation for a change in name of a child or children. A separated parent who has parental responsibility but no longer lives with the child may refuse to consent to changing the child's surname. In such a case the parent wishing to change the child's name would need to apply to the courts for permission to do so. Before registering a change of name, schools need to ensure all those with parental responsibility have consented.

What the schools expect from parents/carers
As part of the Induction Pack, when children start school, all parents will receive a copy of this policy. Parents of children joining the school are asked to bring their child's birth certificate. This ensures children are joining the correct year group and also helps the school ascertain who has Parental Responsibility.

Separated parents are required to inform the school and to return a form (Appendix B) indicating ways in which they would like to be kept informed. Children's welfare and safety are paramount and, where there are issues over access to children, the parent with whom the child resides should contact the school immediately.

Where there is a court restraining order in place, a copy needs to be retained by the school, which will put in place measures to ensure the child is not released to a named individual.
Where an absent parent has parental responsibility and there is no court order in place, the school is required to allow the child home with them; however the Headteacher is able to use discretion and would seek clarification if it was felt there was a child protection issue.
Parents who have joint custody of the child/ren are requested to keep the school informed, in writing, of any disputes they have with each other regarding the collection of children.
Leave of absence request forms signed by one parent must be accompanied by a letter of consent from the other parent.

We will not send text messages to absent parents, which give information on cancelled activities and reminders unless we are asked in writing to do so.
The welfare of the child is at the heart of all we do and the Headteacher and Governors maintain the right to discontinue any of the above if it is deemed to be significantly against the child's best interests. Court orders may also alter the position the school adopts

On answering the telephone
If asked if a child/ren are registered in the school, (in the case of a known absent parent or parent the school staff has never met) the response will be that we cannot disclose information about children over the phone. If you would like to request information please write to the school. You will be asked to provide photographic proof of your identity (e.g. passport, driving licence) and proof of your relationship to the child/ren. Please also include a copy of one of the following documents:

- Child's Birth Certificate
- Marriage Certificate
- Parental Responsibility Agreement.

On receipt of these documents, we will send you (Appendix B). This procedure should be visible in the school office to ensure the correct information is given.

If the children are not in the school we will give the same answer as above. If we have met the parent, who is now no longer living with the family and he/she requests information, we ask them to complete the form in Appendix B.

In person
If a parent unknown to the school arrives at the school unannounced, asking for confirmation that children are at the school, we would say we cannot confirm information that children are in the school without documents proving the identity of the person asking. We would ask them to put their request in writing to the school together with photographic evidence (e.g. passport, driving licence) of their identity. The resident parent may be informed of the absent parent contacting the school but there is no obligation to do so.

Appendix A - Working with separated parents

Guidance on Parental Responsibility

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 leaflet aims to provide you with an explanation of who has parental responsibility so that you are able to provide us with accurate information.

Points to note:

- All mothers automatically have Parental Responsibility.
- If a child's parents were married at the time of the birth, both parents automatically have Parental Responsibility.
- For children born from the 1st December 2003 where the father's name is on the birth certificate, the father and mother will both have Parental Responsibility.
- In all other cases, fathers are required to officially obtain Parental Responsibility.
- Parental Responsibility cannot be lost, except by legal adoption, although it does not guarantee contact.

Appendix B - Working with separated parents

At Colnbrook C of E Primary School we are committed to working with families and understand the importance of continuing the relationship between school and parents who do not live with their child.
Please complete the form below and return to the school office indicating how you would like to be kept informed about your child's education.

Name of Parent:	
Name of Child/Children:	
Address:	
Telephone Number/s:	
Email Address:	

Please select the best way to send information to you:

☐ Via your child

☐ By Teachers2Parents

☐ By post

Please tick the information you would like to receive:

☐ Weekly newsletter

☐ Information about upcoming events/trips

☐ Parents' Evenings

☐ Additional copies of end of year reports

☐ Order form for photos