

Hauraki Primary School

Policy Document

The Role of the Parent/Guardian in School Life

Rationale:

As part of its overall safe school policy, Hauraki School actively seeks to provide an environment that is physically and emotionally safe for all students and staff.

The school recognises that students may live in a situation where one parent is not living at the permanent address of the student. Parents are therefore responsible for informing the school of the day-to-day care, pick-up, and contact arrangements in place for their child, whether agreed informally, recorded in an agreement, or provided for in court orders.

Purpose:

- to comply with all legal requirements
- to provide for the welfare and best interest of students
- to recognise the role of parents in school life

Guidelines:

Guardianship Status

1. Usually a child's parents are joint guardians of their children from birth (often referred to as natural guardians) if they are both recorded on the child's birth certificate, and/or are in a legally recognised relationship (i.e. marriage, civil union, de facto relationship)
2. Separated parents remain guardians of their children, subject to any court orders that are in place.
3. Guardians have a responsibility for the child's care, development, and upbringing. Guardians are responsible for making education decisions about their child and have a duty to consult with each other.
4. The Family Court can appoint other adults, such as a new partner or grandparents, as guardians. A child can have more than two guardians.
5. The Family or High Court may appoint itself as a child's legal guardian and may appoint the Oranga Tamariki – Ministry for Children to act as its agent.

Agreements and Court Orders

6. Day-to-Day care arrangements for children can be agreed informally, recorded in a formal agreement, or determined by a parenting order from the Family Court.
7. It is the responsibility of parents and guardians to provide the school with a written copy of any agreement or court order related to the care of their child as soon as possible. This ensures the school can support the family in following such agreements/orders. It is also very important that family contact details are kept up to date.

8. Any such agreements/orders will be shared with the student's main teacher, and any key staff, as considered necessary by the principal. All personal information is kept strictly confidential and documentation regarding such agreement orders will be held in a separate file.

When Custody arrangements are unclear

9. If a parent or guardian has not given the school reasonable notice of a change in custody/care arrangements for their child, the school may choose to follow the arrangement already in place.

Day-to-Day Care

10. Matters of day-to-day care are the responsibility of the custodial parent. Matters such as absenteeism, lateness and no lunch will be discussed with the day-to-day care parent in the first instance.

Contact Rights and the School

11. Except where there are any court orders or protection orders in place, both parents, and any other guardians, are entitled to:

- receive school newsletters and a copy of the child's reports
- attend parent/teacher conferences
- discuss their child's educational progress with the principal and teachers
- be consulted on the need for specialist educational services
- see their child's school records, subject to any legal restrictions
- participate in disciplinary hearings involving their child
- receive information through the school's class representative system
- vote in Hauraki School Board (the Board) elections
- participate in parent groups or meetings and other school functions

12. The guardians themselves must take the initiative in exercising these rights.

13. The school appreciates parents being able to attend the same parent/teacher conferences where possible.

Impartiality

14. The school will remain neutral and not favour one parent over another. Staff will not engage in conversations with one parent about the other's care of, and interactions with, the child or discuss matters pertaining to particular care or contact arrangements in front of students.

15. In cases where staff are concerned about the child's well being, the principal is to be advised and appropriate action will be taken. This may include:

- meeting with one or both parents
- contacting Oranga Tamariki
- contacting the child's appointed lawyer
- immediately contacting the police if a Protection Order is breached

Contact Rights and the School

16. As a rule, parent contact visits should take place outside of school hours to avoid disruption for students and to ensure the school is a place where students feel settled and can focus on their learning without distraction.

17. A student's learning should not be disrupted by unnecessary communication throughout the day (e.g. texts, social media, phone calls or email). The school also considers it inappropriate for personal mail or emails to be sent to a student at school by someone who is subject to a court

