

Working with Separated Parents Policy

Introduction

This Policy aims to show how staff will continue to work with families, in the best interests of children, after parents separate. At Victoria Education Centre we believe education, therapy and care needs are a joint journey between the child, the school and parents, and believe it is crucial for separated parents to be kept up to date with children's learning and attainment. 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.

Delivery

Below we have listed the ways in which we will work with absent parents to continue to involve them in their child's education.

- Additional copies of reports and targets which will be posted to separated parents
- Letters /invites to meetings regarding
- Appointments offered for parents evenings at appropriate times – where possible it is preferable for parents to attend together, but the school is happy to see parents separately (it is not the schools responsibility to inform the other parent if the separated spouse attends an appointment in school)
- Termly Newsletters
- Information about events in school e.g. sports day, assemblies
- All letters regarding therapy appointments and clinics which take place at the Centre
- Photos/DVDs may be sent to parents where appropriate
- Birthday cards, Christmas cards, Fathers/Mothers day cards (on the discretion of the teacher)
- Information posted on our school website and social networking page

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

Separated parents are required to inform the school and to return a form (Appendix B) indicating ways in which they would like to be kept informed.

Children's welfare and safety are paramount and, where there are issues over access to 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 their discretion and would seek clarification if it was felt there was a child protection issue.

The welfare of the child is at the heart of all we do and the Headteacher maintains 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.

DATE/TIME SCALE: To be reviewed annually or as necessary.

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|---------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Simon Brown - Headteacher | Approved by Governors. |
| Reviewed April 2018. | Due for next Review: April 2019 |

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, 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. The information below 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 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.

Working with separated parents - Appendix B

At Victoria Education Centre 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 to school office indicating how you would like to be kept informed.

I would like to receive the following information:

Child's Name:

.....

| | Please tick |
|--|-------------|
| School reports | |
| Letters / invites to meetings | |
| All letters and information regarding therapy appointments and clinics which take place at Victoria Education Centre | |
| Information regarding parents evening and an appointment times | |
| Termly newsletters | |
| Information about events in school e.g. sports day, assemblies | |
| Photos / DVDs may be sent to parents (where appropriate) | |

Parents name:.....

Address:

.....

Telephone number (s):

Email:

Signed:

Please use the school website to read our school website and social networking page to read our termly newsletter and information about upcoming events.