



CHILTON FOLIAT CE VA PRIMARY SCHOOL



Our School Christian Vision

With thankfulness, courage and love,
we strive to improve heart and mind.

At Chilton Foliat Primary School we honour our educational heritage, supported by a strong Christian ethos. We strive to provide a diverse education that inspires children to develop a **thirst for knowledge**. This is delivered in a safe, thoughtful and nurturing environment promoting self-discipline, motivation and excellence in all that we do.

We encourage strong partnerships and inclusive relationships amongst pupils, parents, carers, staff and the wider community.

Separated or Divorced Parents Policy

Date Reviewed	March 2024
Review Period	Annually/ 2 Yearly /Readopted/Other
Review Body	Standards Committee

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Jesus said, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst". John 4:13



Introduction to policy

At Chilton Foliat Church of England VA Primary School we recognise that some parents are divorced or separated. School and local authority staff must treat all parents equally, unless a court order limits a parent's ability to make educational decisions, participate in school life or receive information about their children.

Parental Responsibility

In order to help us to look after children while they are in our care, the school's staff are required at the admissions stage to ask parents to provide certain information, such as the names of both parents, addresses, contact details etc. They are also required to ask who has Parental Responsibility for the child. This is important because it allows the school to be sure who has the right to make decisions about a child's education and medical treatment. However, this is a specific legal term and many parents may be unaware of how it is applied:

- All mothers automatically have Parental Responsibility (PR).
- If a child's parents were married at the time of the birth, both parents automatically have PR.
- 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 PR.
- In all other cases where a father does not have PR, he may, where mother agrees, complete a parental responsibility agreement. If mother does not agree, the father may be able to obtain it by applying to the court
- PR cannot be lost, except by legal adoption, although it does not guarantee contact.

The information provided to school when the pupil is enrolled, detailing whether both parents have PR, will be presumed to be correct unless a court order or original birth certificate proving otherwise is provided to the school. It is the responsibility of parents to inform the school when there is a change in the family's circumstances. We need to be kept up to date with contact details, arrangements for collecting children and any emergencies.

Parents, as defined above, are entitled to share in the decisions that are made about their child and to be treated equally by schools. These entitlements include:



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- Appeals against admission decisions
- Ofsted & school-based questionnaires
- Participation in any exclusion procedure
- Attendance at parent meetings/school events
- Access to school records and copies of school reports, newsletters, invitations to school events, school photographs relating to their child and information about school trips.

This entitlement cannot be restricted without a specific court order. The school does not have the power to act simply on the request of one parent to restrict another. The school will not seek to make judgements about individual circumstances but will treat both parents equally unless there is a specific court order to the contrary and/or a substantive safeguarding concern in existence. Staff will never pass judgement on either parent to the child.

We will seek to maintain our open-door policy with all parents, and the class teacher and/or Head Teacher will be available by appointment to discuss any issues. The school is under no obligation to inform the resident parent of the other parent contacting the school. Any such information will be given at the discretion of the Headteacher.

Court Orders

Upon receipt of any court order restricting access to a parent, the school retains the right to consult the Local Authority before taking immediate action. The school can only be expected to comply with an order where we have been made aware of it and have received a copy, and only to the extent that it relates to the school. In the event that the school is not informed of the existence of such an order, we cannot comply with its terms. Only a Court Order providing for the arrangements will be deemed valid; a letter from a solicitor is not sufficient.

School communications

The school recognises that, while the parents of some pupils may be divorced or separated, both have a right to be informed of, and involved in, their child's education. However, we expect that parents, whatever the nature of their separation, will do all they can to communicate with each other and share information from and with the school, for the benefit of their child.



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It is assumed that the parent with whom the child principally resides will keep the other parent informed of all school news and events.

Unless the school is advised by both parents, who have agreed that both will be a primary point of contact (for example in the case where custody and residency is shared on a regular basis) the school will send everyday correspondence to the parent with whom the child principally resides.

All diary dates, Newsletters, and Headteacher's letters are available on our website at www.chiltonfoliatprimary.org.uk

Parents are responsible for providing a correct email address.

Occasionally letters are sent home with pupils and we expect parents to communicate these messages to each other as and when appropriate. We expect parents to liaise and communicate directly with each other in matters such as the ordering of school photographs; residential/school visits; tickets for performances and other instances.

Under normal circumstances, we will hold one parents' evening appointment per child each year, where both parents are welcome, and we expect parents to communicate with each other regarding these arrangements. Under certain circumstances, the school can offer a secondary appointment, but this must be discussed with individual class teacher involved.

Both parents are entitled to receive progress reports and review their child's pupil records. Progress reports will be sent to the parent with whom the child resides with the expectation that he/she will share the report with the other parent. The school will email copies of progress reports to the non-custodial parent if a request is submitted. Should an unnamed parent seek information or access to his/her child, the school will always inform the main carer of this to check Parental Responsibility and whether a court order is in place. For the avoidance of doubt, we will seek written confirmation from the main carer. Proof of identity of the non-resident parent will always be required in these cases.

Disagreements between parents must be resolved between the parents and cannot be resolved by the school or local authority.

Collecting a child from school

The school will release children to parents in accordance with arrangements notified to the school. If one parent seeks to remove the child from school in contravention of the usual arrangements and the parent to whom the child would normally be



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released has not notified the school of any change, the following steps will be followed:

- Where a separated parent, who has parental responsibility and no court order in place, wishes to take the child during or at the end of the school day, the resident parent will be contacted in order to ensure that they are in agreement with the arrangement. If the parent to whom the child would normally be released agrees, the child may be released and the records will reflect that permission was granted orally. If the parent opposes the other parent wanting to take the child then the school will advise that without a court order we cannot prevent them from doing so.
- In the event that the parent to whom the child would normally be released cannot be reached, the Headteacher or staff member dealing with the issue will make a decision based upon all relevant information available to him/her.
- During any discussion or communication with parents, the child will be supervised by an appropriate member of school staff in a separate room.
- 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 should be notified immediately.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dealing-with-issues-relating-to-parental-responsibility/understanding-and-dealing-with-issues-relating-to-parental-responsibility#:~:text=School%20and%20local%20authority%20staff,receive%20information%20about%20their%20children.>

https://www.gingerbread.org.uk/information/separating/support-for-your-child/?gclid=EAlalQobChMI45aPh-nH9QIVMoBQBh1_MAK2EAAAYASAAEgLChvD_BwE