



# **HRB Separated Parents Policy**

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**Holy Rosary Catholic Voluntary Academy**

## **“Building Loving Hearts and Strong Minds in Union with God and Each Other”**

### **Purpose**

This policy clarifies what is expected from separated parents and carers, the school and its staff, and will apply unless the school is made aware of any Court Orders in place and has a copy of the documentation as confirmation.

### **Rationale**

At Holy Rosary Catholic Voluntary Academy we have a legal duty to work in partnership with families and to involve all those with parental responsibility in their child’s educational progress. Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 defines a “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 a 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)

Parents as defined above must be treated equally, unless there is a court order limiting an individual’s exercise of parental responsibility. In the event that the school is not informed of the existence of such an order, neither parent will have rights superior to the other.

Evidence shows that after separation children do best when those around them cooperate, provide stability, and avoid conflict. We understand that this can be difficult and parents can become estranged. Our aim is to work with all parties to promote positive family involvement. The child is our main priority and we hope parents will make every effort to recognise this and support us and their child.

### **Responsibilities of parents**

- Parents and partners may need to check on who has official parental responsibility and provide evidence of this to the school. We will ask for sight of a child’s birth certificate on joining the school to confirm parental responsibility
- It is the responsibility of parents to inform the school when there is a change in the family’s circumstances. The school needs to be kept up to date with contact details (including addresses, email addresses and contact numbers), arrangements for collecting children and emergencies. We recognise the sensitivity of such situations and we will maintain confidentiality requested by parents as far as possible

- The information provided to school when the pupil was enrolled, detailing whether both parents have parental responsibility, will be presumed to be correct unless a court order or original birth certificate proving otherwise is provided to the school
- Where there is a court order in place, a copy needs to be retained by the school. We will put measures in place to ensure the child is not released to any individuals named in the court order as persons who do not have parental responsibility
- Parents who have joint custody 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.
- We expect parents to 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 hold one parents evening appointment per child where both parents are welcome. Separated parents may request alternate appointments and the school will endeavour to accommodate this, wherever possible. Online appointments can also be made available. Parents are expected to communicate with each other regarding these arrangements
- 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

### **Responsibilities of the school**

- The school will send routine school information and general letters to the parent with whom the child resides. In the case of shared access, this will be sent to the parent with whom the child resides for the majority of the time. The school will send copies to the non-resident parent if a written or electronic request is made and the school has up to date address and contact details
- Newsletters and diary dates are also available on our school website; [www.holyrosaryacademy.co.uk](http://www.holyrosaryacademy.co.uk)
- Both parents are entitled to receive progress reports. Progress reports will be sent to the parent with whom the child resides, with the expectation that he/she will share the report with the other parent. The school will send copies of the progress reports to the non-resident parent if a written or electronic request is made and the school has up to date address and contact details
- Both parents are legally entitled to collect their child from school unless a court order is provided that states otherwise. In all cases, the school will be mindful of its safeguarding responsibilities and may use its discretion not to send a child home with a particular parent
- The school will always reserve the right to refuse entry or enter into communication with parents who are abusive and use inappropriate language or aggressive behaviour towards any member of staff