

**SEPARATED FAMILIES POLICY**

At Pegasus Childcare Centre we recognise that when parents separate it can be a difficult time for all concerned. We understand that emotions can often run high particularly in the initial stages of separation.

This policy sets out how we will support the child, family and staff members.

The nursery manager and key person will work closely with the family to build good relationships which will support child’s well being and report any significant changes in behaviour to parents. Parents maybe signposted to appropriate services and organisations for extra support.

***While the law does not define in detail what parental responsibility is, the following list sets out the key roles:***

* Providing a home for the child.
* Having contact and living with the child.
* Protecting and maintaining the child.
* Disciplining the child
* Choosing and providing for the child’s education.
* Agreeing to the child’s medical treatment.
* 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 child’s 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 non resident parent.

This is not automatically the case for unmarried parents. According to the law, a mother always has parental responsibility for her child. A father, however, 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 1 December 2003)
* By a parental responsibility Agreement with the mother
* By a parental responsibility Order, made by a court.

Step-parents may also acquire parental responsibility, as may grandparents, proof would be required for such relatives to prove parental responsibility to come under the provisions of this policy

* The responsibility for foster children remains with the Local Authority and PCC will ensure that they have all relevant directions / delegations from the LA when applying this policy.

During the registration process it is important for the nursery to know all details about both parents. This includes details about who does or does not have parental responsibility as this will avoid difficult situations that may arise at a later date. True and correct information must be put on this document.

If a child is registered by one parent of a separated family, we request disclosure of all relevant details relating to the child and other parent such as court orders or injunctions. This will allow us to support both child and family.

***The nursery cannot restrict access to any parent with Parental Responsibility unless a formal Court Order is in place. We respectfully ask that parents/ carers not to restrict access to the other parent in the absence of a Court Order.***

***Pegasus Childcare Centre will:***

* Ensure child's welfare is paramount at at times they are within Pegasus Childcare Centre.
* Comply with any details of a Court Order where they are applicable to the nurseries. situation, provided the nursery has seen a copy/has a copy attached to the child’s file.
* Provide information on the child’s progress within the nursery to both parents.
* Ensure that all matters known by the staff pertaining to the family and the parent’s separation shall remain confidential Ensure that no member of staff takes sides within the separation and treats both parents equally and with due respect.
* Invite both parents to events at Pegasus Childcare Centre, including social events and parental consultations where both parents hold parental responsibility.

***We will 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.

 • Work with us to ensure continuity of care and support for your child.

* To not involve nursery staff in any family disputes/conflict, unless this directly impacts on the care we provide for the child. As child will remain our priority therefore requiring nursery to remain neutral and impartial.
* Talk to the manager/key person 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 .

**This policy was reviewed and adopted on** 1st July 2024

 **Signed (Manager)**

**Signed (Chair)**

The Policy will be reviewed every two years.

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| **Date of Review** | **Policy Updated** | **Signed (Chair)** |
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