

## Parental Dispute Policy

Parental Responsibility (PR) is defined within the Children Act 1989 as: "All the legal rights, duties, powers, responsibilities and authority a parent has for the child and the child's property". Both parents may exercise their rights and responsibilities for the child. A Child Arrangements Order can also share PR with a person specified in that Order.

Information provided to St Anne's Catholic Voluntary Academy on enrolment, detailing who has PR and the address or addresses of that pupil, is presumed to be correct unless an original Birth Certificate or Court Order is provided to us demonstrating otherwise.

PR can be applied jointly and severally. In practice, this means that parents can act in agreement to make decisions, or they can act independently and separately. St Anne's Catholic Voluntary Academy does not have the legal authority to act at the request of one parent to restrict the other, unless we have been provided with a Court Order allowing for this, such as a Prohibited Steps Order or a Specific Issue Order. This applies to consents and to information sharing. If such an Order is made, it is the responsibility of the parents to inform school and provide relevant documentation to us.

Complexities can arise where there is a parental dispute and parents hold different views about what is in the best interests of their child. St Anne's Catholic Voluntary Academy will focus on the welfare of the pupil as being paramount. In the absence of a Court Order, parents are responsible for resolving conflicts between themselves and it is not appropriate for school to intervene in disputes within families other than where our involvement is necessary for safeguarding.

St Anne's Catholic Voluntary Academy will balance requests of parents with our statutory duties – having parental responsibility does not allow a parent to obstruct St Anne's Catholic Voluntary Academy from carrying out our duties under legislation, including the effective provision of education or meeting our welfare and safeguarding obligations to a pupil.

If there has been a serious breakdown in the relationship between child and parent, or where there is a risk of domestic abuse or other such factor, it may be necessary for St Anne's Catholic Voluntary Academy to limit information shared or consent for some activities. Where parental consent is required for outings, activities or residential trips, we will seek consent from the resident parent.

September 2023

This policy will be reviewed every 12 months but may be revised as necessary.