

SEPARATED FAMILY POLICY

Date: May 2021

Introduction

At Meadowpark we recognise that when parents separate it can be a difficult situation for all concerned. We understand that emotions may run high and this policy sets out how we will support all parties within Meadowpark, including our staff team.

Staff will work closely with the parents to build close relationships which will support the child/children's emotional well being and report any significant changes in behaviour to the parent.

Parents will be signposted to relevant services and organisations for support for the whole family.

Parental Responsibility

Whilst the law does not define in detail what parental responsibility (PR) is, the following list sets out some of the key features of someone holding parental responsibility. These include:

- Providing a home for the child
- Having contact with, and living with the child
- Protecting and maintaining the child
- Disciplining the child
- Choosing and providing for the child's education
- Determining the religion of the child
- Agreeing to the child's medical treatment
- Naming the child and agreeing to any change of the child's name
- Accompanying the child outside the UK and agreeing to the child's emigration, should the issue arise
- Being responsible for the child's property
- Appointing a guardian for the child, if necessary
- Allowing confidential information about the child to be disclosed.

In England, if the parents of a child are married to each other at the time of the birth, or if they have jointly adopted a child, then both have parental

responsibility. Parents do not lose PR if they divorce, and this applies to both the resident and the non-resident parent.

This is not automatically the case for unmarried parents. According to current law, a mother always has PR for her child, however, a father only has this responsibility if he is married to the mother when the child is born or has acquired legal responsibility for his child through one of the following routes:

- By jointly registering the birth of the child with the mother;
- By a PR agreement with the mother;
- By a PR order made by a court.

Registration at Meadowpark

During the registration process we collect details about both parents including who has PR, as this will avoid any future difficult situations. These details are requested on the child registration form. If a parent does not have PR, or has a Court order in place to prevent this, we must have a copy of this documentation for the child's records.

If a child is registered by one parent of a separated family, we request disclosure of all relevant details relating to the child and family fully, in accordance with the policy set out below.

We will:

- Ensure the child's welfare is paramount
- Comply with any details of a court order where applicable to the child's attendance at Meadowpark where we have received a copy
- Provide information on the child's progress, to both parents where both hold PR
- Invite both parents to Meadowpark events, including parent/teacher consultations and social events, where both hold PR
- Ensure any incident or accident within Meadowpark relating to the child is reported to the person collecting the child
- Ensure that all matters known by the staff pertaining to the family and the parent's separation remain confidential
- Ensure that no member of staff takes sides regarding the separation and treats both parents equally and with due respect
- Not restrict access to any parent with PR unless a formal Court order is in place. We respectfully ask that parents do not put us in this position.

We ask parents to:

- Provide us with all information relating to PR, Court orders and injunctions
- Update information that changes any of the above as soon as practicably possible
- Work with us to ensure continuity of care and support for your child

- Not involve staff in any family disputes, unless this directly impacts on the care we provide for the child
- Talk to staff away from the child when this relates to family separation in order to avoid the child becoming upset. This can be arranged as a formal meeting or an informal chat
- Not ask Meadowpark to take sides in any dispute.

Approval and Review

The policy was approved by the Headteacher on 12th May 2021.
The renewal date is annually or earlier if there is a change in legislation.