



Working with Separated Parents Policy

This policy should be read alongside the following policies:

Disability Discrimination Act, Whistle blowing, Anti bullying, Health and Safety, Managing allegations, Child Protection, E safety, Safe working practices, behaviour and site security policy and with reference to our school vision statement:

At Hawkinge Primary School, we encourage the whole child to reach his or her full potential and acquire the necessary knowledge, skills and values for life.

Introduction

This Policy aims to show how staff will continue to work with families, in the best interests of children, after parents separate. At Hawkinge Primary School we believe education is a joint journey between the child the school and parents, and believe it is crucial for separated parents to be kept up to date with children's learning and attainment. Schools have a legal duty to work in partnership with families and to involve all those with parental responsibility in their child's education (*see Appendix A Guidance on Parental Responsibility*). This obligation on schools continues even when family circumstances change, for example, relationships between parents break down. It is generally in the best interest of children if parents and schools can work together.

Delivery

Below we have listed the ways in which we will work with absent parents to continue to involve them in their child's education.

- Weekly newsletter will be added to the website each weekend so that non residential parents can access the latest news from school.
- The newsletter will include timely information about upcoming events provided.
- Appointments offered for parents evenings at appropriate times
- Additional copies of end of year reports will be posted to separated parents who register an interest for this information with the school office
- Termly targets will be posted to separated parents who register an interest for this information with the school office

This policy will be posted on the school website so that all parents can access this information.

Parents of children joining the school are asked to bring their child's birth certificate. This ensures children are joining the correct year group and also helps the school ascertain who has Parental Responsibility.

Separated parents are required to inform the school and to return a form (*Appendix B*) indicating ways in which they would like to be kept informed.

Children's welfare and safety are paramount and, where there are issues over access to children, the parent with whom the child resides should contact the school immediately. Where there is a court restraining order in place, the school will put in place measures to ensure the child is not released to a named individual. Where a separated parent has parental responsibility and there is no court order in place, the school is required to allow the child home with them; however the Headteacher is able to use her discretion and would seek clarification if it was felt there was a child protection issue.

The welfare of the child is at the heart of all we do and the Headteacher and Governors maintain the right to discontinue any of the above if it is deemed to be significantly against the child's best interests. Court orders may also alter the position the school adopts.

Guidance on Parental Responsibility

In order to help us to look after your children 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. The information below aims to provide you with an explanation of who has parental responsibility so that you are able to provide us with accurate information.

All mothers automatically have Parental Responsibility.

If a child's parents were married at the time of the birth, both parents automatically have Parental Responsibility.

For children born from the 1st December 2003 where the father's name is on the birth certificate, the father and mother will both have Parental Responsibility.

In all other cases, fathers are required to officially obtain Parental Responsibility.

Parental Responsibility cannot be lost, except by legal adoption, although it does not guarantee contact.

(If you would like further guidance, there is clear information on the government website www.direct.gov.uk/en/Parents/ParentsRights/DG_4002954)

Working with separated parents - Appendix B

At Hawkinge Primary School we are committed to working with families and understand the importance of continuing the relationship between school and parents who do not live with their child.

Please complete the form below and return to the school office indicating how you would like to be kept informed about your child's education.

Name of parent:

Name of child/children:

Address:

Telephone number/s:

Please indicate which information you would like to receive:

- Appointments for parents evenings at appropriate times
- Additional copies of termly targets
- Additional copies of end of year reports.

Please use the school website to read the weekly newsletter which includes information about upcoming events