

Callands Community Primary School



Separated Parents Policy

September 2017

At Callands, we recognise that while some parents may be divorced or separated, both have a right to be informed of, and involved in, their child's educational progress.

Parental Responsibility

In order to help us to look after children whilst they are in our care, staff are required during the admission process to ask parents to provide certain information, such as name of both parents, address, contact details etc. They are also required to ask who has Parental Responsibility for the child. This is important because it allows the school to be sure who has the right to make decisions about a child's education and medical treatment. However, this is a very specific legal term and many parents may be unaware of how it is applied:

- ☐ 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.
- ☐ The information provided to school when the pupil was enrolled, detailing whether both parents have parental responsibility, will be presumed to be correct unless a court order or original birth certificate proving otherwise is provided to the school.
- ☐ It is the responsibility of parents to inform the school when there is a change in the family's circumstances. We need to be kept up to date with contact details, arrangements for collecting children and emergencies.

Parents as defined above are entitled to share in the decisions that are made about their child and to be treated equally by schools. In particular, these entitlements include:

- ☐ Appeal against admission decisions;
- ☐ Ofsted & school based questionnaires;
- ☐ Attendance at parent meetings/school events;
- ☐ Access to school records and copies of school reports, invitations to school events and celebrations, school photographs relating to their child and information about school trips.
- ☐ Participation in any exclusion procedure;

This entitlement cannot be restricted without a specific court order. The school does not have the power to act simply on the request of one parent to restrict another.

The school will not seek to make judgements about individual circumstances but will treat both parents equally unless there is a specific ruling in existence. Staff will never pass judgement on either parent to the child.

We will maintain our open door policy with all parents. Where an appointment is needed, the class teacher, Senior Leaders or Head Teacher will be available by appointment to discuss any issues. The school is under no obligation to inform the resident parent of the absent parent contacting the school. Any such information will be given at the discretion of the Head Teacher.

Court Orders

Upon receipt of any court order restricting access to a parent, the school retains the right to consult the Local Authority before taking immediate action. The school is only obliged to comply with an order if it is properly notified and has received a copy for its files, and only to the extent that it relates to the school. 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. Only a Court Order stating the arrangements is deemed to be valid; a letter from a solicitor is not sufficient.

School Communications

The school recognises that, while the parents of some pupils may be divorced or separated, both have a right to be informed of, and involved in, their child's education. However, we expect that 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. It is assumed that the parent with whom the child principally resides will keep the other parent informed.

We would not expect to send emergency text messages to absent parents, which give information on cancelled activities and reminders.

□ All diary dates for upcoming events are on the school newsletters on the Parents tab on the website, and copies of any letters are also on there too.

Please visit <http://www.callands.warrington.dbprimary.com>

□ Paper letters, usually for clubs and trips, are sent home with children and we expect parents to communicate these messages to each other as and when appropriate and keep informed of current events via the school newsletter which frequently states key dates for events.

However, any requests for paper copies of letters/policies or other by a non-resident parent with PR can be made in person to the office or in writing.

□ We would not expect to send emergency text messages to absent parents, which give information on cancelled activities and reminders.

□ In the instance of first aid issues, the parent with whom the child predominantly resides, will be informed of a head bump via text and letter brought home with the child and in the case of an emergency, staff will contact family members which we have details on the child's contact information sheet.

However, if a parent wants to be informed of any first aid incidents where the child has sustained an injury or needed medical attention and they are not a named contact on our records, a request for this should be made in writing.

□ School Money –the online facility to pay for clubs and trips etc require a code to log in– we expect the resident parent to communicate this code to the other parent.

□ We will hold parents' evening twice a year, where both parents are welcome and we expect parents to communicate with each other regarding these arrangements. The parents do not have to attend this appointment together.

□ We expect parents to liaise and communicate directly with each other in matters such as the text invitation to Celebration Assembly/ Star of the Week assembly, the ordering of school photographs; tickets for performances and other instances.

□ Both parents are entitled to receive progress reports and review their child's pupil records. Progress reports will be sent to the parent with whom the child resides with the expectation that he/she will share the report with the other parent. The school will post or email copies of progress reports to the non-custodial parent if a request is submitted.

□ Should an un-named parent seek information or access to his/her child, the school will always inform the main carer of this to check Parental Responsibility and ensure no court order is in place. 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.

Disagreements between parents must be resolved between the parents and cannot be resolved by the school or local authority.

Collecting a child from school

The school will release children to parents in accordance with arrangements notified to the school and following our End of Day Procedures.

If one parent seeks to remove the child from school in contravention of the usual arrangements and the parent to whom the child would normally be released has not notified the school of any change the following steps will be followed:

Where a separated parent, who has parental responsibility and no court order in place, wishes to take the child during or at the end of the school day, the resident parent will be contacted in order to ensure that they are in agreement with the arrangement. If the parent to whom the child would normally be released agrees, the child may be released and the records will reflect that the permission was granted orally. If the parent opposes the other parent wanting to take the child from the school, we **will advise that without a court order, we cannot prevent them from doing so.**

In the event that the parent to whom the child would normally be released to cannot be reached, the Head Teacher or staff member dealing with the issue will make a decision based upon all relevant information available to him/her.

During any discussion or communication with parents, the child will be supervised by an appropriate member of school staff.

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.