



Policy for Separated and Divorced Parents

Rationale and legal position

At Newcastle School for Boys, we wish to promote the best interests of the boy(s), working in partnership with both parents, unless directed by a court order. In the event that the School is not informed of such action and given sight or confirmation of the court order, neither parent will have rights superior to the other.

Research and experience have shown that separated parents can become particularly estranged, especially during the initial stages of the split. This is very often traumatic for those children concerned. These family problems can have an impact on the schools the children attend. This policy is an attempt to minimise this impact and clarify to all parties what is expected from separated parents and what can be expected from Newcastle School for Boys and its staff.

The School recognises that, while the parents of some boys may be divorced or separated, both have a right to be informed of, and involved in, their son's education.

The information provided to the School when the boy was enrolled detailing whether both parents have parental responsibility for the boy will be presumed to be correct unless a court order or original birth certificate proving otherwise is provided to the School. *Note: this includes financial liability.*

It is the responsibility of the parents to inform the School when there is a change in family circumstances. The School needs to be kept up to date with contact details, arrangements for collecting children and emergencies. This also includes changes in financial arrangements.

We hope and expect that parents, whatever the nature of their separation, will do all they can to communicate with each other and share information from and for the School, for the benefit of their son. This also considerably reduces the administrative burden on the School and the related possibility of errors being made and upset caused.

However, in the event that this cannot be achieved or its execution has a negative effect on the boy(s) and their learning, duplicate letters and e-mails will be sent to both parents. This includes information on all of the main events within school, including productions, sports days, parents' evenings, trips, etc. Occasionally,

items are given directly to boys such as notes in their homework diaries or revision lists for exams, textbooks and other educational resources. We would expect parents to share these with each other as and when appropriate.

We will hold one parents evening appointment per boy where both parents are welcome. We would expect parents to communicate with each other regarding these arrangements.

We expect that parents should liaise and communicate directly with each other in matters such as the ordering of school photographs, tickets for performances and other instances.

Reports

Both parents have the right to receive termly reports and grade cards. If the parents are separated or divorced, progress reports will be sent to the parent with whom the boy resides with the expectation that he/she will share the report with the other parent.

The School will send copies of reports to the non-custodial parent only if that parent submits a written request.

All parents are recommended to regularly use our website. It contains a range of information and links.

On-going disagreements between parents

In the event that the parents are unable to agree with one another on decisions regarding their son's educational programme, including, but not limited to subject choices, participation in co-curricular activities, future schooling and consent to evaluation and services, the School will arrange a meeting with both parents (either together or separately) to attempt to resolve the situation and if it cannot be resolved, the Headmaster reserves the right to ask the parents to find an alternative school for their son.

Absences from school

If one parent seeks to remove the boy(s) from school, and the parent with whom the boy ordinarily resides has not consented, the following steps should be followed:

1. The Headmaster, or a designated deputy, will meet with the parent seeking to remove the boy and, in his/her presence, telephone the parent with whom the boy ordinarily resides and explain the request.
2. If the parent with whom the boy ordinarily resides agrees, the boy will be released and the records will reflect that the permission was granted orally.
3. In the event that the parent, with whom the boy ordinarily resides cannot be reached, the Headmaster, or staff member dealing with the issue, may make a decision based upon all relevant information available to him/her.

4. The Headmaster, or designated deputy, may have to refuse permission if consent cannot be obtained or, if other factors are at play, such as the boy's reluctance or unwillingness to be absent from school or if the Headmaster, or designated deputy, have reasonable concerns that the absence of the boy(s) from school may compromise his (their) safety or well-being.

In extreme circumstances, if there is a belief that a possible abduction of the boy(s) may occur or if a parent is disruptive, the police will be notified immediately.

In the event of the breakdown of a relationship

The School acknowledges that relationships can break down suddenly and/or traumatically, even for a temporary period, and that we may not be aware of this. Our position is never to attribute blame but to support the boy and to ensure his safety and well-being which is paramount. We would ask therefore that one parent at least contact the school if a relationship has broken down and inform us of any changes to plans or arrangements, for example for school pick-up.

We may well need to meet with you to discuss these arrangements. Parents can be assured we will treat the matter with care and sensitivity. In the first instance, please contact your son's form tutor or class teacher. However, if there is an emergency and/or you have safety concerns for your son, please contact the Headmaster or another member of Senior Leadership Team (SLT) immediately.

October 2015