Llandaff City Church In Wales Primary School

Separated and Divorced Parent Policy

Statement of intent

Llandaff City Church in Wales Primary School recognises that children from families whose parents are divorced or who are undergoing separation, may be emotionally affected by the changes to their family unit. With this in mind, we at Llandaff City are empathetic to changes to family units and as such we will make every effort to work with parents to support the welfare of children through this time of change.

This policy has been created to minimise any impact and to clarify to all parties what is expected from separated/divorced parents and what can be expected from the school and its staff.

1. Definitions

1.1. Schools have a legal duty to work in partnership with families and to involve all those with parental responsibility in their child's education. Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 defines a 'parent' as:

· All natural parents, whether they are married or not.

1.2. 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.

1.3. Individuals who have parental responsibility, or care for a child, have the same rights as natural parents. This includes the right to:

· Receive information (e.g. pupil reports, school events etc.).

· Participate in activities (e.g. elections for parent governors).

· Give consent (e.g. for school trips).

· Be involved in meetings concerning the child (e.g. participate in an exclusion procedure, appeal against admission decisions).

2. Headteacher and School Administrator responsibilities

2.1. The Headteacher will ask parents or guardians for the names and addresses of all parents when they register a pupil. Administration staff will then ensure that names and addresses of all parents, where known, are included in the admission register and also in pupil records, and are available to the pupil's teachers. Where a parent believes they may have been omitted from this list it is their responsibility to contact the school administration team and check and update

records. Additionally, if parents believe that their details are not held by the school or that they are not getting regular email / text communications from the school it is their responsibility to liaise with the Administration staff in order to resolve this matter.
2.2. The Administration staff will ensure that names and addresses of all parents are forwarded to any school to which the pupil moves.
2.3. The Headteacher will ensure that details of court orders are noted in a pupil's confidential safeguarding record. Note: From September 2021 this will include uploading a copy of the Court Order onto MyConcern – a site commonly used by the Child Protection Officers in a child's school to record and support the safeguarding of each child.
2.4. The Headteacher will also keep a record of the following information:
· 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).
This information will be shared with the Administration team and class teacher.

3. Parental responsibilities
3.1. It is the responsibility of each parent to ensure that school administration staff have their contact details in order that communications can be made. This information will be treated in line with data protection expectations.
3.2. Parents are responsible for informing the school when there is a change in family circumstances. We recognise the sensitivity of such situations and we will maintain confidentiality requested by parents as far as possible. The school will also not make judgements about individual circumstances, and both parents will be treated equally.
3.3. Where there is a court mandated restraining order in place, a copy needs to be retained by the school, which will put measures in place to ensure the child is not released to named individuals.
3.4. 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. Parents should note that any parent with legal responsibility is able to collect their child from school irrespective of the other parents' wishes unless a court order determines otherwise. (See point 5)
3.5. 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.
3.6. The school provides two opportunities each school year for parents/carers to speak with the class teacher about their child's learning. However, only one parents evening appointment is allocated to each child, where both parents are welcome and encouraged to attend together. However, should there be exceptional reasons where this cannot apply staff will accommodate separate appointment times, but in these circumstances, it may be necessary to reduce the tie allocated to the appointment.
Where meetings are held online parents should inform the school whether they wish to split the consultation appointment in ½ or whether they are happy to nominate one parent to undertake the Autumn Term meeting and one to undertake the Spring Term meeting.
3.7. The school expects parents to communicate with each other regarding any arrangements regarding school unless a court order states otherwise. This includes the sharing of paper-based correspondence and homework tasks. Google Classroom is accessible by both parents along with their child to access school comms and home learning.
3.8. Parents are expected 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 not deal individually with these requests in view of the significantly increased workload that

they represent. Please note that where 2 tickets are available to a performance it is expected that both parents have access to one ticket each before other family members are given access.
3.9. The school expects parents to communicate with each other before making "Exceptional Leave" requests. School will not inform the 'other' parent when requests are made. Please note that no additional allocation of Exceptional Leave will be granted to a family whose parents are separated or divorced. Attendance at school should remain a priority to both parents and requests made should only be when all other options have been exhausted.
3.10. Unless a Court Order does not permit it both parents may attend school events. Parents must manage such situations appropriately in order that their child's wellbeing is not negatively affected by their joint attendance. Note: Where Court Orders do not permit contact time during school hours this will apply to attendance at school-based events too.

4. Progress reports and pupil records

4.1. Any parent has the right to receive progress reports and review pupil records of their child.
4.2. If the parents are separated or divorced, end of year School Reports will either be shared via Goggle classroom or if paper versions are given out these will be sent to the residing home on the day of distribution with the child. School will inform all parents via school comms on how Reports are to be distributed each year. The expectation is that parents will share the report with the other parent at the next possible handover. Should a parent require an additional paper copy this may be requested from the office. A photocopying charge may be requested, and collection must be made in person due to Data Protection regulations.
4.3. Disagreements between parents must be resolved between the parents and cannot be resolved by the school. Parents have the option to involve outside agencies in such matters.
4.4. The school will maintain an open-door policy with both parents and the class teacher will be available to discuss any issues once an appropriate time has been made through the school office.
4.5. 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 will be notified immediately.
4.6. Unless requested not to do so by Social Services in matters of a safeguarding nature both residing parents will be contacted by either the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher who are Safeguarding Officers. Whether a parent does or does not give consent for a referral will be recorded. If the school determines the need to make a referral it will be made irrespective of consent.
4.7. Where custody arrangements are to be determined by the courts and input from school is required the following will apply:
A. Only the Headteacher / Deputy Headteacher should be approached for information.
B. 10 working days' notice should be provided in order to gather all requested information.
C. Only factual information will be provided.
D. Information will be provided only when the school is satisfied that the given email address is appropriate given the sensitivity of the information enclosed.
E. Information will not be provided to individual solicitors, only to the Courts acting in the best interests of the child. The LA will be consulted before any information is shared.

5. Collecting a child from school

5.1. Where a separated parent has parental responsibility and requests to take the child during or at the end of the school day, this will usually be agreed. However, the Headteacher will use their discretion on the decision to allow a child to leave the premises with a non-resident parent or in a situation where there is a known dispute.

6. Obtaining consent

6.1. If parental consent is required for outings or activities, the school will seek consent from the resident parent, unless the non-resident parent has requested to be asked for consent in all such cases.

6.2. 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.

7. Name changes

7.1. Parents are responsible for resolving potential conflicts about the change of a surname. Changing a child's name officially is a legal matter.

7.2. School will only change a child's name for official purposes if we receive official documentation confirming the change of name (be deed poll or change of name deed) with consent of all those with parental responsibility. However, in all other circumstances, the school may agree to call a child by whichever name is in the best interests of the child.

8. Help for your child

8.1. Should either parent feel that their child needs additional help as a result of a change to the family unit parents are advised to discuss this with the Headteacher who will seek to provide additional options of support for your child.

8.2 There are many websites available to support separated and single parents and their children. Pathways Family Help Advisors may also be able to advise and help families. Tel: 0300 0133133

9. Step Parent responsibility and rights

As a general rule, everyone who is a "parent" (as defined in the Guidance for Schools document '"Parents" and "Parent Responsibility"' has a right to participate in decisions about a child's education. Step-parents may have parental responsibility if they enter an agreement with someone with parental responsibility. They may also have parental responsibility if they "care for a child" as determined under section 576 of the Education Act 1966. If more than 1 parent has parental responsibility they have to both agree to step-parents having legal responsibilities for a child. Where Step-Parents are to be treated as a "parent" by the school, a copy of the following court form would have to be completed and shared with the school before legal responsibilities for the child are granted.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/687729/c_pra2_-eng.pdf

Alternatively, evidence should be provided to the school that demonstrates that they "Care" for the child as described in the Guidance for Schools document '"Parents" and "Parent Responsibility"'. Unless a Step-Parent has these rights and can demonstrate these to the school, they cannot make any decisions relating to the child. This includes attendance at Parent Consultations. Although Step-Parents may attend Parent Consultations they will not be able to make any decisions relating to the child unless they have Parental rights. Step-Parents however are recognised as a valuable part of a child's life and are encouraged to take an active part in school life e.g. attendance at PTFA events and by supporting the child with home-school tasks. Where permission is given, they are also able to collect from school.

10. Monitoring and review

10.1. This policy is reviewed every two years by the Governing Body.

10.2. The scheduled review date for this policy is December 2028

Date: November 2026