



SEPARATED PARENTS POLICY

Member of Staff Responsible	Headmaster
Date of Policy	September 2023
Date for Review	September 2025
Distribution	All staff and parents

Rokeby School Policy for separated (and divorced) parents

Rationale and legal position

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. Inevitably these personal family problems 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 Rokeby School and its staff.

The School recognises that, while the parents of some pupils 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.*

At Rokeby, 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, neither parent will have rights superior to the other.

It is the responsibility of the parents to inform the School when there is a change in the family's circumstances. We need to be kept up to date with contact details, arrangements for collecting their 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 may cause difficulty and have a negative effect on the boy(s) and their learning,

letters and emails can be sent to both parents if this is *agreed by both parents and the school together*. This includes information on all the main events within school, including productions, sports days, parents' evenings, form 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 child where both parents are welcome. We would expect parents to communicate with each other regarding these arrangements and behave cordially and respectfully.

Progress reports and Pupil records

Both parents have the right to receive reports and review pupil records of their children. If the parents are separated or divorced, reports will be sent to the parent with whom the boy resides with the expectation that he will share the report with the other parent.

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

Both parents can have equal access to all school information via our management information system, or alternatively please request in writing additional copies of communications to be posted.

All parents are recommended to regularly use our website. It contains all of our back-dated communications and has 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, set placement, participation in extracurricular 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 child ordinarily resides has not consented, the following steps should be followed:

1. The Headmaster or designated deputy (in this case the Designated Safeguarding Lead will meet with the parent seeking to remove the boy and, in his 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 child 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 staff member may have to refuse permission if consent cannot be obtained.

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

In the event of the break-down of a relationship

The School acknowledges that relationships can break down suddenly or traumatically, even for a temporary period, and that we may not be aware of this. Our position is not to attribute blame but to support the boy and to ensure his safety 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. However, if there is an emergency and you have safety concerns for your son, please contact the Headmaster immediately, or the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Our availability

Whatever the circumstances, we will maintain our open-door policy with both parents. The Form Tutor, Year Head, Deputy Head (Pastoral), Head of Middle School or Head of Lower School will be available to discuss any issues by phone or meeting.