CITY OF LONDON
PRIMARY ACADEMY
ISLINGTON

Separated Parents Policy

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Purpose and Aims

Evidence shows that after separation[1] children do best when those around them cooperate, provide stability, and avoid conflict. We understand that this can be difficult and can direct parents to further support services should you find this helpful. Our priority is always the needs of the child, and our aim is to work with all parties to promote positive family involvement. At City of London Primary Academy Islington we recognise that while some parents may be divorced or separated, both have a right to be informed of, and involved in, their child's educational progress.

This policy clarifies what is expected from separated parents and carers, the school and its staff. The guidance in this policy will apply unless City of London Primary Academy Islington is made aware of any Court Orders in place and has a copy of the documentation as confirmation. Parents may need to check on who has official parental responsibility and provide evidence of this. We will ask for sight of a child's full birth certificate on joining the school to confirm parental responsibility.

Definitions

1. City of London Primary Academy Islington has a legal responsibility to work in partnership with families and to involve all those with parental responsibility with their child's education.
2. The definition of a parent for school purposes is much wider than for any other situation. Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 defines a 'parent' as:
    i. All natural parents, whether they are married or not
    ii. Any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person
    iii. 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)

3. Parents as defined above are entitled to share in the decisions that are made about their child and to be treated equally by schools. These entitlements include: -
    - Receiving information about their child's progress e.g., having access to school records, receiving copies of school reports, newsletters, invitations to school events, school photographs relating to their child and information about school trips.
    - Attending parent meetings/school events
    - Being involved in meetings concerning the child (e.g. participate in an exclusion procedure, appeal against admission decisions).
    - Giving consent (e.g. for school trips and referrals for other services)
    - Appealing against admission decisions.
    - Completing Ofsted and school based questionnaires.

4. Parents, as defined above, must be treated equally, unless there is a court order limiting an individual's exercise of parental responsibility. If we are unaware that such an order exists neither parent will have rights superior to the other.

School Responsibilities

1. The school will ask parents or guardians for the names and addresses of all parents when they register a pupil at City of London Primary Academy Islington.

2. It is the school's duty to ensure that the names and addresses of all parents, where known, are included in the admission register and also in pupil records, and are available to the pupil's teachers.

[1] Within this policy separated refers to parents who have previously lived together as well as those who have co-parented separately from a child's birth)

3. We will ensure that the names and addresses of all parents are forwarded to any school to which the pupil moves.

4. The school will ensure that details of the court orders are noted in the pupil's record.

Parental Responsibilities

1. 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. 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.

3. Parents who have joint residency of the child are requested to keep the school informed, in writing, of any disputes they have with each other regarding the collection of children.

4. 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.

5. The school holds two parents evening appointment per child, where both parents are welcome. We expect parents to communicate with each other regarding these arrangements and will endeavour to accommodate these arrangements to reduce anxiety to both children and parents.
6. Parents are expected to liaise and communicate directly with each other in matters such as 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.

Progress Reports and Pupil Records

1. Parents have the right to receive progress reports and review pupil records of their child. If the parents are separated and divorced, progress reports will be shared with parents via MCAS with the expectation that they will share the report with the other parent.

2. We will email a copy of the progress reports to a parent with whom the child does not reside only if that parent submits a written request.

3. Disagreements between parents must be resolved between the parents and cannot be resolved by the school.

4. 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

1. Where a separated parent has parental responsibility and requests to take the child during or at the end of the school day, we will endeavour to ascertain that parents are in agreement, providing a non-contact order is not in place (the usual route for daily contact between

parents and school is via telephone, email or a quick discussion with the class teacher in the playground during morning drop off).

2. The Head Teacher will use their discretion on whether to allow a child to leave the premises with a non-resident parent, where necessary.

Name Changes

1. Parents are responsible for resolving potential conflicts about the change of a child's surname. There must be consent from both parents after divorce or separation for registering a change of name of a child. We will need to ensure that the change in surname is supported by written evidence.

2. 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. In circumstances where a name change has already been actioned by the school, and it is in the interest of the child to refer back to a different name, the school will make a decision holding the best interests of the child under paramount consideration.

Obtaining consent

1. If parental consent is required for outings or activities, or for referrals to other agencies, 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.

2. 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.

Monitoring and review

This policy is reviewed every two years by the Head Teacher/Governing Body
The scheduled review date for this policy is September 2028.

Useful Contacts:

1. Islington Family Information Service for information about a range of services to support children, young people and families: http://directory.islington.gov.uk/kb5/islington/directory/service.page?id=BsNZ36XvrPY
2. For specific services which may offer advice and support around family: http://directory.islington.gov.uk/kb5/islington/directory/results.page?familychannelnew=6_5