The Wyvern Federation



Separated Parents Procedure

Updated on:	Changes made / notes:
November 21	No Changes
NOVEMBER 23	No changes
October 2026	Significant changes in line with latest legislation including • Department for Education: Understanding and dealing with issues relating to parental responsibility • GOV.UK: Parental rights and responsibilities • Children Act 1989 • Education Act 1996 • School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 • Data Protection Act 2018 / UK GDPR • Keeping Children Safe in Education

Separated Parents Procedure

Purpose
The Wyvern Federation aims to act in the best interests of the child and to work fairly with all parents.

Where parents are separated, the school will remain neutral and will not take sides or resolve private disputes between parents.

Parents are expected to keep the school informed of relevant changes to family circumstances, contact details and any court orders.

Parents and Parental Responsibility
For education purposes, the legal definition of a **parent** can include a biological parent, a person with Parental Responsibility (PR), or a person who has care of the child.

Parental Responsibility means the legal rights, duties, powers and responsibilities a person has for a child.

Full information about who has or can acquire PR is available in the Department for Education guidance: **Understanding and dealing with issues relating to parental responsibility**.

Separation or divorce does not, by itself, remove Parental Responsibility.

More than one person may have PR for a child at the same time.

Parental rights and disputes
The school will treat parents fairly and will provide information and involvement in accordance with education law.

One parent cannot remove or restrict another parent's legal rights simply by asking the school to do so.

Where parents disagree about contact, collection arrangements or the exercise of Parental Responsibility, they are responsible for resolving this themselves, including through mediation, legal advice or the Family Court where necessary.

The school will not act as an intermediary or adjudicate between parents.

Court orders
Parents must tell the school about any relevant court order or legal restriction and provide the most recent copy where permitted.

The school will act in accordance with any order that applies to the school.

A solicitor's letter does not itself have the same legal effect as a court order, although the school will consider any relevant information it contains and seek advice where necessary.

Where the meaning of an order is unclear, the school may seek legal or Local Authority advice.

School information and communication
A parent who is legally entitled to information about their child's education may ask to receive this directly from the school.

The school may verify a person's identity and relationship to the child before providing information.

The school will not require the permission of the parent with whom the child lives before recognising another legal parent or providing information they are entitled to receive.

Operational messages, such as reminders or emergency closures, will normally be sent through the school's registered communication system and priority contacts.

The school will not disclose one parent's private contact details or correspondence to another parent without an appropriate lawful basis.

Parent meetings and school premises
Where appropriate, both parents may receive information about parent meetings and school events.

Separate arrangements may be considered where attending together is not practical or appropriate.

Parental Responsibility does not give an automatic right to enter school premises. The school may restrict access to its premises where necessary to maintain safety and good order.

Collecting a child from school
Parents must provide clear and up-to-date collection arrangements.

One parent cannot simply telephone, email or tell the school that another parent with Parental Responsibility must not collect their child.

A request from one parent alone does **not** create a legal restriction on the other parent.

Where a parent wishes the school to prevent another parent with PR from collecting the child, the school will require an appropriate legal basis, normally a relevant court order or other legal restriction.

Where there is no such restriction, the school will not impose a blanket ban simply because the other parent objects.

If an unexpected or disputed collection occurs, the matter will be referred to the Headteacher or senior leader. The school may:

- verify the identity of the person collecting;
- check for relevant court orders;
- contact parents to clarify the situation; and
- seek legal, Local Authority or police advice where appropriate.

Contacting one parent for clarification does not give that parent a right to veto collection by another person with Parental Responsibility.

The school will not make the final decision about disputed parental contact arrangements. Parents requiring an ongoing restriction should seek appropriate legal advice or an order from the Family Court.

Changing a child's name
Requests to change a child's surname should normally have the agreement of all those with Parental Responsibility or be supported by an appropriate court order.

The school may request evidence before making a change.

The admission register will record the child's full name and the name used at school in accordance with current pupil-registration legislation.

Safeguarding
Nothing in this procedure overrides the school's statutory safeguarding duties.

Any safeguarding concern or allegation will be managed under the Federation's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

The raising of an allegation does not, by itself, create a legal restriction on another parent's Parental Responsibility or automatically prevent them from collecting their child.

Where there is an immediate safeguarding concern, the school will follow its safeguarding procedures and seek advice or assistance from Children's Social Care and/or the police as appropriate.

Further guidance

- Department for Education: **Understanding and dealing with issues relating to parental responsibility**
- GOV.UK: **Parental rights and responsibilities**
- Children Act 1989
- Education Act 1996
- School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- Data Protection Act 2018 / UK GDPR
- Keeping Children Safe in Education