



Inspiring Primaries Academy Trust

Policy for separated (and divorced) parents

The Board of Trustees adopted this policy on: 5th July 2017
To be reviewed: Summer 2020

Rationale and legal position

Research and experience have shown that separated parents can become particularly estranged, especially during the initial stages of the split. This is very often traumatic for those children concerned. Inevitably these personal family problems have an impact on the schools the children attend. This policy is an attempt to minimise this impact and clarify to all parties what is expected from separated parents and what can be expected from Inspiring Primaries Academy Trust ("the Trust") schools and their staff.

Each school within the Trust recognises that, while the parents of some pupils may be divorced or separated, both have a right to be informed of, and involved in, their son/daughter's education.

The information provided to the school when the pupil was enrolled detailing whether both parents have parental responsibility for the pupil will be presumed to be correct unless a court order or original birth certificate proving otherwise is provided to the school.

The school wishes to promote the best interests of the pupil(s), working in partnership with both parents, unless directed by a court order. In the event that the school is not informed of such action, neither parent will have rights superior to the other.

It is the responsibility of the parents to inform the school when there is a change in the family's circumstances. We need to be kept up to date with contact details, arrangements for collecting pupils and emergencies. This may also include changes in financial circumstances.

We hope and expect that parents, whatever the nature of their separation, will do all they can to communicate with each other and share information from and for the school, for the benefit of their son/daughter. This also considerably reduces the possibility of errors being made and upset caused.

However, in the event that this may cause difficulty and have a negative effect on the pupil(s) and their learning, letters, texts and emails can be sent to both parents if this is agreed by parents and the school together. Information on all the main school events, including productions, sports days, parent's evenings, trips, etc. are available on the school website. Occasionally items are given directly to pupils such as notes in their home-school diary. We would expect parents to share these with each other as and when appropriate.

Both parents are welcome to parent's evenings. We would expect parents to communicate with each other regarding the arrangements for these.

We expect that parents would liaise and communicate directly with each other in matters such as the ordering of school photographs; tickets for performances and other instances. The school will not normally deal individually with these requests.

Progress reports and pupil records

Both parents have the right to receive progress reports and review pupil records of their children. If the parents are separated or divorced, progress reports will be sent to the parent with whom the pupil resides with the expectation that they will share the report with the other parent.

The school will send copies of reports to the non-custodial parent if requested.

Both parents can have equal access to all school information via our website, or alternatively please request in writing additional copies of communications to be posted.

All parents are recommended to use our website regularly. It contains most of our communications and has a range of information and links.

Absences from school

If one parent seeks to remove the pupil(s) from school, and the parent with whom the child ordinarily resides has not consented, the following steps should be followed:

1. The Headteacher or another member of staff with designated responsibility for Safeguarding will meet with the parent seeking to remove the pupil and, in their presence, telephone the parent with whom the pupil ordinarily resides and explain the request.
2. If the parent with whom the pupil ordinarily resides agrees, the pupil will be allowed to leave and the records will reflect that the permission was granted orally.
3. In the event that the parent, with whom the pupil ordinarily resides cannot be reached, the Headteacher or staff member dealing with the issue may make a decision based upon all relevant information available to him/her.
4. The Headteacher or staff member may have to refuse permission if consent cannot be obtained.

In extreme circumstances if there is a belief that a possible abduction of the pupil(s) may occur or if the parent is disruptive, the police will be notified immediately.

In the event of the break-down of a relationship

The Trust acknowledges that relationships can break down suddenly or traumatically, even for a temporary period, and that we may not be aware of this.

Our position is not to attribute blame but to support the pupil and to ensure his/her safety which is paramount. We would ask therefore that one parent at least contact the school if a relationship has broken down and inform us of any changes to plans or arrangements, for example emergency contact numbers.

We may well need to meet with you to discuss these arrangements. Parents can be assured we will treat the matter with care and sensitivity. In the first instance, please contact your son/daughter's class teacher. However, if there is an emergency and you have safety concerns for your son/daughter, please contact the Headteacher or other member of staff with designated responsibility for Safeguarding immediately.