



# Separated Parents Policy

Signed by:	
Head Teacher	
Chair of Governors	Approval delegated to Head Teacher
Date Adopted	20 January 2022
Date of Last Review	Spring Term 2024
Date of Next Review	Spring Term 2026



## Statement

At Orchard Primary School we recognise that some children come from families where parents are already separated or go through difficult changes in family circumstances during their time at school. Our responsibility is for the welfare of the children and we make every effort to work with parents to support these children.

This document aims to clarify to all parties what is expected from separated parents and what can be expected from the school and its staff.

## Definition

For the purposes of education law, the Department for Education considers a 'parent' to include:

- All biological parents, whether they are married or not.
- Any person who, although not a biological parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person - this could be an adoptive parent, a step-parent, guardian or other relative.
- Any person who, although not a biological parent and does not have parental responsibility, has care of a child or young person.

Individuals who have parental responsibility for, or care of, a child have the same rights as biological parents. For example, to:

- Receive information – such as pupil reports.
- Participate in statutory activities – such as voting in elections for parent governors.
- Be asked to give consent - such as to the child taking part in school trips.
- Be informed about meetings involving the child – eg to discuss special educational needs etc.

## Changes in Circumstances

It is the responsibility of parents to inform school when there is a change in family circumstances and we encourage parents to tell us at an early stage so that suitable support can be offered if needed. The school also needs to be kept up-to-date with contact details and arrangements for collecting children and dealing with emergencies.

## Court Orders

The School recognises that while the parents of some pupils may be divorced or separated, they have the same rights as resident parents and this entitlement cannot be restricted without a specific Court Order. In particular, the school does not have the power to act on the request of one parent to restrict another.

The information provided to the school when the child was enrolled detailing whether parents have parental responsibility for the child will be presumed to be correct unless a Court Order or original birth certificate proving otherwise is provided to the school. Similarly,

the information provided on the address where the child resides will be presumed to be correct unless a Court Order proving otherwise is provided to the school.

Upon receipt of any Court Order restricting access to a parent, the school retains the right to consult with the Local Authority before taking immediate action. 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.

## **Collecting a Child from School**

The school will release children to parents in accordance with arrangements notified to the school. If one parent seeks to remove the child from school in contravention of the notified arrangements, and the parent to whom the child would normally be released has not consented, the following steps will be taken:

- The Head Teacher, or designated Deputy, will meet with the parent seeking to remove the child and telephone the parent to whom the child would normally be released and explain the request. 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.
- In the event that the parent to whom the child would normally be released to cannot be contacted, the Headteacher, or designated Deputy, may make a decision based upon all relevant information available to him/her.
- The Head Teacher, or designated Deputy, may have to refuse permission if consent cannot be obtained.
- The Headteacher is able to use her discretion not to allow a child to leave the building with a non-resident parent if it was felt that there was a child protection issue.
- In extreme circumstances if there is a belief that a possible abduction of the child may occur, or if the parent is abusive, the police should be notified immediately.

## **Attendance**

Anyone who has parental responsibility for a child has a responsibility to ensure that their child attends regularly at school unless there are reasonable circumstances which prevent this from happening.

## **School Trips and Visits**

We will seek consent from the resident parent for the child to participate in school visits. However, details of these trips or visits will be placed on the school website so both parties have access.

## **Newsletters and General School Updates**

Newsletters and general school updates can be seen by all parents on the school website. This information will contain all the main events within school, including school productions,

sports days, parents' evenings, class trips etc. The Class Pages on our school website also provide useful information for parents on what the children are learning in school.

## **Parents' Evening**

We hold one appointment per child, where all parents are welcome. We would expect parents to communicate with each other regarding these appointments. The school will consider a second appointment at another mutually agreeable time if there are difficulties in parents attending the same appointment.

## **Progress Reports and Pupil Records**

We will send formal documentation, such as school reports, to the resident parent in the expectation that he/she will share the report with the other parent. However, the non-resident parent may request such information by sending a written request to the Headteacher.

## **School Photographs/Tickets for Performances etc**

We expect that parents should liaise and communicate directly with each other in matters such as the ordering of school photographs, tickets for performances etc. However, the non-resident parent may request such information by sending a written request to the Headteacher.

## **MarvellousMe**

Login details for this app will be sent to the resident parent. However, the non-resident parent may also request login details by sending a written request to the Headteacher.

## **Access to Information**

All parents can have equal access to all school information on the school's website or, alternatively, request in writing copies of communications which are not available on the school website.

We will maintain our open-door policy with all parents, and the Class Teacher and/or Headteacher will be available by appointment to discuss any issues. We hope that by working together with parents we can achieve the best possible outcomes for our pupils.

## **Review**

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years.

