

GUIDANCE ON SUPPORTING PARENTS WHO ARE SEPARATED

Rosh Pinah Primary School recognises that children from families whose parents are separated or are undergoing separation, may go through difficult changes to family life during their time at school. The school will make every effort to work with parents to promote the welfare of their child/children.

The School acknowledges that anyone who is a parent has the right to take part in decisions about their child and receive information about the child/children unless a court order is in place limiting an individual's exercise of parental responsibility; the school will ensure that parents are dealt with in an equal manner. We will endeavour to help resolve problems that arise between parents regarding their child's education, but will avoid becoming involved in conflict between parents.

The terms "resident" or "Primary Carer" and "non-resident" or "Secondary parent" are used to distinguish between parents who do and do not live with a child.

The "Resident Address or Primary Carer" is defined as an address the child lives at and the parent own the property or have a tenancy agreement for a minimum of 12 months. If a child regularly lives at more than one address Monday to Friday, the address provided should be the address where the child spends the majority of their time. If a child lives at two addresses equally, the address of the parent/carers that claims child benefit/child tax credit will be considered as the child's main residence. If a parent is not in receipt of child benefit/child tax credit alternative documentation will be requested.

Our paramount consideration in making decisions will be the welfare of the child.

The school has a legal duty to work in partnership with parents regarding their child's education and under Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 uses the wide definition of "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).

Persons with parental responsibility for a child or who care of a child have these rights:

- To receive information (e.g. pupil reports, school events etc.),
- To participate in activities (e.g. elections for parent governors),
- To give consent (e.g. school trips), and
- To be involved in meetings concerning the child (e.g. participate in an exclusion procedure, appeal against admission decisions)

It is essential when parents separate/divorce they provide up to date information and documentation in a timely manner and it is necessary for the school to have the following information.

- The names and addresses of all parents
- Written notification of any formal or informal residence/contact arrangements (with, where appropriate, relevant supporting documents e.g. copy of court order)
- Notification (with copy of any relevant documentation) of any court imposed restrictions relating to a parent's (or any other person's) contact with a child
- Written notification of any collection from school arrangements between a resident and non-resident parent
- Written notification of any relevant change in family circumstances including any disputes regarding residency and contact or collection from school arrangements.

The school will ensure that:

- The names and addresses of all known parents are included in the admission register and in pupil records and are available to the pupil's teachers
- The names and addresses of all parents are forwarded to any school to which the pupil moves
- The details of any court orders are promptly noted in a pupil's record
- All formal and informal arrangements notified to school relating to residence, contact and collection from school are promptly and accurately recorded

Parents Consultation

- The school usually holds one parents consultation appointment per child, however where required the school will make arrangements for separate appointments for each parent.

Pupil Reports and Pupil Records

- Any parent has the right to receive progress reports and review pupil records of their child
- Where parents live at different addresses progress reports will be sent to both parents.
- 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, participation in extracurricular activities, and consent to evaluation and services, the school will arrange a meeting with all parents (preferably together or separately if required) to attempt to assist the parents to resolve the situation. Ultimately, however, disagreements between parents must be resolved by the parents or in the final resort, the Courts
- Parents are entitled to equal access to all school information via the School's parent mail system, or alternatively, should request in writing additional copies of communications to be sent (Appendix 1)
- All parents are recommended to regularly use the school website. It contains all our back dated newsletters and has a range of information and links.
- The school maintains an open door policy with both parents and the class teacher who can be available to discuss any issues by phone or face-to-face meeting.
- Where the address of a non-resident parent is unknown, the school will inform the resident parent that the non-resident parent is entitled to be involved in their child's education and ask that information is passed on to them where possible.

Collecting a child from school

- the School will ensure that a child is not released to a parent where this would be in breach of any court order
- it is the duty of both parents to co-operate in arrangements to collect their child from school

Obtaining consent

- If parental consent is required for outings/activities, the school will seek consent from the “Resident parent/ Primary Carer” unless the decision is likely to have a long-term and significant impact on the child
- 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, with the exception of where a court order has been obtained by either party giving a definitive decision.
A leave of absence request form may be signed by either parent, but may be subject to restriction of any court order with regard to access.

Name changes

- Parents are responsible for resolving issues relating to any change of surname
- Both parents must provide written/signed consent to the school for a change of name of a child to be recorded in the school records
- In the absence of joint consent the parent wishing to change the child’s name would need to obtain permission from court to do so before the school can record any requested change.

School Photos, events etc.

- Parents are required to liaise and communicate directly with each other in matters such as the ordering of school photographs, tickets for trips and other instances. The school will not deal individually with these requests in view of the significantly increased workload they represent

Financial Obligations

Rosh Pinah Primary School is a voluntary aided school, certain aspects of the curriculum and security of the site and pupils are maintained by donations made by parents through the Education & Security Supplement (E.S.S.). Other financial costs such as Nursery Additional hours charges, School Lunch Money, After School Clubs and Non curriculum Residential Trips, where compulsory payment is required to be made by either or both parents. The school will consider that both parents are legally liable for any payment unless a court sealed financial order clearly defines which parent is solely liable for these costs. The school may request a copy of any court sealed financial order to hold on file. If a family or child is eligible and entitled to ‘Free School Meals’ and/or ‘Pupil Premium’ then any compulsory charges in regards to their entitlement will be deducted.

Governing Body Approval : July 2016

APPENDIX 1

Working with parents

Rosh Pinah Primary School is committed to working with families and understands 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:

Address:

Telephone number/s :

Email

Please circle the best way to send information to you:

Via your child

By Parentmail (email)

By Post

Please tick the information you would like to receive:

Text box

Weekly Newsletter

Information about upcoming events

Parent Consultation

Additional copies of end of year reports

Copies of Individual Educational Health Care Plans (EHCPs)

Order form for photos

Signed.....