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*Excellence, Respect, Friendship*

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# CAWSTON GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL

## Separated Parents Guidance and Procedures

At Cawston Grange Primary School, our core values of excellence, respect, and friendship guide our commitment to supporting every child and their family, recognising the unique challenges that separated families may face. We aim to foster positive relationships with all parents and carers, ensuring that children feel secure and valued during their time at school.

### **Celebrating Family Diversity**

We embrace the diversity of our school community, recognising that families come in many forms, including single parents, blended families, and shared or split parental arrangements. We are committed to treating all families with respect and sensitivity, providing an inclusive and supportive environment for every child.

### **Keeping the School Informed**

To ensure we can support every child effectively, we ask parents to keep us updated on family circumstances that may affect their child. This includes changes in living arrangements, new contact details, or the introduction of court orders that impact school-related matters. We also encourage parents to notify us if their child might need additional emotional or practical support due to family changes.

If parents experience difficulty sharing information or coordinating arrangements between themselves, we ask that this is communicated to the school so we can adapt our processes to best support the child and ensure that both parents remain fully informed.

### **Parental Responsibility**

Under education law, a "parent" includes biological parents, those with parental responsibility (e.g., adoptive parents or guardians), and individuals who provide daily care for the child. Unless a court order dictates otherwise, all parents with parental responsibility have the right to:

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- Receive updates on their child's education, including reports, attendance, and school communications.
- Attend school events such as parents' evenings and performances.
- Be consulted on significant decisions affecting their child, such as changes to their name or school.

## Communication and Information Sharing

We are committed to keeping all parents informed about their child's education:

- **School communications** such as newsletters, reports, and invitations to events will be sent to all parents with registered contact details.
- **Urgent matters**, such as accidents or emergencies, will be communicated to the primary contact or the parent with whom the child resides. We will also endeavour to inform the non-resident parent as soon as possible.
- **Behaviour or SEND concerns** will be communicated to both parents as required. Whilst our preference is that any necessary meetings are held with both parents present, where this is not possible we will hold separate meetings to ensure that both parents are fully informed and involved.

Parents are encouraged to liaise directly with each other regarding items like event tickets or sharing information. However, if this is not feasible due to family circumstances, we will make reasonable efforts to support both parents while remaining neutral.

When a parent contacts the school with concerns about their child, we will treat the matter with the utmost seriousness and sensitivity. Our priority is the well-being and education of the child. The school will:

- Listen to the concerns raised and document the details provided.
- Investigate the matter as appropriate.
- Communicate findings or relevant updates to both parents, ensuring neutrality and transparency.
- If necessary, convene a meeting involving the parent who raised the concern, and other parties as appropriate, to collaboratively address the issue while prioritising the child's best interests.
- In cases where the concern relates to safeguarding or court-mandated arrangements, the school will follow statutory guidance and consult relevant authorities to ensure compliance with legal and ethical responsibilities.

## Parents' Evenings and Meetings

Parents' evenings are crucial opportunities for families to engage with their child's education. We encourage separated parents to attend together when possible. If this is not practical or desirable, we can arrange separate appointments upon request, particularly in cases involving conflict or court orders.

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For other meetings, such as those related to Special Educational Needs (SEN) or safeguarding, we aim to involve all relevant parties. Where necessary, meetings can be scheduled separately to ensure effective communication without causing additional stress.

## Consent and Decision-Making

Consent for routine activities, such as trips or extracurricular participation, will generally be sought from the resident parent unless the non-resident parent has requested involvement in such decisions. If there is disagreement between parents, we will proceed as though consent has not been given to prioritise the child's safety.

Major decisions, such as changing a child's surname or transferring to another school, require the written consent of all individuals with parental responsibility.

## Pick-Up and Drop-Off Arrangements

We have clear procedures in place to ensure the safety and well-being of all children during pick-up and drop-off times:

1. **End of Day Arrangements Form:** Parents must complete an annual form listing authorised individuals who can collect their child. Updates to this form can be made at any time by contacting the school office.
2. **Routine Pick-Up:** Children will only be released to authorised adults as specified on the End of Day Arrangements form. If a parent is unable to collect their child on a particular day, the school must be informed in advance, either in writing or via a phone call, specifying the alternative arrangements.
3. **Separated Parents:** In cases where parents are separated, the school will follow the pick-up arrangements agreed upon and communicated by the parents. Any changes must be provided in writing and agreed upon by both parents where possible.
4. **Conflicts at Pick-Up:** If a parent arrives to collect their child in contravention of agreed or court-mandated arrangements, the following steps will be taken:
  - A senior staff member will speak with the parent and contact the other parent to clarify the situation.
  - If no agreement can be reached, the child will remain in the care of the school while advice is sought from safeguarding authorities or legal advisors.
  - In cases of immediate concern for the child's safety, the police may be contacted.
5. **Court Orders:** If a court order restricts a parent's access to the child, the school must be provided with a copy of the order. Staff will be informed of any specific arrangements to ensure compliance.
6. **Late Collection:** In cases of late collection, we will contact the individuals listed as emergency contacts. Repeated late pick-ups will be discussed with the family to resolve any underlying issues.

## Supporting Children During Family Changes

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We understand that family separation can be a difficult time for children. Our pastoral care team is available to provide emotional support and guidance. By maintaining open communication with parents, we aim to identify and address any challenges the child may face, ensuring their well-being remains at the centre of all decisions.

## **Resolving Conflicts**

While we are committed to supporting both parents, the school cannot act as a mediator in disputes. We encourage parents to seek external mediation or legal advice if conflicts arise. Our focus remains on the child's education and well-being, and we will always act in their best interests.

## **Conclusion**

At Cawston Grange Primary School, we are dedicated to fostering positive relationships with all families and providing a stable, supportive environment for every child. If you have questions or concerns about this policy or require additional support, please contact the school office. Together, we can ensure your child thrives academically, socially, and emotionally.

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