

Hillside Primary and Nursery School

A Flying High Trust Academy



Guidance for Separated Parents September 23

To be reviewed: September 25

Working with Separated Parents at Hillside School

If school need to contact parents they will they will use the contact information sheet and contact the first person on this list. We restrict school to home communications and day to day matters to that person. However, Hillside respects and welcomes the involvement of all parents in their child's education.

The non custodial parent has rights to access their child's curriculum record under the 1989 Regulations if the parent is known to the school. This includes a divorced parent with joint legal custody, a separated parent, a legal guardian or a foster parent who have parental rights.

The non custodial parent can access the school newsletter and many other documents on the Hillside Website (www.hillsideprimary.com). These provide a link and information of the activities which children enjoy on a weekly basis. It also provides key information about parent consultation meetings and the dates of these, should the non custodial parent wish to attend.

In addition at the request of the non custodial parent annual pupil reports can be sent by post for their information. Non custodial parental contact information can be added to our Dual Parents Database and if requested receive all communications. *Please note* Proof of Parental Responsibility (PR) will be required in order to complete this process.

The only cases where this would not apply would be:

- if there is a Court Order in effect which specifically prevents that person from having access to those records, or
- if the school has reason to believe that disclosing the information is likely to cause serious harm to the physical or mental health or emotional condition of the pupil concerned or any other pupil.

In these instances the Head Teacher would uphold the right to deny access to protect the pupil.

Request to pass on a message to a child

If a Head Teacher is asked to pass on a message or other items to a child by non-custodial parent, the message will be returned unopened. The person making the request will be advised to contact the person who normally has custody of the child.

Where a parent seeks to speak to a child during school hours

Whilst the Head Teacher will exercise discretion such a request will be denied by the Head Teacher until she/he is completely happy that the request is being made with the knowledge and agreement of the person who has custody of the child.

In general, and whatever the family circumstances, schools will discourage parents from seeking access to children during the school day.

Where a parent without actual custody wishes to remove a child during school hours, or is likely to do so after school has finished

In such circumstances the request will always be denied. Non-custodial parents must communicate with the custodial parent and seek agreement to access the child.

If it is felt that there is any danger that a child will be intercepted after school, the child will be kept in school and the custodial parent contacted to arrange for the child's collection.

In extreme cases the Police will be called.

Definitions

From the introduction of the Children Act on 14th October 1991, the term 'parent' or 'guardian' means:

- the mother;
- the father, where he was married to the mother at the time of the child's birth, or where he acquired parental responsibility by formal agreement with the mother, or by means of a Residence Order made by a Court;
- another person, eg a step-parent, a foster parent, to whom the Court has given a Residence Order (which provides parental responsibility) for the child;
- the Local Authority Social Services Department, when the child is the subject of a Care Order;
- or a person named in a Guardianship Order, or appointed as a testamentary guardian.

The circumstances previously described as 'a child being in care' become known as 'being looked after by the Local Authority' and divide into two situations. A child may be 'accommodated and maintained' by agreement with the parent : the latter retains parental responsibility. Alternatively a child may be in care as a result of a Care Order made by a Court : the Social Services Department then exercises parental responsibility (although the parents do not cease to be parents).

Legal Framework

- Education Reform Act 1988
- Education (School Records) Regulations 1989