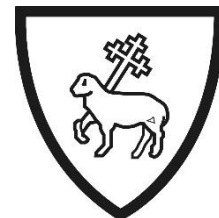


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# Brockington College Separated Parents Policy

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Brockington College, a Church of England Academy, has at its heart a distinctive Christian ethos. Based on our Christian foundation and values we seek to promote a culture of developing every person and therefore every school policy is written from this perspective, with a commitment to learning and maturing in the context of communal and individual development.
- 1.2 We lay particular stress on the Christian values of compassion, forgiveness, justice, koinonia, learning, perseverance, respect and wisdom for individuals and across the school community.

## 2. Purpose

- 2.1 Brockington College recognises that children from families whose parents are separated, or are undergoing separation, may experience difficult or traumatic changes during their time at college. With this in mind, we will make every effort to work in partnership with parents to promote the welfare of children.
- 2.2 This policy has been created to minimise any adverse impact of separation on students' learning and wellbeing and to clarify to all parties what is expected from separated parents and what can be expected from the college.

## 3. Definitions

- 3.1 Colleges 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:
  - all natural parents, whether they are married or not
  - any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person
  - any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person (a person with whom the child lives and who looks after the child).
- 3.2 Parents as defined above must be treated equally, unless there is a court order limiting an individual's exercise of parental responsibility. In the event that the college is not informed of the existence of such an order, neither parent will have rights superior to the other.
- 3.3 Individuals who have parental responsibility, or care of a child, have the same rights as natural parents. This includes the right to:
  - receive information (e.g. college reports, college events, newsletters)
  - request to see their child's educational record
  - participate in statutory activities (e.g. elections for parents governors)
  - give consent (e.g. for trips or sharing photos of the child on the school website)
  - be informed about meetings concerning the child (e.g. parents' evenings, a suspension/exclusion hearing).

## 4. College responsibilities

- 4.1 The college's responsibilities:
  - will ensure that the college has arrangements in place to ask parents or guardians for the names and addresses of all parents when they register a child

- that the names and addresses of all parents, where known, are included in the admission register and also in student records, and are available to the student's teachers
- that names and addresses of all parents are forwarded to any college to which the student moves
- that the details of court orders are noted in the student's records
- where the address of a non-resident parent is unknown, the principal will tell the resident parent that the non-resident parent is entitled to be involved in their child's education and request that information is passed to them.

## **5. Parental responsibilities**

- 5.1 Parents are responsible for informing the college when there is a change in family circumstances, such as if there are any changes in parental responsibility/separation. We recognise the sensitivity of such situations and we will maintain confidentiality requested by parents as far as possible. The college will also not make judgements about individual circumstances, and both parents will be treated equally.
- 5.2 Where there is a court order in place, a copy needs to be retained by the college. We will put measures in place to ensure the child is not released to any individuals named in the court order as persons who do not have parental responsibility.
- 5.3 Parents who have joint custody of the child are requested to keep the college informed, in writing, of any disputes they have with each other regarding the collection of the children.
- 5.4 If a leave of absence request form is received and signed by only one parent, the college will endeavour to seek confirmation that the other parent is aware.
- 5.5 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 college immediately.
- 5.6 The college policy is to hold one parents' evening appointment per child, where both parents are welcome. Due to capacity, the college cannot offer more than one appointment. If the appointment cannot be jointly attended, the separated parent can make a request for a written report to the Head of Year.
- 5.7 Parents are expected to liaise and communicate directly with each other in matters such as the ordering of college photographs, tickets for performances and other such instances.
- 5.8 It is not the school's responsibility to settle disagreements over consent. This is for parents to agree and if cannot agree, parents need to seek independent legal advice or use a mediator.

## **6. Resident Parent**

- 7.1 The resident parent is the parent the child lives with most of the time (also known as 'having custody'). If a child lives with each parent for an equal amount of time, both parents count as resident parents.

## **7. Progress reports and student records**

- 6.1 Any parent has the right to receive progress reports and review student records of their child. If the parents are separated or divorced, progress reports will be sent to the parent and address noted in the college'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 college's records formally capture that the child resides at two addresses, then progress reports will be sent to both addresses. The college will send copies of the progress report to a parent with whom the child does not reside if that parent submits a written or electronic request for this to happen.

*Progress reports are sent electronically to all parents with parental responsibility. If the college has not been provided with email addresses for one parent, the college's expectation is the resident*

*parent will share the progress report with the other parent. It is the parents responsibility to keep the college updated with their current email address in this respect.*

## **Collecting a child from college**

- 7.1 Where a separated parent has parental responsibility, and requests to take the child during or at the end of the college day, the resident parent will be asked to confirm that they are aware of this, providing a non-contact order is not in place. The principal will exercise discretion on the decision to allow a child to leave the premises with a non-resident parent.

## **8. Obtaining consent for off-site activities**

- 8.1 If parental consent is required for outings or activities, the college 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 college 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 college will assume that parental consent has not been given.

## **9. Name changes**

- 9.1 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 a name of a student. The college 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.
- 9.2 In circumstances where a name change has already been implemented by the college 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 college will make a decision holding the best interests of the child under paramount consideration.

## **10. Disagreements**

- 10.1 Disagreements between parents must be resolved between the parents and cannot be resolved by the college.
- 10.2 In the event that the parents are unable to agree with one another on decisions regarding their child's educational programme, including but not limited to placement and participation in extra-curricular activities, the college will assist by facilitating a meeting with all parents if it will assist the parents in resolving the situation.
- 10.3 Where, in the reasonable opinion of the college, the issue requiring parental consent is likely to have a long term and significant impact on the child, the college may require the consent of all those with parental responsibility for the child who are known to the college. An example of the circumstances where joint consent is likely to be required includes the decision to withdraw a child from sex education or religious education within the college curriculum.
- 10.4 The college will maintain an open door policy with both parents and 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 threatening, the police will be notified and advice will be sought.

## **11. Management Information System**

- 11.1 Parents are always Priority 1 and 2 on the system. Both parents are treated equally and will be sent all appropriate communication. When the school has to contact home for illness or pastoral, Priority 1 will be used first. The exception to this, is if a parent lives out of the local area, so would be unavailable to attend the school in the case of illness or an emergency. In this instance, the parent would be Priority 5 but still be sent all appropriate information.

- 11.2 The school will prioritise parents on Bromcom (the MIS system) as deemed most appropriate, when there is a 50/50 split for residency, following this criteria for deciding which parent will be Priority 1:
- the parent who completed the original admission form for Year 7;
  - the parent who claims free school meals (if applicable);
  - the parent who resides a reasonable distance from the school;
  - both parents agree who should be Priority 1.
- 11.3 The school will not change the priority order when there is any sort of dispute between parents. Ultimately, the school principal will make the final decision on the parental priorities when there is a dispute that cannot be resolved.

## **12. Pupils aged 13 and over**

- 12.1 Pupils aged 13 and over can assume control over their personal information and restrict access to it under the UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018.
- 12.2 Pupils aged 13 and over cannot stop a parent from accessing their educational record.

## **13. Moving Schools/Home School Education**

- 13.1 The school does not have a statutory obligation to notify one parent if the other decides to remove their child. It is the responsibility of the separated parents to discuss the issue. The welfare of every child will always be taken into consideration and, if the school feels it is appropriate, the school will contact the other parent.