



Hopelands Preparatory School

## **CHILDREN OF SEPARATED PARENTS POLICY**

Hopelands Preparatory School recognises that many of the pupils in its care will be members of families where parents have separated before they come to the school or who may go through changes in family circumstances while they are pupils here.

The school's prime responsibility is for the welfare of the individual pupil in these circumstances. We will make every effort to support pupils who are going through changes in their families by offering individual support. Confidential counselling is available to all pupils and will be recommended if it is felt to be appropriate. We recognise that a child's circumstances and feelings may evolve and will maintain our support and observation of her welfare throughout his/her time here.

We encourage parents to tell us at an early stage if there is a change in family circumstances. Whenever possible, staff will be informed of such changes so that suitable support can be offered. We will, however, recognise the sensitivity of some situations and maintain the level of confidentiality requested by parents as far as possible.

In all cases, we will respect any legal requirements that have been entered into by the parents or required by the courts. The school will not seek to make judgements about individual circumstances but will treat both parents equally unless there is a specific ruling in existence. Members of staff will never pass judgement on either parent to the child.

In cases where only one parent has signed the parent contract/acceptance of a place, the other parent will not automatically be consulted or receive information relating to their son/daughter. Should the non-contracting parent seek information or access to his/her daughter, the school will always consider the expressed wishes of the contracting parent and these will be a key factor in determining our actions, subject always to the welfare and interests of the child. For the avoidance of doubt, Hopelands Preparatory School will seek written confirmation from the contracting parent of their consent to Hopelands Preparatory School providing information and access.

Apart from specific situations as mentioned above, we will make every effort to ensure that access to both parents is maintained. We will normally copy reports and other written information to both parents and both parents will be welcome at parent/teacher meetings provided both of them are signatories to the parent contract.

We recognise that parents may go through difficult and stressful times and will offer support to them as far as we can. Occasions such as Parents' Evening will occasionally provide information about issues such as step-families and the effects of separation on children and the school has access to outside agencies which can be helpful and will provide information on request. We will provide ongoing training for staff in these issues so that they are aware of their legal obligations and of the pastoral issues raised.

Staff should seek further guidance from the Head if they wish.

S Bradburn  
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