

ULEY C OF E PRIMARY SCHOOL



SEPARATED PARENTS POLICY

MAY 2025 – 2027

They are like trees that grow beside a stream that bear fruit at the right time and whose leaves do not dry up. They succeed in all they do. Psalm 1:3

OUR SCHOOL VISION

Live – Learn – Flourish

-  Live: at home, in school, and in our local community
-  Learn: about self, others, and our ever-changing world
-  Flourish: be the best we can be in all that we do

OUR SCHOOL MISSION

-  We give all – pupils and staff – the opportunities and encouragement to be the best that they can be
-  We create an environment that has the right balance of challenge and support
-  We deliver a curriculum that is right for our school, inspiring and motivating all, and embracing new ideas
-  We apply our School Core Values of Trust, Friendship, Compassion and Wisdom in all that we do
-  We develop strong and effective partnerships between pupils, staff, governors, parents and the wider community
-  We strive to ensure that all flourish within a moral framework built on Christian values and the Diocesan vision “I have come that they may have LIFE, and have it to the full”. (John 10:10)

ETHOS STATEMENT

We believe that everyone should be given the opportunity and encouragement to be the best that they can be. To this end, we strive to create the right environment, deliver the right content, and embrace new ideas. We apply our school values of trust, friendship, compassion and wisdom to enable every individual to flourish within a moral framework built on Christian values. We believe that this can only be achieved by developing partnerships between pupils, staff, governors, parents and the wider community.

At Uley C of E Primary School we aim to promote the best interests of the child, working in partnership with all parents where possible with a child centred approach to enable each child to Live, Learn and Flourish.

Introduction and Context

Research and experience have shown that separated parents can work well together in the best interests of their children and can together play a role in their children's education. However, some parents become estranged, and do not work together or in the best interests of their children, especially during the initial stages of their separation. This is very often traumatic for any children concerned where personal family problems can have an impact on the child and on the schools the children attend.

This policy is an attempt to minimise any impact, clarify to all parties what is expected from separated parents and what can be expected from the school / staff.

Parental Responsibility

In order to help us to look after children whilst they are in our care, Uley staff are required at the admissions stage to ask parents to provide certain information, such as name of both parents, address, contact details etc. They are also required to ask who has Parental Responsibility for the child. This is important because it allows the school to be sure who has the right to make decisions about a child's education and medical treatment.

<https://www.gov.uk/parental-rights-responsibilities/who-has-parental-responsibility>

A mother automatically has parental responsibility for her child from birth unless it has been removed by an adoption order or a parental order following surrogacy.

A father usually has parental responsibility if he is 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

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

Unless a child is adopted, parental responsibility cannot be removed. The parent would have to seek legal advice.

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.

It is the responsibility of 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 children and emergencies.

Other Circumstances:

- Being granted a Residence Order
- Being appointed a Guardian
- *Being named in an Emergency Protection Order (although parental responsibility in a such a case is limited to taking reasonable steps to safeguard or promote the child's welfare)*
- Adopting a child.

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: -

- Appeal against admission decisions
- Ofsted & school based questionnaires
- Participate in any exclusion procedure
- Attend parent meetings/school events
- Have access to school records, receive copies of school reports, newsletters, invitations to school events, school photographs relating to their child and information about school trips.

The Governing Body recognise that while the parents of some pupils may be separated they are 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.

The information provided to the school when the child was enrolled detailing whether parents 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 on the address(es) where the child resides will be presumed to be correct unless a court order proving otherwise is provided to the school.

This entitlement cannot be restricted without a specific court order. The school does not have the power to act simply on the request of one parent to restrict another.

The school will not seek to make judgements about individual circumstances but will treat both parents equally unless there is a specific ruling in existence. Staff will never pass judgement on either parent to the child.

We will maintain our open door policy with all parents, and the class teacher and/or Head Teacher will be available by appointment to discuss any issues. The school is under no obligation to inform the resident parent of the non-resident parent contacting the school. Any such information will be given at the discretion of the Head Teacher.

Court Orders

Upon receipt of any court order restricting access to a parent, the school retains the right to consult the Local Authority before taking immediate action. The school is only obliged to comply with an order if it is properly notified and has received a copy for its files, and only to the extent that it relates to the school. 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. Only a Court Order stating the arrangements is deemed to be valid; a letter from a solicitor is not sufficient.

School communications

The school 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 child's education. However, we 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 child. It is assumed that the parent with whom the child principally resides will keep the other parent informed.

- All diary dates, Newsletters, and Head Teacher's letters are available on our website at www.uleyprimary.org.uk.
- Class emails (when in use) will be sent to both parents. Parents are responsible for providing a correct email address. Occasionally paper letters are sent home with pupils and we expect parents to communicate these messages to each other as and when appropriate.

- We would not expect to send emergency text messages to non-resident parents, which give information on cancelled activities and reminders.
- We expect parents to liaise and communicate directly with each other in matters such as the ordering of school photographs; tickets for performances, residential, school visits and other instances.
- Both parents are entitled to receive progress reports and review their child's pupil records. 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 email copies of progress reports to the non-custodial parent if a written request is submitted.
- Under normal circumstances, we will hold one parent's evening appointment per child, two times a year, where both parents are welcome and we expect parents to communicate with each other regarding these arrangements. Under certain circumstances, the school may be able to offer a secondary appointment but this must be discussed with individual class teacher involved.
- Should an un-named parent seek information or access to his/her child, the school will always inform the main carer of this to check Parental Responsibility and ensure no court order is in place. For the avoidance of doubt, we will seek written confirmation from the main carer. Proof of identity of the non-resident parent will always be required in these cases.

Disagreements between parents must be resolved between the parents and cannot be resolved by the school or local authority.

Collecting a child from school

The school will release children to parents in accordance with arrangements notified to the school. If one parent seeks to remove the child from school in contravention of the usual arrangements and the parent to whom the child would normally be released has not notified the school of any change the following steps will be followed:

- Where a separated parent, who has parental responsibility and no court order in place, wishes to take the child during or at the end of the school day, the resident parent will be contacted in order to ensure that they are in agreement with the arrangement. If the parent to whom the child would normally be released agrees, the child may be released and the records will reflect that the permission was granted orally. If the parent opposes the other parent wanting to take the child then the school will advise that without a court order we cannot prevent them from doing so.
- In the event that the parent to whom the child would normally be released to cannot be reached, the Head Teacher or staff member dealing with the issue will make a decision based upon all relevant information available to him/her.
- During any discussion or communication with parents, the child will be supervised by an appropriate member of school staff in a separate room.
- In extreme circumstances, if there is a belief that a possible abduction of the child may occur or if the parent is disruptive, the police should be notified immediately.
- Depending on the relationship between the separated parties and/or court orders, if either separated parent with parental responsibility informs the school of an alternative adult collecting from school i.e. grandparent, family friend, step-parent,

the school may request that the informing parent also contacts the parent to let them know i.e. for both parents to have agreed.

Review

This policy will be reviewed biennially. Any alterations that come from this review will be discussed and ratified by the appropriate governing body sub-committee