



**IRONSTONE ACADEMY TRUST**

# Working with Separated Parents and families

**Date of Issue:** November 2024

**Issued by:** Mr C Faulkner

**Review Date:** November 2027

## Introduction

This Policy aims to show how staff at an Ironstone Academy Trust School will work with families, in the best interests of children, in some specific, potentially challenging circumstances; for example, after parents separate. It should be read in conjunction with our other policies and information on the website. In matters where interpretation is unclear the decision of the Head teacher is final, save for the legal responsibilities of the Trust and the current legal situation being upheld.

## Background

We expect all members of the school family to treat everyone with care, courtesy and respect. We see education as a partnership between parents/carers and school and will work to promote this view.

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.

**The Safeguarding Lead for each School is identified on the school website and Safeguarding Policy.**

## Delivery

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

Weekly or termly newsletters available electronically to non-residential parent.

Some of our Academies use a downloadable app available to all, with individual notification of updates relating to a child. Some use an electronic notification system

Timely information about upcoming events provided via the Academy website.

Separate appointments can be offered for parent's evenings at mutually convenient times.

Additional copies of end of year reports provided either in the post, or electronically.

This policy will be shared on the website.

## Information sharing

Parents of children joining the school meet with the Head teacher and 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. At this stage the school will discuss the contents of the Policy if required.

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 Head teacher 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 Head teacher and Governors of the Academy 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.



## **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. This leaflet 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.

***If you would like further guidance, there is clear information on the government website [www.direct.gov](http://www.direct.gov)***

## Working with separated parents - Appendix B

Ironstone Academy Trust 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 the school office indicating how you would like to be kept informed about your child's education.

**Name of parent:**

**Name of child/children:**

**Address:**

**Telephone number/s:**

**Email:**

**Please circle the best way to send information to you:**

Via your child    By email    By post

**Please confirm the information you would like to receive:**

- Appointments offered for parents evenings at appropriate times.
- Additional copies of end of year reports.

To be completed by School, Evidence Check: