



# Separated Parents Policy

## 1. Purpose

This policy sets out how Barnes Primary School (the 'School') communicates with parents where it has been made aware that parents are separated, divorced, or otherwise living apart. It aims to ensure that children's education is supported whilst maintaining clear professional boundaries and protecting staff time.

The School recognises that separation can be difficult for families; however, the School must remain neutral and cannot become involved in parental disputes.

## 2. General Principles

A significant amount of information relating to dates, events, etc. is available on the School website and WhatsApp communications transmitted by class reps for each year group. It is a parent's responsibility to access this information.

The School's default position is that parents are responsible for sharing routine School information between households.

This includes, but is not limited to:

- homework
- class or year group communications
- reminders
- event information
- non urgent updates.

The School will not duplicate routine communications to multiple contacts unless a specific exception has been agreed in accordance with this policy.

Anyone that has Parental Responsibility has the right to receive annual progress reports for their child. At the School, this comprises parent consultation evenings and the End of Year Report. Invitations to sign up for parent consultation evenings and access to the End of Year Report will be provided to separated or divorced parents for whom the School has up-to-date contact details. Anyone who does not receive these should contact the School directly to resolve the issue.

## 3. Parental Responsibility

The information detailing who has parental responsibility for the child that was provided to the School when the child was enrolled 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 ensure that the School is informed of any changes to Parental Responsibility and to provide relevant documentation where appropriate (e.g. court orders).

The School cannot determine Parental Responsibility on behalf of parents.

The School will provide information as defined by law to parents who have Parental Responsibility.



## 4. Routine Communications

Routine communications will normally be sent via the School's standard communication platforms, as determined by the School, to the Prime Parent recorded on the School's management information system. In the case of parents who are separated, divorced, or otherwise living apart, this will usually be the parent with whom the child resides most consistently.

Where parents share Parental Responsibility, it is expected that information will be shared appropriately between them outside of School.

The School will not:

- act as a messenger between parents;
- manage separate communication preferences between households;
- resend information because it has not been shared by one parent with another.

## 5. Requests for Duplicate Communications

Requests from separated parents for duplicate communications will may only be agreed in the event of exceptional circumstances (see clause 7).

The School will not make changes to its communication arrangements simply because:

- parents are separated or divorced;
- parental communication is difficult;
- one parent prefers not to contact the other.

Agreeing to such requests places an unreasonable administrative burden on the School and risks drawing staff into private disputes.

## 6. Parents' evening appointments

Parents are encouraged to attend parent meetings together and requests for separate appointments for parents' evening will not normally be agreed. This avoids duplication adding to staff workload.

## 7. Exceptional Circumstances

### 7.1 Controlled Administrative Exception

Where there is a court order, legal restriction or safeguarding direction that prohibits or discourages communication between parents, the School may support access to routine information or parents' evening appointments via a controlled administrative exception.

Examples may include:

- a court order prohibiting contact;
- bail conditions or injunctions;
- safeguarding advice from police, social care, or another statutory agency.

The School can only be expected to comply with an order if it is properly notified and has received a sealed digital or paper copy for its files, and only to the extent that it relates to the School. The School has no responsibility for enforcing any Court order but will endeavour to ensure that, if there are restrictions in place with regards to the collection of a child, such restrictions are adhered to.



Where the school is aware of circumstances making it potentially detrimental for both parents to attend school events together, for example where there have been reported instances of domestic violence, it may at its own discretion facilitate separate attendance or meetings.

## 7.2 Authorisation

- Any exception must be authorised by the Headteacher or a delegated senior leader.
- The exception will be clearly recorded and reviewed periodically.
- Administrative exceptions will apply only to the information specified and may be withdrawn if circumstances change.

## 8. Behaviour and Expectations

Whenever a change in family circumstances occurs, the School encourages parents to share that information so that the child can be sensitively supported in School.

The School expects all parents to:

- communicate with the School in a respectful and reasonable manner;
- avoid placing staff in the middle of parental disagreements;
- avoid using the School's communication systems to exert pressure on the other parent.

Abusive, persistent, or unreasonable communication will be referred appropriately.

## 9. Legal Proceedings

The School:

- will not provide reports, letters, or statements for court proceedings unless legally required;
- will not take sides in family disputes;
- will comply with lawful requests where required, subject to data protection legislation.

Reviewed by:	TLA&I Committee
Last reviewed:	Summer 2026
Next review:	Summer 2028