



## Parents with responsibility resident at different addresses

### Policy Details:

**Reviewed:** March 2023

**Next review:** March 2025

### Policy history:

March 2023	Policy Reviewed	Steph Watson, Acting Principal
January 2021	Policy updated using <a href="#">The Key for School Leaders</a>	James Bancroft, Principal
April 2018	Policy written using Shavington Academy example	James Bancroft, Principal

This policy was reviewed at the Local Advisory Board Spring2 2023 meeting.



## Parents with responsibility resident at different addresses Policy

This policy explains our processes in relation to the most frequent scenarios regarding separated parents. Other situations may need to be considered as they arise.

### Who is a parent?

For the purposes of education law, parents include:

- All biological parents, whether they're married or not
- Any person who has parental responsibility for a child or young person, even if they're not biologically related, e.g. adoptive parents, step-parents or guardians
- Any person who has care of a child or young person but is not a biological parent and does not have parental responsibility – usually the person with whom the child lives, even if they do not have legal responsibility, e.g. a foster carer.

For further information: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/dealing-with-issues-relating-to-parental-responsibility/understanding-and-dealing-with-issues-relating-to-parental-responsibility](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dealing-with-issues-relating-to-parental-responsibility/understanding-and-dealing-with-issues-relating-to-parental-responsibility)

### Recording information

In line with its data protection (GDPR) policy, information regarding separated parents and people with parental responsibility will be recorded in the school's data management information system (Arbor).

We will be mindful of protecting the private data of each parent and avoid inadvertent disclosure.

### When parents separate

Parental Separation can be traumatic for children, and can provide organisational challenges for them that they did not previously have to deal with. At Wistaston Church Lane Academy, our role is to support each child, so that they can continue to enjoy school and achieve their potential. We will support the child as much as we can so that the child feels safe and supported at school.

Pupils and schools can sometimes be caught in the middle of a parental separation, and can be expected to take sides, or be assumed to have taken sides. From the school's perspective, it is important to us that we continue to inform all individuals with parental responsibility. It is not our role to offer advice, in these circumstances, nor to be involved in resolving issues between parents.

The school will not attempt to intervene in any situation and will not attempt to ask parents to agree unless safeguarding issue is identified. We would recommend to parents that independent legal advice should be sought, or a mediator used.

It may be a good idea to hold a meeting with parents/important adults in a child's life so that we can:

- Centre the child's needs, and establish clear expectations about supporting them through school
- Understand the important relationships in the child's life (so we can better provide support)
- Clarify which parents want to be contacted about which things

In the best interests of the child, the school needs to be notified when parents separate. This policy may be sent to both parties, once we are informed.

Parents are requested to let school know of any arrangement that may present organisational challenges for their child.



## **Conduct**

We understand that issues around family breakdown and separation can be fraught. However, we expect parents to be courteous and respectful at all times in their dealings with school.

## **Rights of separated parents**

Each person with parental responsibility for a child is entitled to:

- Receive information about their child
- Request to see their child's educational record
- Participate in statutory activities (like parent governor elections)
- Be informed about meetings involving their child (such as parents evenings or an exclusions hearing)
- Be asked to give consent (for things like school trips or sharing photos of the child on the school website)
- Withdraw the child from religious education and collective worship and non-statutory aspects of Relationships, Sex and Health Education
- Initiate or be involved in the procedure for obtaining a statement of special educational needs for the child.

## **Consent for school activities and visits**

For activities and outings, the DfE says that school should seek consent from the resident parent (the parent the child lives with the majority of the time; if a child lives with each parent for an equal amount of time, both parents would count as resident parents).

If parents can't agree on whether to consent to something school will treat the situation as consent having not been given.

## **Admissions**

For admission into Reception, parents should seek advice from Cheshire East regarding choosing school for your child. Once a place is offered school will use its admissions form to find information regarding the people with parental responsibility for the pupil.

For in-year admissions an application only needs to be made by one parent, usually the resident parent. Separated parents are encouraged to consult with Cheshire East before making the application. Once a child is registered at the school the detail in this policy comes into action.

Parents should record information on the admissions form accurately, including details of separated parents. It is parents' responsibility to complete the form accurately.

## **Website/Social Media Consent**

Only one parent, usually the resident parent, is required to give consent for a child's image to be used on social media or the school website. If one parent consents but another one does not give consent, the school will not use the child's image.

## **Parents' rights**

Conflicts between parents don't change legal rights. We can only prevent a parent exercising their rights if:



- There's a court order relating to the child that requires this
- A change of circumstances means someone no longer has parental responsibility (for instance, if the child's mother and step-father divorce, the step-father may lose parental responsibility unless there's an official agreement that says otherwise).

The school requires copies of any relevant court orders, and will amend its procedure to take account of them. The school is not able to act on a verbal instruction relating to court orders, from either parent.

### **Attendance at school events, including parents' evenings**

If capacity restrictions mean we can only provide two tickets per child to a school event we encourage separated parents to come to a decision about how they'll manage these types of situations themselves. If we are made aware of difficulties school will attempt to support families in these situations but we cannot guarantee additional tickets.

Usually we offer one appointment per child at parents' evenings so we ask separated parents to try to come to an arrangement in the first instance. If we are made aware of difficulties we will attempt to support families in these situations but we cannot guarantee additional appointments or phone calls.

### **Changing a surname**

A change of a child's name is private law and should be resolved between parents. The school will not change a child's surname in its records without written evidence that consent has been given by both parents and/or anyone who has parental responsibility.

### **Collecting children**

If a parent with parental responsibility arrives to collect a child, the school is not able to refuse the parents' right to take their child, unless relevant court orders have been provided to the contrary.

The school should be informed immediately if a parent with parental responsibility becomes absent. In this instance, we would contact the substantive parent before allowing a child to leave the premises with an absent parent.

### **Home Practice and Remote Learning**

All parents should prioritise home practice and remote learning when their child is resident with them and that parent is responsible for engaging with the work. We are able to make adjustments in school, in relation to handing in homework, should a child find that they have left their work with one parent, etc.

### **Emergencies**

We will contact emergency contacts in the order that they are recorded on our data management information system. This means that we will usually contact the parent with whom the child mainly resides first.