

Greswell Primary Separated Parents Policy

Statement of intent

Greswell Primary 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.

A parent has the right to participate in decisions about their child and receive information about the child.

This policy has been created to 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.

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.

1. Definition of Parent and their Rights

- 1.1. Schools have a legal duty to work in partnership with parents in their child's education.

Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 defines a 'parent' 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).

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

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

- 1.4. Individuals who have parental responsibility, or 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.).
- Participate in activities (e.g. elections for parent governors).
- Give consent (e.g. for school trips).

- Be involved in meetings concerning the child (e.g. participate in an exclusion procedure, appeal against admission decisions).

2. Providing and Recording Relevant Information

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

Headteacher responsibilities

The school will ensure that:

- 2.1. Confidentiality is maintained and that information is only shared to the extent that it is the child's best interests to share information.
- 2.2. The names and addresses of all known parents, are included in the admission register and on the SIMS electronic system.
- 2.3. The names and addresses of all parents are forwarded to any school to which the pupil moves.
- 2.4. The details of any court orders are kept confidentially.
- 2.5. Where the address of a non-resident parent is unknown, the headteacher will tell the resident parent that the non-resident parent is entitled to be involved in their child's education and request that information is passed on to them.

Parental responsibilities

Parents are requested to ensure school has the following information:

- 2.6. The names and addresses of all parents when they register a pupil.
- 2.8 Parents are responsible for informing the school when there is a change in family circumstances. We recognise the sensitivity of such situations and we will maintain confidentiality requested by parents as far as possible. The school will also not make judgements about individual circumstances, and both parents will be treated equally.
- 2.9 Where there is a court mandated restraining order in place, a copy needs to be retained by the school, which will put measures in place to ensure the child is not released to named individuals. Court Orders are kept confidentially in school.
- 2.7. Children's welfare and safety are paramount, where there are issues over access to children, the parent with whom the child resides should contact the school immediately.

3. Guidance on Specific Matters

Parent's Evening

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

Progress reports and pupil records

- 3.2. Any parent has the right to receive progress reports and review pupil records of their child.
- 3.3. If the parents are separated or divorced, progress reports will be sent to the parent and address noted in the school's records specifying where the child resides with the expectation that they will share the report with the other parent.
- 3.4. 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 addresses.
- 3.5. The school will send copies of the progress reports to a parent with whom the child does not reside only if that parent submits a written request.
- 3.6. Disagreements between parents must be resolved between the parents and cannot be resolved by the school.
- 3.7. 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 and participation in extra curricular activities, the school will arrange a meeting with all parents in order to assist the parents in resolving the situation.
- 3.8. The school will maintain an open door policy with both parents and the class teacher will be available to discuss any issues.
- 3.9. 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.

Collecting a child from school

- 3.10. Where a separated parent has parental responsibility and needs to take the child during or at the end of the school day, the resident parent will be contacted in order to ensure that parents are in agreement, providing a non-contact order is not in place.
- 3.11. The headteacher will use his or her discretion on the decision to allow a child to leave the premises with a non-resident parent.

Obtaining consent

- 3.12. If parental consent is required for outings or activities, the school will seek consent from the resident parent or where the non-resident parent has requested to be asked for consent in all such cases, for the non-resident parent to be contacted as well.
- 3.13. 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 assume that parental consent has not been given.

Name changes

- 3.14. Parents are responsible for resolving potential conflicts about the change of a surname.
- 3.15. There must be consent from both parents after divorce or separation for registering a change of name of a pupil.
- 3.16. The school will ensure that the change in surname is supported by written evidence.
- 3.17. A separated parent who has parental responsibility, but no longer lives with the child, may refuse to consent to changing the child's surname. In such cases, the parent wishing to change the child's name would need to apply to the courts for permission to do so.
- 3.18. In circumstances where a name change has already been effected by the school and it is in the interest of the child, who might be known by a new name, to refer back to a different name, the school will make a decision holding the best interests of the child under paramount consideration.

School Photos and Events

- 3.19. Parents are expected 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. In exceptional circumstances, the school may liaise with both parents in these situations.
- 3.20. All parents are recommended to regularly use our website. It contains all our back dated newsletters and has a range of information and links.

Greswell Primary School

Policy: Separated Parents Policy
Implementation date: January 2025
Next review date: January 2027

Signed 19.03.25

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Chair of Governors

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Date

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Headteacher

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Date