

Promoting health and hygiene

1.23 Separated Families Policy

Policy statement for St Joseph's Nympsfield Out of School Club

The priority of St Joseph's Nympsfield Out of School Club (OOSC) is for the child of separated parents to be supported by the staff as necessary and for parents to be able to receive and share information about their child in the most appropriate way. With regard to information sharing, this policy differentiates between the resident and non-resident parent. For the purposes of our policy we will define a resident parent as one who has the child living with them for more than 5 nights per week.

At St Joseph's Nympsfield Out of School Club we recognise that separated parents may find themselves in a difficultly situation with regard to maintaining good working relationships with those who care for their children. We understand that the family situation can be complex and difficult for all parties and can sometimes involve legal proceedings. This policy sets out how we will support the family within the setting, including our staff.

St Joseph's Pre-school children who attend the OOSC retain the same key person as when attending the Pre-school, as two members of staff from the Pre-school also work for the OOSC. If a pre-school child is booked into the OOSC for an ad hoc session, then they will be cared for by either the Play Leader or Deputy Play Leader, dependent on what day they attend. By working this way, OOSC is able to build relationships which will support the child's emotional wellbeing and report any significant issues or changes in behaviour to the parents, ie. both resident and non-resident parent.

Should parents want to discuss a matter with a member of staff other than the child's key person (for those within the EYFS), they should talk to the Play Leader in the first instance. Separated parents can be given the option of being supported by different members of staff who would communicate between themselves and share any information regarded as pertinent to the child's welfare.

Parent

As a parent you are entitled to be given information about your child and share in decision making to your child's learning.

On registration via the online booking system¹, the onus is on the family to provide contact information for all parents who wish to be kept informed about the OOSC and the child. The system allows for separated parents to have separate accounts.

As part of the registration process St Joseph's Nympsfield Out of School Club will ask the family for emergency contact details. If and when necessary, for example an unwell child, staff will call in the order listed on the online booking system.

Parental Responsibility

While the law does not define in detail what parental responsibility is, the following list sets out some of the key features of someone holding parental responsibility. These include:

- providing a home for the child;

¹ Kids Club HQ

- having contact with and living with the child;
- protecting and maintaining the child;
- disciplining the child;
- choosing and providing for the child's education;
- determining the religion of the child;
- agreeing to the child's medical treatment;
- naming the child and agreeing to any change of the child's name;
- accompanying the child outside the UK and agreeing to the child's emigration, should the issue arise;
- being responsible for the child's property;
- appointing a guardian for the child, if necessary; and
- allowing confidential information about the child to be disclosed.

If the parents of a child are married to each other at the time of the birth, or if they have jointly adopted a child, then they both have parental responsibility. Parents do not lose parental responsibility if they divorce and this applies to both the resident and the non-resident parent.

This is not automatically the case for unmarried parents. According to current law, a mother always has parental responsibility for her child. However, a father has this responsibility only if he is married to the mother when the child is born or has acquired legal responsibility for his child through one of these three routes:

- by jointly registering the birth of the child with the mother (from December 2003);
- by a parental responsibility agreement with the mother; and
- by a parental responsibility order made by a court.

Other adults can obtain parental responsibility for a child for example via a Child Arrangements Order or by application of a step parent or guardian.

Registration Process

During the registration process, a separated family who wish to make a contract booking based on a court order or family arrangements will need to provide this information to the Committee Treasurer or the Play Leader when booking days to ensure their family needs are met.

We will:

- Ensure the child's welfare is paramount at all times they are in our care.
- Comply with any details of agreements between parents and/or court orders where applicable to the child's attendance at St Joseph's Nympsfield Out of School Club. Parents in these situations are requested to share this information with the Play Leader.
- Provide information on the child's progress e.g learning journeys, progress checks within the setting, to both parents, or to the nominated parent, provided there is no Order to the contrary of which we have been advised.
- Ensure any incident or accident within St Joseph's Nympsfield Out of School Club relating to the child is reported to the person collecting the child.
- Ensure that all matters known by the staff pertaining to the family and the parents' separation remain confidential.
- Ensure that no members of staff takes sides regarding any separation and treats both parents equally and with due respect.

- Not restrict access to any parent or person with parental responsibility unless a formal court order is in place. We respectfully ask that parents do not put us in this position.

We ask parents to:

- Provide us with all information relating to parental responsibilities, court orders and injunctions.
- Update information that changes any of the above as soon as practicably possible by advising the Play Leader via email from both parents or from the resident parent if the Play Leader deems this to be applicable
- Work with us to ensure continuity of care and support for the child.
- Not involve St Joseph's Nympsfield Out of School Club staff in any family disputes, unless this directly impacts on the care we provide for the child.
- Talk to the Play Leader (or Key Person for EYFS children) away from the child when this relates to family separation in order to avoid the child becoming upset. This can be arranged as a more formal meeting or as an informal chat.
- Not ask St Joseph's Nympsfield Out of School Club to take sides in any dispute. We will only take the side of your child and this will require us to be neutral at all times.

Associated Policies and Procedures

- 4.4 Parental Involvement

Version Number	Author	Purpose of change	Date
1.0	NP and HS	Updating policies	23.01.2023
2.0	KC, NF-P and MK	Updated and formatted. Inclusion of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Associated Policies and Procedures" section • updated to reflect current practice within the OOSC 	26.02.2024 Committee Meeting