



## HOLMEWOOD HOUSE SCHOOL

*'Kindness, aspiration & self-belief'*

### PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT POLICY

#### Arrangements when Parents are Divorced, Separated or Parenting Separately

|                             |            |
|-----------------------------|------------|
| <b>Policy Holder</b>        | The Head   |
| <b>Date Approved</b>        | April 2024 |
| <b>Approval</b>             | SLT        |
| <b>Date for next review</b> | April 2025 |

This policy sets out the School's approach to clarifying arrangements with all of those with parental responsibility for a child, in circumstances where they are divorced, separated or are in a situation where they are parenting their child separately of the other.

The school recognises the potential stress and difficulty involved in divorce or separation, the impact that this can have on children and the importance to children's well-being of having in place clear arrangements for matters that in other circumstances are uncontroversial, such as communication with School, collection from School and attendance at School events.

#### **Admissions**

At the Registration and Acceptance stages the following are required and any offer of a place, notwithstanding any other conditions, is conditional upon satisfactory compliance with the process set out below. Failure to comply may lead to the offer of a place being withdrawn.

#### **Registration**

- The name, contact details and relationship to the child of any person with parental responsibility must be disclosed on the Registration Form.
- Parental responsibility includes responsibility for 'choosing and providing for the child's education' and those with parental responsibility are required to confirm their consent to a child attending the school irrespective of whether they are a party to the contract with the school. This consent should be evidenced by all those with parental responsibility signing the Registration and Acceptance Forms.

### Accepting An Offer of a Place

- The terms and conditions require that the 'Parents' in signing the Acceptance Form, confirm that 'all holders of parental responsibility for the above-named child have signed this Acceptance Form and that no one else holds parental responsibility for him or her'. When signing the Acceptance Form, Parents agree to be bound by the Terms and Conditions, including confirming that no other person's consent is required for the child to attend the School.
- In signing the Acceptance Form, parents are required to inform the School if they are separated or divorced and if any court orders have been made in relation to their child or either of the parents (including any orders relating to financial matters). Parents are also required to inform the School if the child has a Legal Guardian (appointed under **Section 5 of the Children Act 1989** by the court or by a parent with parental responsibility or by an existing guardian) and provide the Legal Guardian's full contact details.
- In signing the Acceptance Form, Parents agree to notify the School immediately of any change of address or in family circumstances. Acceptance Form Declaration (Section 6) also requires Parents to declare that: I/We agree to inform the school immediately of any change of address or in family circumstances. If, at any time prior to or during my child's time at the School, a court order is put in place or an undertaking is given to a court in respect of (or relating to) my child's attendance at the school (including its premises) and/or the School's provision of education to my child. These would include any court order or undertaking given to a court which may deal with or impact upon in any way:
  - (i) my child's living and/or contact arrangements
  - (ii) my child's education, welfare and/or upbringing; and/or
  - (iii) the payment of fees and/or supplemental charges. In any such circumstances you must (whether upon request or otherwise) promptly provide the School with copies of the relevant court order(s) or undertaking(s) (or the relevant parts of them). The school will abide by the stipulations of any court order with regard to arrangements made for communication, collection, attendance at events or any other matter relating to the school's duty of care.

## **Provision of Information**

We will send information (eg, school reports) about your child to both of you as a matter of course. You must agree that those persons who have parental responsibility for your child are entitled to receive certain information about your child from the School (including school reports, correspondence and other materials relating to his or her progress, development and/or education generally). The School shall therefore disclose such information as a matter of routine to such persons UNLESS the School is restricted from doing so by a court order (or similar direction) or by any other legal requirement or obligation (for example, under the Data Protection Act 1998, and from 25th May 2018, the General Data Protection regulations).

In order to have the clearest possible arrangements for the care of a child and to avoid potential conflict that may be detrimental to a child's well-being, the School requires that those with parental responsibility agree between themselves a mutually acceptable framework for communication of relevant information, for collection arrangements, for attendance by each party at school events and any other matter that might otherwise create difficulty that may impact on a child's well-being. Such an agreement, working within the parameters of any court order, should be supplied to the Head in writing and signed by all relevant parties, at the time of signing the Acceptance Form.

The agreement between those with Parental responsibility should clarify:

- Arrangements for delivery of the child to school and collection from school and whether there are any limitations on anyone holding parental responsibility to undertake this
- Attendance at school events in which the child is participating and whether there are any limitations on those with parental responsibility in this regard
- Arrangements for receiving relevant written information concerning the child's progress, e.g. written school reports
- Arrangements for communication with regard to other matters, e.g. ill-health, pastoral matters
- Attendance at meetings, e.g. parent evenings, with regard to the child's progress
- Access to the School's website portal
- Any other matters not covered above about which those with parental responsibility have reached a mutual agreement
- Arrangements for payment of fees or charges in relation to school.

## **Current Pupils**

If a child's parents separate or divorce after the child has joined the School, the mutually acceptable framework described above should be confirmed to the Head in writing once the change in the parents' relationship status is confirmed. Parents are also required to inform the Head in writing should any other person acquire parental responsibility for their child.

While the School understands that there may be difficulty for those with parental responsibility in reaching agreement about arrangements as set out above, the School's paramount duty is to the child's well-being, to which clear arrangements for access and communication will contribute.

The School will follow arrangements agreed by those with parental responsibility, (subject to complying with the terms of any court order), and act in accordance with the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy which is available to download from the School's website [www.holmewoodhouse.co.uk](http://www.holmewoodhouse.co.uk)