

# St. Andrew's N.S.



## ***Custody/Parental Separation Policy***

This policy should be read in conjunction with all other school policies.

Policy Ratified

10<sup>th</sup> April 2019

### **Custody/Parental Separation Policy**

The Staff of St. Andrew's encourage parents experiencing separation to come and speak confidentially to the teachers and Principal. It is our aim to handle such matters with sensitivity and compassion, and ultimately, our primary concern is for the well-being and overall development of the child.

The following are the key procedures in place with separated parents of pupils in the school:

- When a child spends time in two homes, it is requested that the school be provided with both sets of emergency/contact numbers.
- It is the school policy to offer the option of separate parent/teacher meetings, if so desired. However, for the child's sake we recommend that both parents attend together. Each parent has a right to attend such meetings and receive school reports unless there is a court order to the contrary.
- It is assumed that when we wish to communicate with parents regarding their child, the parent who is contacted (i.e. the parent with whom the child principally resides) will inform the other parent of meetings, arrangements, etc. Special requests for separate communication can be accommodated.
- Regarding school communication, both parents will receive emails from the school.
- In the absence of a custody arrangement, both parents will be treated as equal partners in terms of parenting rights and responsibilities.
- The school cannot be asked to withhold a child from either parent in the absence of a court order. A solicitor's letter is not a court order.
- If there is a serious concern about a parent abducting or leaving the country with the child, the parents/guardian should request their solicitor to seek a court order instructing the school and any other carers regarding rights of access.
- In the case where the estranged parent/guardian is not known to the class teacher, the concerned parent/guardian should provide a family photograph enabling the class teacher to identify the person in question.
- Teachers are under no legal obligation to provide any reports about a child if requested to do so by any third party (e.g. Solicitor/psychologist).
- Teachers are not obliged to attend court unless under subpoena or summons.
- In the case where a legal order is in place, a copy of this order must be furnished to the school.
- The parent/guardian of each child has full responsibility for informing the school in writing of any change in circumstances at home e.g. separation, divorce, custody arrangements.
- The staff can recommend books, videos, publications, etc. dealing with the impact of separation, on request.
- Teachers will endeavour to:
  - act in a fair, open and even-handed manner in respect of both parents
  - advise both parents of meetings if the teacher believes that one parent will not inform the other
  - facilitate separate parent/teachers meetings, if so required.

- pass relevant information from one teacher to another within the school as needed
- If in any doubt, a teacher should seek advice from the Principal teacher or Board of Management.

### **Notes re. Guardianship/Custody**

**Please refer to:**

**Children and Family Relationships Act 2016**

[https://www.lawreform.ie/\\_fileupload/RevisedActs/WithAnnotations/HTML/en\\_act\\_2015\\_0009.htm](https://www.lawreform.ie/_fileupload/RevisedActs/WithAnnotations/HTML/en_act_2015_0009.htm)

**Citizens Information have a helpful website:**

[http://www.citizensinformationboard.ie/downloads/relate/relate\\_2015\\_05.pdf](http://www.citizensinformationboard.ie/downloads/relate/relate_2015_05.pdf)

### **Implementation and Review**

This policy will be implemented following ratification by the BOM in 10<sup>th</sup> April 2019

Ratified by the BOM

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chairperson

Date: \_\_\_\_\_