



Working with Separated Families Policy

Date Reviewed:	26.06.2026
Next Review Date:	26.06.2027
Policy Owner:	Mrs Gemma Mitchell Mrs Faye Dance

Date	Amendment	Staff Member

Mission Statement

We are committed to providing a supportive, enjoyable and family style environment in which every child is nurtured and encouraged to achieve their potential through a broad-based curriculum and opportunities for developing sporting, dramatic, artistic and musical talents.

Statement of Aims & Objectives

- To enable each child to fulfil their own academic and personal potential.
- To instil in every child the importance of developing personal initiative and to foster in them a belief that they can fulfil their potential in any area of school life.
- To provide a broad based academic and extra-curricular education that is delivered in such a way as to satisfy the learning needs of each and every pupil.
- To help each pupil to develop both a set of values and an understanding and appreciation of other religious beliefs.
- To learn the difference between right and wrong and to appreciate that rights and responsibilities are equally balanced.
- To develop and promote a sense of caring and community between the pupils within the school and the wider community as a whole.
- To instil in each pupil a high degree of self-respect and respect for their fellow pupils, teachers and other adults.
- To prepare each child for the transition to the next stage of their education and to be able to take advantage of any opportunities as they present themselves.



Oakhurst Grange School

Safeguarding

Oakhurst Grange School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. At this school we respect and value all children and are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for our pupils so that they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. We believe that every pupil should be able to participate in all school activities in an enjoyable and safe environment and be protected from harm. This is the responsibility of every adult employed by, or invited to deliver services at Oakhurst Grange School. We recognise our responsibility to safeguard all who access school and promote the welfare of all of our pupils by protecting them from physical, sexual and emotional abuse, neglect and bullying. This should be read in conjunction with the Safeguarding Policy.

All staff will be asked to complete training annually following KCSIE updates. Further safeguard training will take place throughout the year. All staff must wear their lanyards at all times.

The Safeguarding governor is: Pauline Clark Pauline.clark@oakhurstgrangeschool.co.uk

DSL: Roxann Dowling (Head of EYFS)

DDSL: Gemma Mitchell (Headteacher)

DDSL: Faye Dance (Deputy Headteacher)

Telephone: 01883 343344

Safeguarding Team: DSL@oakhurstgrangeschool.co.uk



Introduction

Oakhyrst Grange School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. At this school we respect and value all children and are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for our pupils so that they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. We believe that every pupil should be able to participate in all school activities in an enjoyable and safe environment and be protected from harm. This is the responsibility of every adult employed by, or invited to deliver services at Oakhyrst Grange School. We recognise our responsibility to safeguard all who access school and promote the welfare of all of our pupils by protecting them from physical, sexual and emotional abuse, neglect and bullying. The security, safety and protection of our children in all online contexts is equally important.

Oakhyrst Grange School actively promotes democracy, the rule of the law, individual liberty and mutual respect for those with different faiths and beliefs. These are fundamental British Values which underpin all that we offer.

This Policy aims to identify how Oakhyrst Grange 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 (*see Appendix A - Guidance 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 interest of children if parents and schools can work together.

As a school, we will support separated parents and look for ways to continue to involve them in their child's education and ensure they receive information about their child if this is an issue. Where possible we can share the following with non-residential parents who request it:

- Newsletters/letters
- Information about upcoming events provided via calendar and on school website
- Appointments for consultation evenings at appropriate times
- Additional copies of end of year reports / SEND reports

All information may be sent via the child, email or by post to both parents. Separated parents are required to inform the school and to return a request for additional information form indicating ways in which they would like to be kept informed.

Parents of children joining the school meet with the Registrar and are asked to bring their child's birth certificate, along with a copy of a passport and any relevant visas. Copies of court orders or solicitor's letters confirming parental responsibility should, also be provided, if applicable.

Children's welfare and safety are paramount and, where there are issues over access to children, parents should contact the school immediately. Where there is a court restraining order in place all information must be passed onto the school in order that the school is aware who the child can be released to.

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 there was a child protection issue.



Oakhurst Grange School

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 following policies:

Safeguarding and Child Protection

This Policy is subject to regular review.



Working with Separated Parents - Appendix A

Guidance on Parental Responsibility

In order to help us to look after your child/ren whilst they are in our care, we are required to ask you to provide certain information, such as name of parents, address, 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. Listed below is 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 the 1st December 2003 where the father's name is on the birth certificate, the father and mother will 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.

Having parental responsibility means assuming all the rights, duties, powers, responsibilities and authority that a parent of a child has by law. People other than a child's natural parents can acquire parental responsibility through:

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

(If you would like further guidance, there is clear information on the government website <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dealing-with-issues-relating-to-parental-responsibility/understanding-and-dealing-with-issues-relating-to-parental-responsibility>)

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 parents' evening appointments throughout the year and parents are welcome to attend together or separately. Parents can order photographs, tickets for performances and other instances directly through the school office.



Progress reports and pupil records

- Any parent has the right to receive progress reports and review pupil records of their child.
- If the parents are separated or divorced, progress 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 progress reports will be sent to both addresses.
- The school will send copies of the progress 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 in order 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.

Collecting a child from school

- 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 usual route for daily contact between parents and school is via email or through a child's Contact book such as a homework diary or reading record.
- The Headteacher will use her discretion on the decision to allow a child to leave the premises with a non-resident parent.

If one parent seeks to remove a child from school in contravention of the notified arrangements, and the parent to whom the child would normally be released has not consented, the following steps will be taken:

- The Headteacher, Deputy Head, Designated Safeguarding Lead (or member of the Safeguarding Team) will meet with the parent seeking to collect/remove the child and, in his/her presence, telephone the parent to whom the child would normally be released and explain the request
- If the parent to whom the child would normally be released agrees, the child may be released and it will be recorded that permission was granted in this instance
- In the event that the parent to whom the child would normally be released cannot be contacted, the Headteacher or staff member dealing with the issue may make a decision based upon all relevant information available to him/her
- The Headteacher or staff member may have to refuse permission if agreement/consent cannot be obtained and may need to take advice before a child or children are collected/ released
- Oakhyrst Grange School cannot prevent the other parent collecting the child or children but we will endeavour to reach an agreement and this may mean keeping the child or children safe whilst our staff try and reach such an agreement
- If there is a Court Order restricting contact, or there is contravention of any access agreement, the child or children will not be released. The other parent will be advised to take any necessary action to prevent any further issues
- During any discussion or communication with parents, the child or children will be supervised by an appropriate member of school staff in a separate room
- 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 and Children's Services will be informed.



Obtaining Consent including for Trips, Events and Residential Excursions

- 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. This can include medical issues such as vaccinations. Please be aware that pupils will not be able to go on a school trip if loco parentis is not provided. Both parents must consent to a pupil going on a residential trip.

Name changes

- 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 to 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.

Information when Transferring to Another School

The school will require consent from both parents to share any recent reports to secondary schools if they are applying for a place at the school. If a decision to a Secondary school is not agreed, then Oakhyrst Grange School will seek notification from both the parent's solicitors and/or the courts final decision.

- Parents must inform the office of any pre-planned absences due to examinations or interviews providing the dates, times and reason clearly.

Payment of Fees and Deposit

Termly fees are uploaded to the Parent Portal by the end of each term and can be accessed by both parents. All parents are provided with their own separate log in details to the Portal when their child joins the School. A re-activation email may be obtained from ict@sthilarysschool.com. As per the Parent Contract, each person with parental responsibility for the child is required to sign the Acceptance Form and the School is entitled to treat any instruction, authority, request or prohibition received from one signatory as having been given on behalf of all signatories and therefore on behalf of all those with parental responsibility for the child. Consequently, those who have signed, are liable for the whole of the fees due and any and all supplemental charges. Parents are responsible for resolving potential conflicts about who settles the bill.

The returnable deposit paid at the start of the child's entry to the School (once they leave at the end of Year 6) and any other returnable deposits paid (e.g. instrument hire) will be returned to the parent who made the initial payment. Where this cannot be identified (i.e. it was paid from a joint bank account), the deposit will be returned to the resident parent unless both parents have contacted the School before the end of the term that the child is leaving, to advise otherwise. Both parents should be in agreement.



Oakhyrst Grange School

Request for Additional Parental Information

At Oakhyrst Grange 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. It is the parent's responsibility to ensure they contact Oakhyrst Grange to provide all up-to-date contact details.

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

Request for Additional Information

Name of parent:

Relationship:

Name of child/children:

Home Address:

Telephone number:

Email Address:

Please provide detail of a second contact in case there is an emergency.

Name of Person:

Relationship to child:

Telephone number: