



Separated Parents Policy

Date of Policy:	November 2025
Review Date:	November 2027
Signed:	 Laura O'Brien Assistant Headteacher/ Designated Safeguarding Lead

Purpose

Ashdene Primary School recognises that many children have separated, divorced, or estranged parents/carers. In such situations, it is important for the school to be clear about how it will work with both parents (where they have Parental Responsibility), to promote the child's welfare and ensure consistent communication. This policy sets out how the school will support separated parents and clarify expectations for all involved.

By accepting a place at Ashdene Primary School, parents and carers agree to adhere to the principles and procedures outlined in this policy.

Legal Framework

- Under the **Children Act 1989**, **Education Act 1996**, and other relevant law, the school must treat all parents with Parental Responsibility equally, unless a court order specifies otherwise.
- The school will keep records of which parents have Parental Responsibility, and of any court orders that affect who can make decisions, who can receive information, who can collect the child, etc.
- Where there are conflicting instructions or uncertainty about legal documents (birth certificate, court orders), the school may request sight of the original documents to clarify.

Definitions

- **Parent:** any person who has Parental Responsibility for a child, whether or not they are the biological parent, married to the other parent, living with the child, etc.
- **Parental Responsibility:** the legal rights, duties, powers, responsibilities, and authority a parent has for a child; this is often automatic for mothers, for married fathers, or can be acquired otherwise.
- **Separated Parent:** a parent who no longer lives with the child but still has Parental Responsibility or plays an active role in the child's life.
- **Resident Parent:** the parent with whom the child lives for the majority of the time, or who is the main point of contact for day-to-day matters, unless otherwise formalised.



Admissions

- During the admissions process, the parent who completes the admissions application through the **Cheshire East Local Authority** will receive all correspondence related to the application. This is because the Local Authority manages the admissions process directly.
- It is essential that the parent completing the admissions form ensures that all information provided is accurate and complete, including the child's full legal name as shown on their birth certificate and the correct details of all parents with Parental Responsibility.
- Once Ashdene Primary School receives all relevant information through the school's registration process, we will update our records to include all parents who have Parental Responsibility.
- From that point, the school will communicate with both parents, in accordance with the principles outlined in this policy.

Registration Information

- At the beginning of a child's time at Ashdene (or as soon as possible thereafter), parents are asked to provide full details of all persons with Parental Responsibility, including contact addresses, telephone numbers, and email addresses.
- It is the responsibility of the parent completing the registration form to ensure that all information provided is accurate and complete.
- Any changes to these details should be communicated to the school as soon as possible.

Court Orders & Legal Documents

- Parents are asked to provide copies of any court orders or legal documentation that relate to Parental Responsibility, changes of name, restrictions, or collection arrangements.
- The school will rely on valid legal documents rather than informal agreements when required.

Safeguarding

- The school's safeguarding policies apply in all cases. If there is any suspicion of risk, abuse, or a legal order relevant to child protection, the school will follow its safeguarding procedures.
- Staff will be trained to understand the implications of court orders, Parental Responsibility, and confidentiality requirements.

Communication

- The school will provide both parents with access to school communications (newsletters, reports, invitations to events) unless there is a legal reason not to.



- If a separated parent requests copies of reports or newsletters, these will be supplied (by email or post) provided the parent has supplied up-to-date contact details.
- We hold twice-yearly parent consultation evenings and we expect parents to communicate with each other regarding these arrangements. The school will only consider separate appointments when a court order is in place restricting contact between parents.
- Tickets or invitations to school events (such as performances, assemblies and parent lunches) will be distributed per child, not per parent. It is the responsibility of the parents to decide who attends events on behalf of the child.

School Reports, Records & Information Sharing

- Both parents with Parental Responsibility may have access to the child's educational records, reports, and information about progress, behaviour, and attendance unless access is restricted by a court order.
- The school will maintain a single record of each pupil but ensure that information is shared with all relevant parents.
- If there is a dispute between parents about information sharing, the school may consult the Local Authority or seek legal advice if needed.

School Trips and Events

- Parents are welcome to volunteer for or attend school events and trips where appropriate. However, where a court order or safeguarding concern restricts a parent's contact or involvement, the school will comply fully with that order and may decline or restrict attendance as necessary to protect the welfare of the child.
- Decisions will be made by the Headteacher in consultation with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and, where appropriate, the Local Authority.

Consent & Decision-Making

- Consent from parents with Parental Responsibility may be required for certain matters (e.g. trips, medical treatment, photographs). Unless restricted by a court order, the school will accept consent from any parent with Parental Responsibility.
- Unless a court order is in place, it is the responsibility of parents who hold Parental Responsibility to discuss and agree on any decisions or consents relating to their child.
- If parents disagree on a matter involving consent or decision-making, the school will not act as a mediator for private disputes; it is the responsibility of the parents to resolve such disagreements independently.



Collection of Children from School

- The school needs clear instructions about who is authorised to collect a child.
- If a separated parent with Parental Responsibility wishes to collect the child, they must inform the school. Unless restricted by a court order, the school cannot withhold the child from a parent with Parental Responsibility.
- If there is a known safeguarding risk or relevant court order, the school will follow the legal restriction and safeguarding policy.

Personal and School Belongings

- It is the responsibility of parents to ensure that their child attends school each day with the correct equipment, uniform, and belongings needed for learning.
- The school will not accept responsibility for any personal or school belongings that the child may bring to school, including items transferred between homes.
- The school will not facilitate the transfer of personal or school belongings between parents. This includes items such as clothing, lunchboxes, homework, or correspondence intended for the other parent.
- Parents should make their own arrangements for sharing or exchanging their child's belongings outside of school.

Dispute Resolution

- The school will not involve itself in private disputes between parents beyond providing factual information and arranging meetings to clarify the school's role.
- Parents are expected to resolve disagreements through legal channels or mediation.
- The school may seek Local Authority or legal advice in complex situations.
- Where parents are separated or in the process of separation, Ashdene Primary School encourages them to access support offered by Cheshire East Council's "Support for Separated and Separating Parents" guidance, available through the Family Information Service: [Support for Separated and Separating Parents – Cheshire East Council](#)

This local authority resource provides practical and emotional support for families, including:

- Advice and information for parents navigating separation
- Access to Family Hubs and Children's Centres
- The Healthy Relationships Programme, which supports separated parents in developing effective communication, reducing conflict, and creating stable co-parenting arrangements.
- Links to early help and mediation services, as well as online tools and resources to support positive family relationships.



- Contact details for the Family Help Front Door for those needing additional guidance or support referrals.

Specific Communication

- Phone calls relating to a child will be made firstly to the parent with whom the child resides with for the majority of the time.
- If the school is unable to contact the main caregiver, any other parents with Parental Responsibility will then be contacted.
- It is the responsibility of the parent receiving the call to communicate with the other parent.
- Notices about trips, extracurricular activities, and school events will be sent to all parents with Parental Responsibility.

Review & Monitoring

- This policy will be reviewed every two years or sooner if legislation changes or there are concerns.
- Governors and leadership will monitor how well the school ensures equality of access and communication with separated parents.

Ashdene Values

Ashdene Primary School is committed to values of **Communication, Respect, Teamwork, and Empathy.**

We commit to:

- Treating all separated parents with respect and impartiality.
- Ensuring clarity, fairness, and consistency in communication.
- Prioritising the welfare, wellbeing, and best interests of every child.