



Barley Fields Primary School

Working with Separated Parents Policy

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Prepared by:	Head Teacher
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Introduction

At Barley Fields we are committed to working respectfully and fairly with all adults who share parental responsibility, regardless of family arrangements. We want to ensure your child feels safe, supported and knows we are on their side.

Who Is Considered a “Parent” at School?

In education law, the term “parent” includes more than just a biological parent. It covers:

- Any person who has parental responsibility for the child
- Any person who has care of the child (i.e. lives with and looks after them)
- Adoptive parents, guardians, or others with legal responsibility

What You Can Expect from Us

We aim to:

- Treat all persons with parental responsibility equally
- Share school reports, newsletters, invitations, and information with both parents (unless we have a court order saying otherwise)
- Respect boundaries: we won’t take sides in personal disputes
- Request a copy of any relevant court orders, so we understand who can do what (for example, who has the right to collect the child)
- Maintain confidentiality, while ensuring the child’s welfare is always the priority

What We Ask of Separated Parents / Co-parents

To support a smooth experience for your child, we encourage all parents to:

- Communicate with us: Let us know about any changes in family arrangements or court orders
- Decide among yourselves (where possible) who will be the main contact for day-to-day communications
- Share contact details (address, phone, email) and update the school if these change
- Be civil and avoid conflict in or around school premises
- Respect that the school cannot act as arbitrator in disputes

Communication

As a school we will support separated parents and look for ways to continue to involve them equally in their child’s education and ensure they receive information about their child if this is an issue. Where possible we can share the following with non-residential parents who request it.

- Newsletters/letters – all sent via Parent Mail/Marvellous Me App
- Information about upcoming events provided via Parent Mail/Marvellous Me and on our school website.
- Appointments for consultation evenings at appropriate times (jointly where possible).
- Additional copies of interim and end of year reports sent via email or collected from the school office

Non-residential parents may request additional copies of information to be sent by post in writing to the school (parents must supply the school office with stamped addressed envelopes for this purpose).

Decisions, Permission & Consent

For many school matters—trips, medical consent, change of school, etc.—both parents with parental responsibility may need to be involved. If one parent gives consent but the other objects, we may need to seek legal advice or see the court order to clarify.

Confidentiality, Safeguarding & Court Orders

- Our first priority is always the child's welfare
- If there is a court order in place (for example, stating one parent is prohibited from contact or collecting the child), the school must follow it
- We may ask to see relevant parts of the order to understand our obligations
- Staff will not act as go-betweens in parental conflict
- If we believe a child might be at risk due to parental conflict, we may consult safeguarding or social services

What Happens at Events & Pick-ups

- We will invite both parents with parental responsibility to parent evenings and school events
- Unless restricted by court order, both parents should be involved simultaneously
- In pick-up/drop-off, please follow the agreed plan and avoid confrontations
- If there is conflict at school gates, we may ask the parties to resolve it off site

If you have any questions about how this policy works, or if your family's arrangements change (or you obtain a court order), please speak to the Head Teacher or the school office. We aim to support your child's education without being drawn into disputes.

This policy should be read in conjunction with following policies:

Safeguarding and Child Protection

Equality (Prince Regent Street Trust Policy replaces school Equality Policy from Autumn 2024)

Working with Separated Parents - Appendix A

Guidance on Parental Responsibility

To help us to look after your child 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. Listed below is an explanation of who has parental responsibility so that you can provide us with accurate information.

A mother automatically has [parental responsibility](#) for her child from birth.

A father usually has parental responsibility if he's either:

- married to the child's mother
- listed on the birth certificate (after a certain date, depending on which part of the UK the child was born in)

If the parents of a child are married when the child is born, or if they've jointly adopted a child, both have parental responsibility.

They both keep parental responsibility if they later divorce.

Unmarried parents - An unmarried father can get parental responsibility for his child in 1 of 3 ways:

- jointly registering the birth of the child with the mother (from 1 December 2003)
- getting a parental responsibility agreement with the mother
- getting a parental responsibility order from a court

Civil partners - Same-sex partners will both have parental responsibility if they were civil partners at the time of the treatment, eg donor insemination or fertility treatment.

(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>)