

Springwood Infant and Junior School Federation

TOGETHER WE LEARN, TOGETHER WE GROW



Springwood Federation Separated Parents Policy

Non - Statutory Policy

Approved By: **Governing Body**

Effective Date: **January 2024**

Review By: **January 2026**

Stay Safe,
Treat Others How You Wish to be Treated,
Try Your Best and be Proud

SEPARATED PARENTS POLICY

This policy should not be read in isolation and staff should be aware of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) Policy when using personal information about staff, pupils, parents and other individuals who come into contact with the school.

1. Introduction

Parental separation can lead to some parents becoming estranged from their child and losing contact with school altogether. When a parent loses contact with their child(ren), this can be traumatic for the child(ren) concerned, as they may worry about their parent's whereabouts and safety, and may blame themselves for relationship breakdown and loss of contact.

At Springwood Federation, we aim to maintain contact with both parents in the best interests of their children. Research and experience indicate that whenever separated parents make a concerted effort to work well together and in partnership with school staff to support their child in their behaviour and learning, the negative impact on children's overall well-being and academic attainment can be reduced.

This policy aims to minimise any impact and to clarify to all parties what is expected from separated parents and what can be expected from the school and its staff.

2. Definition of "parent"

The definition of a "parent" for school purposes is much wider than for any other situation. The Education Act 1996 defines a parent as:

- all natural parents, including those that are not married;
- any person who has parental responsibility but is not a natural parent, e.g. a legally appointed guardian acting in *loco parentis* or the Local Authority named in a Care Order;
- any person who has care of a child, i.e. a person with whom the child resides and who looks after the child irrespective of the relationship.

Parents, as defined above, are entitled to share in the decisions that are made about their child and to be treated equally by schools. In particular, these entitlements include:

- appealing against admission decisions;
- Ofsted and school-based questionnaires;
- participation in any exclusion procedure;
- attending parent meetings/school events;
- having access to school records and receiving copies of school reports, newsletters, invitations to school events, school photographs relating to their child and information about school trips.

The Governing Body recognises that while the parents of some pupils may be separated, divorced or estranged, they are still entitled to the above and this entitlement cannot be restricted without a specific court order. In particular, the school does not have the power to act on the request of one parent to restrict another.

3. Parental responsibility

The information provided to the school when the child was enrolled detailing which adults have parental responsibility for the child will be presumed to be correct unless a court order or original birth certificate proving otherwise is provided to the school. Similarly, the information provided regarding the address(es) where the child resides will be presumed to be correct unless a court order proving otherwise is provided to the school. Parents should notify the school of any changes in writing so records can be updated. It is also the parent's responsibility to notify the school if they do require further information to be sent home.

4. Safeguarding

When the parents are not living together and the school have been notified by either parent not to disclose the other parent's address, the school must ensure procedures are in place to not divulge this information. When sending home reports/attendance data the Administration team will ensure that address details are not printed to ensure there is no data breach.