Awaken Education Ltd

Separated Parents Policy

Date Issued: June 2025

Review Date: June 2026

1. Purpose and Principles

Awaken Education is committed to working constructively and transparently with parents and carers in the best interests of every child and young person in our care. We recognize that family structures vary and that parental separation or divorce can be a challenging period.

This policy clarifies the operational approach of Awaken Education regarding information sharing, communication, consent, and site access for separated parents, ensuring that the organization remains neutral, child-centered, and compliant with UK family law and safeguarding guidelines.

2. Legal Framework and Parental Responsibility (PR)

Under the Children Act 1989, parental responsibility is defined as all the rights, duties, powers, responsibilities, and authority that a parent has by law regarding the child.

- **Automatic PR:** Biological mothers automatically have Parental Responsibility. Biological fathers have PR if they were married to the mother at the time of birth, or (for births registered in England and Wales after December 1, 2003) if they are named on the birth certificate.
- **Other Legal Means:** PR may also be acquired by court order, parental responsibility agreement, or adoption.
- **Equal Entitlement:** Separation or divorce does not alter or diminish Parental Responsibility unless a specific court order exists that explicitly restricts it. Therefore, Awaken Education will treat all individuals who hold PR equally unless presented with verified, certified court documentation to the contrary.

3. Documentation and Record Keeping

To ensure effective communication and adherence to safeguarding protocols:

- **Registration:** Parents or legal guardians enrolling a student must provide full names, contact details, and PR status for all parents or legal guardians.
- **Court Orders:** If there are court orders in place—such as a Child Arrangements Order, Prohibited Steps Order, Specific Issue Order, or Non-Molestation Order—the parent with care must provide a clear, official copy of the full order to Awaken Education.
- **Confidentiality of Orders:** Court documentation will be held confidentially in the student's safeguarding file overseen by the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
- **Updating Details:** Parents must inform Awaken Education in writing of any address, telephone, or legal changes immediately.

4. Communication and Information Sharing

Awaken Education strives to maintain balanced and transparent communication with both parents holding PR:

- **Academic Reports & Progress:** Both parents are entitled to receive copies of progress reports, attendance updates, and general organizational newsletters.
- **Separate Communications:** Where parents live at separate addresses, Awaken Education will make reasonable provisions to send copies of letters, reports, and emails to both parties upon written request.
- **Parent Meetings & Reviews:** Unless restricted by a court order, both parents are entitled to attend progress reviews and pastoral meetings. Awaken Education will arrange separate appointments where joint meetings are not feasible or would cause distress.
- **Neutrality:** Awaken Education staff will not act as intermediaries, pass personal messages, or take sides in domestic disputes.

5. Consent and Decision-Making

- **Everyday Decisions:** Routine permissions (e.g., standard educational visits, participation in routine day trips) may be granted by the parent who has resident care of the child on that day.
- **Major Decisions:** For significant decisions (such as withdrawal from Awaken Education, changes of name, or long-term medical treatment plans), the agreement of all individuals holding PR is required by law unless a court order specifies otherwise.
- **Disagreements:** If parents who both hold PR cannot agree on a fundamental issue, Awaken Education will remain neutral and cannot proceed until both parents provide written agreement or an official court determination is provided.

6. Collection, Site Access, and Emergencies

Collection of Students

- Students will only be released to parents, guardians, or authorized adults listed on the student's collection and emergency record.
- If a separated parent without residency seeks to collect a child, Awaken Education cannot legally refuse if they hold Parental Responsibility, **unless**:
    1. A valid court order (e.g., Prohibited Steps Order or Non-Molestation Order) is on file prohibiting contact or collection.
    2. Releasing the child poses an immediate safeguarding risk or violates safety protocols (e.g., the individual appears impaired or aggressive).

- Where unexpected collection attempts occur, staff will immediately contact the primary resident carer and the DSL before releasing the student.

Site Access and Conduct

- All parents and visitors must sign in and adhere to Awaken Education's site safety and behavioral protocols.
- Abusive, harassing, or disruptive behavior toward staff, learners, or other parents will not be tolerated. Individuals exhibiting aggressive or inappropriate conduct will be directed to leave the premises immediately and may have their site access suspended.

Emergency Medical Care

- In the event of a medical emergency requiring urgent attention, staff will contact emergency services (999) without delay.
- On-site designated first aiders will provide primary care.
- Both parents will be contacted via the emergency numbers provided as soon as the child's immediate medical safety is secured.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) *(Daniel Jarvis)*	Holds court documentation securely, assesses safeguarding referrals related to family disputes, liaises with social care or police if required, and advises staff on collection procedures.
Health and Safety Officer (HSO) *(Lydia Jarvis)*	Ensures visitor protocols and site security are strictly maintained to protect learners, visitors, and staff.
All Staff & Volunteers	Treat both parents with equal respect and neutrality, report changes or concerns to the DSL, and verify ID/authorization prior to student collection.

8. Key Contacts

- **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):** Daniel Jarvis (Level 3 DSL)
- **Health and Safety Officer (HSO):** Lydia Jarvis
- **First Aider:** Daniel Jarvis
- **Official Emails:** awakeneducationuk@gmail.com | info@awakeneducationuk@gmail.com
- **Contact Numbers:** 07378846928 / 07456099714
- **Emergency Services:** 999

Signed on behalf of Awaken Education Ltd:

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