

North Baddesley Junior School

Operational Document

Separated Parents



The policy for working with separated parents links closely to other school policies and should be read in conjunction with these. The principles used have been derived from the North Baddesley Infant School Separated Parent policy to ensure a consistent approach but in a different setting for both schools.

The policy for working with separated parents supports the linked policies by:

- recognising that many of the pupils in its care will be members of families where parents have separated before they come to the school or who may go through changes in family circumstances while they are pupils here
- ensuring the school continues to work with families, in the best interests of children, after parents separate
- recognising 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 A Guidance on Parental Responsibility*) and that this obligation on schools continues even when family circumstances change, for example, relationships between parents break down
- Recognising it is generally in the best interest of children if parents and schools can work together
- ensuring children's welfare and safety are paramount
- ensuring emotional support is available to all pupils and recommended if it is felt to be appropriate
- not passing judgements about individual circumstances
- encouraging parents to tell us at an early stage if there is a change in family circumstances
- informing staff of such changes whenever possible, so that suitable support can be offered whilst recognising the sensitivity of some situations and maintaining the appropriate level of confidentiality
- assuming that parents will communicate with each other and ensure that the child's education and welfare is paramount

Procedures

Many of the steps below may have been taken on entry to the infant school, but the junior school is a separate setting and so it cannot be assumed that these steps do not have to be repeated.

- Parents of children joining the school are asked to bring in their child's birth certificate. This ensures children are joining the correct year group and also helps the school ascertain who has parental responsibility.
- The parent with residency is required to provide details of all persons with parental responsibility on the child's data sheet.
- In cases where only one parent has signed the acceptance of a place and we hold no details of other persons with parental responsibility, the other parent will not automatically be consulted or receive information relating to their son/daughter.
- Should the un-named parent seek information or access to his/her child, the school will always inform the main carer of this and ensure no court order is in place preventing this. For the avoidance of doubt, we will seek written confirmation from the main carer. Proof of identity of the non-resident parent will always be required in these cases.
- Day to day information will normally be passed via the parent with residency.
- The school will provide additional copies of information indicated below to non resident parents who have requested this by completing the form attached as Appendix B:
 - the option of text messages
 - a copy of reports of progress and attainment

- the option of appointments for parent consultation evenings at mutually convenient and appropriate times. Please note, where possible we would hope that separated parents would try to attend together. We appreciate this may not be possible in certain circumstances and would therefore attempt to offer an additional appointment where feasible.
- Copies of any legal documentation in place for the child or family should be submitted to the school. If we do not have sight of documentation, it cannot be assumed that the school will know of any orders in place or be able to put in place what the order relates to.
- Where there is a court restraining order in place, the school will put measures in place to ensure the child is not released to a named individual.
- Where there are issues over access to children, the parent with whom the child resides should contact the school immediately.
- Where a separated 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 from the resident parent before allowing the child to leave the premises.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The school will review this policy annually and assess its implementation and effectiveness.

Note that the school website lists the school calendar, permission letters for trips, school bulletins (Contact). This is the best way to keep in touch with day to day events in the school. We do not include photographs of any children unless we have permission to do so and we do not refer to children by their full names, only first names.

Working with separated parents - Appendix A

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 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.

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.

(If you would like further guidance, there is clear information on the government website <https://www.gov.uk/parental-rights-responsibilities/who-has-parental-responsibility>)

Working with separated parents - Appendix B



At North Baddesley Junior 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: **(Please clearly write your email address below ensuring upper and lower case letters, hyphens and underscores are clearly distinguished)**

Please indicate the best way to send information to you:

| | |
|----------|----------------------------------|
| By email | Via your child / resident parent |
|----------|----------------------------------|

Please tick the information you would like to receive:

| | |
|---|--|
| Text messages (for day to day information and reminders only) | |
| A copy of reports of progress and attainment | |
| The option of appointments for parent consultation evenings at an appropriate mutually convenient time. | |