Separated Parents Policy

Sir William Burrough Primary School

September 2024

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0. Document Control

The table below contains the changes made between the different final editions of this document set for approval. This is to help provide information to those reviewing and approving the document of the changes being made.

Document Edition	Section	Details of change

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1. Definitions

The "Trust" refers to the company known as the University Schools Trust, East London and all Trustees, Governors and Staff who work within it.

A "School" refers to an individual academy within the Trust, as denoted by their Unique Reference Number. As such a 'school' may span one or several phases of education to the individual academies within the Trust. Depending on the context the term "School" may refer to a singular academy or to all of the academies within the Trust but as separate entities.

"Staff" refers to any individual who is employed by the Trust or who operates on the Trust's behalf, e.g. Trustees and Governors.

A "Parent" includes the natural or adoptive parent of a pupil as well as any non-parent / carer who has parental responsibility including being involved in the day-to-day care of a pupil.

A "Pupil" includes any incoming or current pupil at any School within the Trust. It also includes any individual who was previously a pupil at any School within the Trust and who has left within the appropriate timeframe for consideration as necessary, e.g. complaints. The term pupil is used as standard by the UST in its policy documents but can be replaced with the term "student" or "child" with no change of definition.

The "Headteacher" is defined as the individual who has ultimate responsibility for a school in line with UST strategy, approach, ethos and values. Individual schools may have alternative titles for this position such as Executive Headteacher or Principal.

2. Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to all staff and parents. This policy applies to all relevant adults who are defined as:

- Trust staff, including any agency workers and contractors;
- Teacher trainees and other trainees/apprentices;
- Volunteers and any other individuals who work for or provide services on behalf of or for the school to include, but not limited to, all those detailed in the single central record (as amended);
- Trustees and governors

3. Policy Aims and Ethos

This policy is designed to ensure effective contact and liaison with separated families, which will help us to achieve our aims. Sir William Burrough Primary School recognises that children from families whose parents are separated, or are undergoing separation, may go through traumatic changes during their time at school. With this in mind, we will make every effort to work with parents to promote the welfare of children. This policy has been created to minimise any impact and to clarify to all parties what is expected from separated parents and what can be expected from the school and its staff.

The policy aims to show how staff at Sir William Burrough Primary School will continue to work with families, in the best interests of children, after parents separate. 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:

- Biological parents, whether they are married or not.
- Any person who, although not a biological parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person.
- Any person who, although not a biological parent, has care of a child or young person (a person with whom the child lives and who looks after the child).

Schools must treat all parents equally, unless a court order limits an individual's exercise of parental responsibility (DfE guidance). This obligation on schools continues even when family circumstances change, for example, relationships between parents break down. It is generally in the best interest of children if parents and schools can work together. Everyone who has parental responsibility has a right to receive information about the child. This is the case whether they live with the child or not. There is no requirement to inform one parent about communications with the other parent.

Rights of those with parental responsibility. The DfE's guidance on parental responsibilities, referred to above, explains that individuals who have parental responsibility for a child have the right to:

- Receive information, such as pupil reports
- Participate in activities, for example voting in elections for parent governors

- Be informed about meetings involving the child; for example, parent consultation evenings and a governors' meeting on the child's exclusion
- Timely information about upcoming events provided
- Newsletters sent electronically or by post to non-residential parents.

4. Links to Legislation and Guidance Documents

4.1. Relevant Internal Policies

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

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Information, Records and Data Protection: Policies and Procedures

4.2. Relevant External Documents

- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024
- Child protection procedures for staff working in childcare settings

5. Roles and Responsibilities

5.1. Executive Headteacher/Headteacher/Senior Leadership Team

The Executive Headteacher/Headteacher/Senior Leadership Team will ensure the implementation and adherence of this policy across their school and ensure that all those defined under 'scope of the policy' receive and have access to a copy of this document.

The DfE's guidance also provides advice for Executive Headteachers/Headteachers and Senior Leaders, who should:

- Ask parents or guardians for the names and addresses of all parents when they register a pupil
- 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
- Ensure that names and addresses of all parents are forwarded to any school to which the pupil moves
- Ensure that details of court orders are noted in a pupil's record
- Where the address of a non-resident parent is unknown, tell the resident parent that the non-resident parent is entitled to be involved in their child's education and ask that information is passed on to them.

5.2. Parents

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. 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. 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.

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. The school holds one parents evening appointment per child, where both parents are welcome. The school expects parents to communicate with each other regarding these arrangements. 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. Any parent has the right to receive reports and review pupil records of their child. If the parents are separated or divorced, reports will be sent to the parent and address noted in the school's records specifying where the child resides with the expectation that they will share the report with the other parent. If the child is subject to a joint residence order and the school's records formally capture that the child resides at two addresses, then reports will be sent to both addresses. The school will send copies of the reports to a parent with whom the child does not reside only if that parent submits a written request.

Disagreements between parents must be resolved between the parents and cannot be resolved by the school. The school will maintain an open door policy with both parents and the class teacher will be available to discuss any issues. 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.

Where a separated parent has parental responsibility and requests to take the child during or at the end of the school day, the school will endeavour to ascertain that parents are in agreement, providing a non-contact order is not in place. The Executive Headteacher/Headteacher and senior leaders will use their discretion on the decision to allow a child to leave the premises with a non-resident parent. If parental consent is required for outings or activities, the school will seek consent from the resident parent, unless the decision is likely to have a long-term and significant impact on the child or the non-resident parent has requested to be asked for consent in all such cases. 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 (Separated Parents Dual Parental Consent Letter Appendix 1).

Where parents seek to change a child's name, parents are responsible for resolving potential conflicts about the change of a surname. There must be consent from both parents after divorce or separation for registering a change of name of a pupil. The school will ensure that the change in surname is supported by written evidence. A separated parent who has parental responsibility, but no longer lives with the child, may refuse to consent to changing the child's

surname. In such cases, the parent wishing to change the child's name would need to apply to the courts for permission do so. In circumstances where a name change has already been affected by the school and it is in the interest of the child, who might be known by a new name, to refer back to a different name, the school will make a decision holding the best interests of the child under paramount consideration.

6. Approval Signature

Signature of (enter position e.g. Chair) _____

Print name _____

Date _____

7. Appendix 1 – Key Members of Staff Referenced

Executive Headteacher	Siobhan Fehim
Senior Leadership Team	David Hodges Karyce Maitland

8. Appendix 2 – Separated Parents Dual Consent Letter

Parent name

Parent address

Dear _____,

The school recently asked you to sign and return a consent form for _____.

On this occasion, you granted/didn't grant consent, but _____ granted/didn't grant consent.

In situations like this, it's our school's policy to act as though consent hasn't been given if both parents don't agree.

This means that, at present _____ won't be attending the school trip to _____.

If you and _____ wish to change your response to the consent request, you both need to inform the school in writing. Please email the school office (office@swbschool.net).

Sincerely,

Salmon Lane Limehouse London E14 7PD
t: +44 (0)20 7987 2147 f: +44 (0)20 7515 1858 e: admin@sirwilliamburrough.towerhamlets.sch.uk
www.sirwilliamburrough.info
Headteacher: Siobhan Fahim
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9. Appendix 3 – Parents Information Form

Parent information form – To be completed as part of the Admissions Process

PUPIL INFORMATION	
SURNAME	
FIRST NAME	
DATE OF BIRTH	

Parent Details

We need to collect details of every parent.
For the purposes of the school, you're a child's parent if you:

- Are the child's biological parent
- Aren't the child's biological parent, but have parental responsibility for them (e.g., adoptive parents, step-parents or guardians)
- Have the child in your care (e.g., foster carers).

We need these details so we can meet our statutory responsibilities towards all parents.

If there's a court order affecting the child that affects who has parental responsibility for the child, please contact the school office

PARENT 1	
SURNAME	
FIRST NAME	
HOME ADDRESS	
HOME PHONE NUMBER	
MOBILE PHONE NUMBER	
WORK ADDRESS	
WORK PHONE NUMBER	
EMAIL ADDRESS	
RELATIONSHIP TO CHILD	

DO YOU LIVE WITH THE CHILD? (circle the most appropriate response)	Yes, full-time / Yes, part-time / No

PARENT 2	
SURNAME	
FIRST NAME	
HOME ADDRESS	
HOME PHONE NUMBER	
MOBILE PHONE NUMBER	
WORK PHONE NUMBER	
WORK ADDRESS	
EMAIL ADDRESS	
RELATIONSHIP TO CHILD	
DO YOU LIVE WITH THE CHILD? (circle the most appropriate response)	Yes, full-time / Yes, part-time / No
IF YOU ANSWERED 'YES, PART-TIME', PLEASE SPECIFY (For example, 'every other week', 'weekends only', or 'every week Monday-Thursday)	

PARENT 3	
SURNAME	
FIRST NAME	
HOME ADDRESS	
HOME PHONE NUMBER	
MOBILE PHONE NUMBER	
WORK PHONE NUMBER	

PARENT 3	
WORK ADDRESS	
EMAIL ADDRESS	
RELATIONSHIP TO CHILD	
DO YOU LIVE WITH THE CHILD? (circle the most appropriate response)	Yes, full-time / Yes, part-time / No
IF YOU ANSWERED 'YES, PART-TIME', PLEASE SPECIFY (For example, 'every other week', 'weekends only', or 'every week Monday-Thursday)	

PARENT 4	
SURNAME	
FIRST NAME	
HOME ADDRESS	
HOME PHONE NUMBER	
MOBILE PHONE NUMBER	
WORK PHONE NUMBER	
WORK ADDRESS	
EMAIL ADDRESS	
RELATIONSHIP TO CHILD	
DO YOU LIVE WITH THE CHILD? (circle the most appropriate response)	Yes, full-time / Yes, part-time / No
IF YOU ANSWERED 'YES, PART-TIME', PLEASE SPECIFY (For example, 'every other week', 'weekends only', or 'every week Monday-Thursday)	