

NON-CUSTODIAL PARENTS POLICY

RATIONALE

Given the number of children coming from home environments where parents have separated, situations regularly arise at school, with non-custodial parents. Procedures are needed to ensure the best interests of the child are recognised while maintaining legal conditions regarding their custody.

PURPOSE

To provide general guidelines which allow staff to deal with issues regarding custodial and non-custodial parents.

GUIDELINES

1. For the school to recognise a parent as non-custodial, we require written legal evidence that this is the case, from the parent with custody.
2. Custodial parents can (with a court order) ask the school to deny access to the non-custodial parent. However, it is their responsibility to let the school know.
3. If no written evidence of custody is available and staff are concerned about children being uplifted from school by the parent not responsible for the initial enrolment, then the enrolling parent will be contacted if possible before the child is released.
4. The school will make every effort to ensure the request of custodial parents are met without offering guarantees.
5. Non-custodial parents occasionally request that they be advised immediately if a child is absent. This is a matter of day-to-day care and as such is the business of the custodial parent.
6. Unless there has been a court order stating otherwise, both parents are still their child's legal guardians regardless of the custody orders in place.
Parents are therefore entitled to: -
 - Copies of their child's school report
 - Attend parent/teacher meetings or discuss their child's progress.
 - Be consulted when the school is suggesting the need of specialist services.
 - Participate in disciplinary hearing involving their child.
 - Participate in parent activities / functions.
 - Vote in elections for Board of Trustees.
7. If teachers are in any doubt as to how they should respond to non-custodial parents they should contact the Principal.
8. Because of the complexity and individuality of custodial issues, none of the above precludes the Principal from acting on a case-by-case basis.

CONCLUSION

We should avoid acting as adjudicators when parents disagree.

When in doubt, ask for a copy of the court order to support the position the parent is maintaining.

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