

Trinity Christian School Nursery, Primary & Secondary



**TRINITY
CHRISTIAN SCHOOL**

Separated Parents Policy

SLT Review Date:	June 2023
To be reviewed by SLT:	Spring 2024

SEPARATED PARENTS POLICY

Trinity Christian School recognises that children from families whose parents are separated, or are undergoing separation, may go through traumatic changes during their time at school. The School will make every effort to work with parents to promote the welfare of their child.

This policy has been created to help minimise any impact and to provide guidance to separated parents (as defined below) and set out the steps that will be taken by the School.

Unless there is a court order in place limiting an individual's exercise of parental responsibility the School will ensure that parents are dealt with in an equal manner and in accordance with this guidance.

The School's paramount consideration in making decisions arising from this guidance will, of course, be the welfare of the child. The School will endeavour to help resolve problems that arise between parents regarding their child's education but will avoid becoming involved in conflict between parents.

This document is intended to set out general policy and guidance. In the event that a child's circumstances are not covered by the guidance the School will endeavour to provide specific guidance relating to those circumstances (but cannot of course provide legal advice to parents).

1. Definition of parent and rights

The School has a legal duty to work in partnership with parents regarding their child's education.

Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 provides a wide definition of 'parent'. For the purpose of school education provision a "parent" is defined as:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not.
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person.
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person (a person with whom the child lives and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their relationship is with the child, is considered to be a parent in education law).

See further references section at the end

Therefore, those persons with parental responsibility for a child or who care for a child, have the same rights as natural parents. This includes the right:

- to receive information (e.g. pupil reports, school events etc.),
- to participate in activities (e.g. elections for parent governors),
- to give consent (e.g. school trips), and
- to be involved in meetings concerning the child (e.g. participate in an exclusion procedure, appeal against admission decisions).

The terms "resident" and "non-resident" parent are used to distinguish between parents who do and do not live with a child.

2. Providing and recording relevant information

To ensure that when parents separate/divorce the child's best interests are met it is essential that relevant up to date information and documentation is provided and recorded in a timely manner.

With this in mind parents are requested to ensure that the School has the following information;

- the names and addresses of all parents.
- a copy of the child's birth certificate.
- written notification of any formal or informal residence/contact arrangements (with, where appropriate, relevant supporting documents e.g. copy court order)
- notification (with a copy of any relevant documentation) of any court imposed restrictions relating to a parent's (or any other person's) contact with a child
- written notification of any collection from school arrangements between a resident and non-resident parent.
- written notification of any relevant change in family circumstances including any disputes regarding residence and contact or collection from school arrangements.

The School will ensure that:

- confidentially is maintained and that information is only shared to the extent that it is the child's best interests to share information
- the names and addresses of all known parents are included in the admission register and in pupil records and are available to the teachers.
- the details of any court orders are promptly noted in a pupil's record.
- all formal and informal arrangements notified to the School relating to residence, contact and collection from school are promptly and accurately recorded

3. Guidance on specific matters:

Parent's evening

- The school will normally hold one parents' evening appointment per child, where both parents are welcome, however in exceptional cases will try to make arrangements for separate appointments.
- The School expects parents to communicate with each other regarding these arrangements.

Reports and Pupil Records

- Any parent has the right to receive reports and review pupil records of their child.
- Where parents live at different addresses reports will be sent to the parent where the child resides. NB: Reports are sent home via the pupil. Where we have an email address for the other parent the report will be emailed.
- If the child is subject to a joint residence order and the school's records formally capture that the child resides at two addresses, then progress reports will be sent to both parents either by sending two copies home for distribution via the pupil or an email can be given to the Office to send this way.
- The School will send copies of the reports and other relevant information to a non-resident parent if that parent submits a written request (Appendix 1).

- In the event that the parents are unable to agree with one another on decisions regarding their child's educational programme, including but not limited to placement, participation in extracurricular activities, and consent to evaluation and services, the school will arrange a meeting with all parents (preferably together or separately if required) to attempt to assist the parents to resolve the situation. Ultimately, however, disagreements between parents must be resolved by the parents, or in the final resort, the Courts.
- Parents are entitled to equal access to all school information via email or the sharing of letters, or alternatively, one should request in writing additional copies of communications to be sent (Appendix 1)
- All parents are recommended to regularly use our website. It contains a range of information and links.
- The School will maintain its open door policy with both parents, and the class teacher can be available to discuss any issues, by appointment only.
- Where the address of a non-resident parent is unknown, the School want to make clear that the non-resident parent is entitled to be involved in their child's education and ask that information is passed on to them where possible/appropriate.

Collecting a child from school

- The School will ensure that a child is not released to a parent where this would be in breach of any court order
- It is the duty of both parents to co-operate in arrangements to collect their child from school.
- The Parent must inform the school of any collection arrangements so we know who is safe and approved to collect your child. Any issues in this matter will need to be discussed with the Headteacher.

Obtaining consent

- If parental consent is required for outings/activities, the school will seek consent from the resident parent unless the decision is likely to have a long-term and significant impact on the child or the non-resident parent has requested to be asked for consent in all such cases.
- In cases where the school considers it necessary to seek consent from both parents, it is possible that one gives consent and the other withholds it. In such cases, the school will arrange a meeting with both parents to discuss.
- A leave of absence request form must be signed by the resident parent, or where arrangements have been made with the other parent, an accompanied letter of consent from the other parent is required to confirm this.

Name changes

- Parents are responsible for resolving issues relating to any change of surname.
- Both parents must provide written/signed consent to the School for a change of name of a child to be recorded in the school records.
- In the absence of joint consent, the parent wishing to change the child's name would need to obtain permission from court before the School can record any requested change.

School photos, events etc

- Parents are required to liaise and communicate directly with each other in matters such as the ordering of school photographs, tickets for performances and other instances. The School will not deal individually with these requests in view of the significantly increased workload that they represent.

FURTHER REFERENCE: Definition of parent

Who has parental responsibility?

A mother automatically has parental responsibility for her child from birth.

A father usually has parental responsibility if he's:

- 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)

Births registered in England and Wales

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 only get legal 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

Births registered outside the UK

If a child is born overseas and comes to live in the UK, parental responsibility depends on the UK country they're now living in.

Same-sex parents

Civil partners:

Same-sex partners who were civil partners at the time of the treatment will both have parental responsibility.

Non-civil partners:

For same-sex partners who aren't civil partners, the 2nd parent can get parental responsibility by either:

- applying for parental responsibility if a parental agreement was made
- becoming a civil partner of the other parent and making a parental responsibility agreement or jointly registering the birth

Appendix 1

SEPARATED PARENTS INFORMATION

Trinity Christian School is committed to working with families and understands the importance of continuing the relationship between School and parents who do not live with their child. Please note that we cannot legally restrict access where there is no court order in place - any concerns please speak to the Headteacher or DSL at school.

Please complete the form below and return to the school office indicating any issues and also how you would both like to be kept informed about your child’s education, where applicable.

Child/rens name’s:

Option 1: Where there is dual residence or there is an agreement between parents please complete below:

Resident Parent Name:	
Address:	
Email:	
Information/Communication:	
Non-resident Parent Name:	
Address:	
Email:	
<p>Both Parents are allowed to receive information and opportunities to know about their child’s progress and info at school. How is this best communicated?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Email both Parents?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Send two copies of information/letters home to resident address for distribution/sharing?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Send one copy home for sharing (email or hardcopy)?</p> <p>Other:</p>	

NB: we do not send anything via the post due to the high cost and inconvenience of a Staff having to send. Parents will receive an Email or sent home via the Child at school.

Both parents must check and agree to the above and signed below or an email can be sent by the non-resident parent to confirm:

Resident parent:

Print name: Date:

Non-Resident parent:

Print name: Date:

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SEPARATED PARENTS INFORMATION

Child/rens name's:

Option 2: Where there is a court order or safeguarding issue please complete below:

Resident Parent Name:	
Address:	
Parent/s / Persons who have restricted or no access please complete below for information:	
Their Name/s:	
Restrictions or brief details of court order:	
<i>A copy of any Court orders must be sent to the School Office.</i>	

Resident parent:

Print name: Date:

Option 3: where there is other information which does not come under one of the above please state here:

Name/s:	
Other information:	
<i>Please note that where there is no legal document in place Parents have a legal right to information and access to their child/ren.</i>	

Resident parent:

Print name: Date: