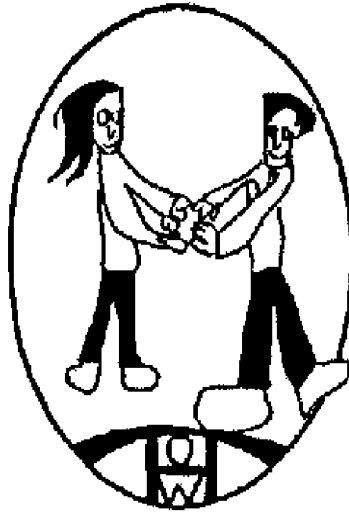


Howbridge Infant School



Working with Separated Parents

Date last reviewed by Governing Body: January 2025

Introduction

This policy aims to show how staff at Howbridge Infant School will continue to work with families, in the best interests of children, after parents separate. It is underpinned by our mission statement.

Mission Statement

We are a caring school community, where everyone is respected and valued. We can learn from each other in a safe and supportive environment, having the confidence to meet challenges with enthusiasm and a belief that anything is possible.

Aims and Ethos

To fulfill our mission statement, our aims are:

- To be a safe, happy caring community of learners
- To help all individuals regardless of their race, gender or disability to acquire the skills and knowledge needed to achieve their full potential in a rapidly changing world
- To develop understanding of and respect for a wide range of religious values, languages and cultural traditions and different ways of life
- To encourage an enjoyment of life-long learning
- To encourage positive parental and community involvement
- To promote healthy lifestyles
- To provide a curriculum that is stimulating, broad, balanced, innovative and creative
- To celebrate achievement

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 non-resident parents to continue to involve them in their child's education.

- Letters emailed to parent.
- Weekly newsletters available on the school website.
- Timely information about upcoming events provided.
- Appointments offered for parents' evenings at appropriate times.
- Additional copies of end of year reports provided either via the child, in the post, or electronically.
- All letters and newsletters can also be obtained from the school's website.

As part of the Induction Pack, when children start school, all parents will receive a copy of this policy. (*Working with Separated Parents*)

Parents of children joining the school will need to show confirmation of date of birth in the form of a birth certificate. We will not ask for a long birth certificate or other documents which would include information about the child's parents. In the case of previously looked after children, we may request sight of the adoption order or special guardianship order. We request sight of a birth certificate so that we can ensure that your child is joining the correct year group.

Separated parents can complete 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 order in place we will retain a copy whilst the child is a pupil at school. We will put in place measures to ensure the child is collected by the correct adult.

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.

This policy should be read in conjunction with following policies:

Safeguarding
Child Protection
Equality

Working with separated parents - Appendix A

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 the 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. This document aims to provide you with an explanation of who has parental responsibility so that you are able to provide us with accurate information.

Who has parental responsibility

A mother automatically has [parental responsibility](#) for her child from birth.

A father usually has parental responsibility if he's either:

- 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)

You can [apply for parental responsibility](#) if you do not automatically have it.

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 get parental 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 in Scotland

A father has parental responsibility if he's married to the mother when the child is conceived, or marries her at any point afterwards.

An unmarried father has parental responsibility if he's named on the child's birth certificate (from 4 May 2006).

Births registered in Northern Ireland

A father has parental responsibility if he's married to the mother at the time of the child's birth.

If a father marries the mother after the child's birth, he has parental responsibility if he lives in Northern Ireland at the time of the marriage.

An unmarried father has parental responsibility if he's named, or becomes named, on the child's birth certificate (from 15 April 2002).

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 will both have parental responsibility if they were civil partners at the time of the treatment, eg donor insemination or fertility treatment.

Non-civil partners

For same-sex partners who are not 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

Working with separated parents - Appendix B

At Howbridge Infant 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:

Email:

Please tick the information you would like to receive:

- ☐ Letters and newsletters sent via email
- ☐ Appointments offered for parents' evenings as appropriate
- ☐ Additional copies of end of year reports
- ☐ All letters and newsletters can also be obtained from the school's website