

# ***St. Mary's C. E. Primary School***



## ***POLICY FOR WORKING WITH SEPARATED PARENTS AUTUMN TERM 2012***

### **Introduction**

This Policy aims to show how staff at St Mary's School will continue to work with families, in the best interests of children, after parents separate. It is underpinned by Our Vision which can be viewed as part of our prospectus.

Schools have a legal duty to work in partnership with families and to involve all of those with parental responsibility in their child's education (**see Appendix A on Parental Responsibility**). This obligation on schools continues even when family circumstances change, for example, relationships between parents break down. It is generally in the best interests of children if parents and schools can work together.

### **Delivery**

We list below the ways in which we will work with absent parents to continue to involve them in their child's education if requested.

- Regular newsletters sent via email or by post to non-residential parents
- Timely information about upcoming events provided
- Appointments will be offered for parents evenings at appropriate times or where this is not feasible written reports of parents consultations will be provided
- Additional copies of end of year reports will be provided either via the child, by post or by email

As part of the Induction pack received when children start school, all parents will receive a copy of this policy.

Parents of children joining the school are required to produce their child's original birth certificate. This ensures that the children are joining the correct year group and this also helps the school to ascertain who has Parental Responsibility.

Separated parents are required to inform the school and return a form (**Appendix B**) indicating ways in which they would like to be kept informed and to advise us of any changes to contact details.

Children's welfare and safety are paramount and, where there are issues over access to the children, the parent with whom the child resides should contact the school immediately. Where there is a court restraining order in place, the school will put in place measures to ensure the child is not released to a named individual.

Where a separated parent has parental responsibility and there is no court order in place, the school is required to allow the child home with them; however the Headteacher is able to use her discretion and would seek clarification if it was felt that there was a child protection issue.

The welfare of the child is at the heart of all we do and the Headteacher and Governors maintain the right to discontinue any of the above if it is deemed to be significantly against the child's best interests. Court orders may also alter the position the school adopts.

**This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:**

*Safeguarding and child protection*  
*Equality and Community Cohesion*

## **Working with separated parents – Appendix A**

### **Guidance on Parental Responsibility**

In order to help us to look after your children whilst they are in our care, we are required to ask you to provide certain information, such as name of parents, up to date address and contact details etc. We are also required to ask who has Parental Responsibility for your child. This is important because it allows us to be sure who has the right to make decisions about your child's education and medical treatment. However, we are aware that this is a very specific legal term and many of you may be unaware of how it is applied. This leaflet aims to provide you with an explanation of who has Parental Responsibility so that you are able to provide us with accurate information.

- All mothers automatically have Parental Responsibility
- If a child's parents were married at the time of the birth, both parents automatically have Parental Responsibility
- For children born from 1<sup>st</sup> December 2003 where the Father's name is on the birth certificate, both the Father and the Mother both have Parental Responsibility
- In all other cases, Fathers are required to officially obtain Parental Responsibility
- Parental Responsibility cannot be lost, except by legal adoption, although it does not guarantee contact

If you would like further guidance, there is clear information on the Government website

[www.direct.gov.uk/en/Parents/ParentsRights/DG\\_4002954](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Parents/ParentsRights/DG_4002954)

## Working with Separated Parents – Appendix B

At St Mary's School we are committed to working with families and understand the importance of continuing the relationship between school and parents who do not live with their child.

Please complete the form below and return this to the School Office indicating how you would like to be kept informed about your child's education.

Name of Child: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Parent: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Post Code \_\_\_\_\_

Tel: \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Please circle the best way to send information to you:

Via your child                      Email                      Post

Please tick the information you would like to receive:

- Regular Newsletter
- Timely information about forthcoming events
- Appointments offered for parents evenings at appropriate times (where this is not feasible written reports of parent consultations will be provided)
- Additional copies of year end reports