

# EQUAL PARENTS

Clearing the obstacles to  
involvement of non-resident  
parents in their children's  
education



FAMILIES NEED FATHERS  
**SCOTLAND**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The life of most of our children is built around their time at school not only in class but in the wider activities of the school community. From after school clubs to the forming of friendships school provides the hub around which social skills and personal development can build

There is much research and general acceptance that children do better when they have the active interest and involvement of both parents as well as their wider family in their education whether that be measured in exam results or broader measures of well-being.

It is a reality that many of our children have parents who live separately either through divorce or separation or who never lived together.

It is also fair to acknowledge that in those circumstances many parents do give priority, whatever the differences between them, to the support that both should give their children through their time at school.

However, it is unfortunately true that other non-resident parents find themselves either actively excluded from involvement in their children's life school life by the parent with the majority of care or passively excluded by the inertia or indifference of the school's approach to continuing engagement. Non-resident parents frequently report that they have to argue repeatedly for acknowledgement and inclusion - and the more they argue the more they run the risk of being perceived as 'difficult'.

The majority of non-resident parents are fathers and Families Need Fathers Scotland has been contacted by many men who have experienced great difficulty in fulfilling their wish to stay involved with their children. They take seriously the notion that Parental Rights and Responsibilities means something in law and in public policy.

With Children in Scotland we will soon be publishing a separate guide aimed specifically at education authorities and schools to help them understand their obligations and make suggestions of how they could become more inclusive.

The aim of this publication is primarily to support non-resident parents in their efforts to stay involved with their children.

We hope to achieve this in this revised edition not only by clarifying the legal rights they have to information about their children's progress at school but also the duties of the schools and education authorities to respond to them both in the letter and in the spirit of the law. We have also included some template letters that may get the relationship between non-resident parent and his child's school off to a good start.

This guide is an aid to building a constructive relationship between non-resident parents and schools across Scotland in support of our children.

**Ian Maxwell, National Manager of Families Need Fathers Scotland.**

## THE PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT ACT AND NON-RESIDENT PARENTS

CASE STUDY. "I volunteered to help with reading in my son's school. Wee P1 boys and girls, not just my son's group, would come into the library to listen to stories and choose a book to take back to class. I didn't realise how important it was just to be visible as a non-resident parent. One day as they were heading back to class I heard one boy say to my son, 'Your dad's really cool.' I made it to the playground before bursting into tears of pride."

[The Scottish Schools \(Parental Involvement\) Act 2006](#) was clear about the important part that all parents can play in partnership with school in supporting the education of Scotland's children.

To make it more than a statement of the obvious the Act required Scottish ministers and education authorities to actively promote the involvement of parents in children's education.

The [Guidance](#) that was published along with the Act prior to its implementation in August 2007 is explicit about the family situations where parents live apart. The Guidance is clear that both parents have equal status in terms of their relationship with the school "unless there is a court order limiting an individual's exercise of parental rights and responsibilities".

The Guidance urges schools to "work hard" in engaging with non-resident parents and requires authorities to produce a parental involvement strategy and report annually on its progress:

*"The education authority strategy, therefore, should include the arrangements they have in place to assist parents who do not live with their children, or others who have parental or caring responsibilities towards children, to be involved in their education. This should include how they provide parents with advice and information on any matter relating to the child's education, on meetings involving the child, and on school activities."*

Further on it states:

*"Schools and education authorities, therefore, should do what they can to help non-resident parents maintain the relationship with the child's education."*

Authorities are particularly urged to make an effort to engage with all fathers.

*"The positive involvement of fathers in children's learning is associated with better exam results, better school attendance and behaviour, and better relationships in adult life. Some fathers perceive barriers to their involvement and so authorities and schools **must work hard** (our emphasis) to help break down these barriers in providing a warm welcome to all parents and ensuring that they receive the information they need in order to be able to support their child."*

Apart from the occasional slip where it refers in the text to "absent parents", a term that is neither accurate nor encouraging to the non-resident parents who are doing their best to be involved, the Guidance to the Act sets out clearly that it expects schools to engage with both parents on an equal basis and make additional effort to ensure that those involved with a child, including non-resident parents and grand parents and other relevant individuals, are embraced

within the school community.

It even provides a tool kit to assist them in evaluating their own performance in communicating the strategy to staff as well as parents.

The approach of the 2006 Act now falls within the broader Scottish Government [National Parenting Strategy](#)<sup>1</sup> which makes clear the obligations of all public authorities to ensure their practice is inclusive and promotes the full participation of parents for the benefit of their children. The Minister for Children and Young People told the Two Year Review of the National Parenting Strategy in August 2014, "If Scotland is to be the best place in the world for children to grow up it must also be the best place in the world to be a parent."

There is no doubt that most schools are willing to engage with most non-resident parents. FNF Scotland recently conducted an in-house survey of members about the issues that have most concerned them. Of those who answered the questions about their dealings with schools almost 2/3rds reported that they had a positive or very positive experience.

The experience of the others is that far from being welcomed and actively encouraged they are made to feel that they are a bother. Although the various pieces of relevant legislation are clear that a non-resident parent is entitled to respect and equal involvement unless there is a court order in place to stop it many non-resident parents feel they have to prove that there is no such order. That is undermining and distressing.

It is a common discouragement to the non-resident parents that the first response from the school office staff is to give them a list of documents that they must supply to establish their status. These are important and essential but schools should be aware, as the guidance anticipates, that a negative first response by the school office to a parent is "a barrier to their involvement" that can kill the relationship stone dead.

In summer of 2011 Families Need Fathers Scotland set out to gather some information on how much proactive effort education authorities have made to establish productive relations with non-resident parents in the spirit of the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act.

Our aims were threefold. First to give feedback to education authorities and schools; second, to clarify for non-resident parents what they are entitled to expect from the schools and staff and how to go about securing it; and thirdly, to make some suggestions for improvements that may not be obvious to schools but are important to non-resident parents.

The research revealed that far from actively engaging most and education authorities were largely passive and reactive.

We repeated the exercise again in 2013-14 in collaboration with Children in Scotland. A very mixed picture emerged. It is clear that best practice is not always being delivered.

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<sup>1</sup> Scottish Government (2012). National Parenting Strategy: Making a positive difference to children and young people through parenting. Available from: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2012/10/4789>

A few authorities and individual schools have invested the significant effort required to involve fathers and non-resident fathers. Good practice case studies are set out in the FNF Scotland/Children in Scotland report associated with this user guide.

However, it appears the majority still regard “responding when asked” as sufficient. It is not - neither in the terms nor of the spirit of the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006.

## WHAT IS THE LAW?

This section deals with some of the questions most frequently asked by parents.

### Who is a parent?

CASE STUDY: My daughter was born a couple of months before the 2006 Family Law (Scotland) Act that would have given me statutory Parental Rights and Responsibilities as a separated unmarried father. For six months the school and the education authority dug in and told me they would not give me any information about her. When I pressed them for an explanation I eventually got an e mail saying, "... without either care and control of a child or Parental Rights and Responsibilities in relation to a child, an individual is not classed as a parent and information cannot be released to them." As soon as I got that I was able to write back and tell them their refusal was completely contrary to law. I directed them to the 1980 Education Act. They didn't actually apologise for the difficulties they had caused by misreading the law but I'm hopeful that we can all move on now.

For the purposes of education law "parent" is defined in [section 135\(1\) of the Education \(Scotland\) Act 1980](#):

'Parent includes guardian and any person who is liable to maintain **OR** has parental responsibilities (within the meaning of section 1(3) of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 in relation to, **OR** has care of a child or young person'.

The legislation covers state schools and pre-school nursery classes. It does not cover the independent sector. However the [Scottish Council for Independent Schools](#) website states that most independent schools pay particular attention to engaging with parents with many asking parents to sign a parental agreement when signing their child up at the school.

Nurseries are covered by separate legislation (see below).

The two '**ORs**' we have highlighted in the 1980 Act definition are important in our contemporary Scotland where family relationships can be complex albeit frustrating for education authorities looking to create a simple series of boxes for head teachers to tick.

Liability to maintain is sufficient. This means that all fathers must be treated as parents for the purposes of statutory education rights unless they have been withdrawn after due process.

Our research has revealed this is where some relationships between non-resident parents and schools can break down – at the very first hurdle if they don't fit neatly into one of the boxes.

The [Children \(Scotland\) Act 1995](#) covered the status of the father and the associated Parental Rights and Responsibilities in mainstream family relationships even after divorce or separation. The [Family Law \(Scotland\) Act 2006](#) extended recognition of unmarried fathers, awarding Parental Rights and Responsibilities providing their name is on the birth certificate and the child was born after May 4<sup>th</sup> 2006.

These cover the majority of families. However, we are aware of a tapestry of non-standard decisions of courts where, for example, a sheriff has awarded Parental Responsibilities but not Rights or vice versa; where a non-resident father has been awarded 'a mandate' "that the sheriff deemed "equivalent of Parental Rights and Responsibilities"; and, not infrequently, where social workers have brought the children to live with the non-resident parent - usually where the mother has drink or drug problems – making him the de facto parent with care but without changing his legal status. In such a case the non-resident parent "has care" of the child but no paperwork to show the school.

The Family Law (Scotland) Act 2006 generated an entirely new anomaly. It is not uncommon for an unmarried non-resident father to have Parental Rights and Responsibilities for his younger children but not for any born before the May 4th 2006 cut-off date even though they are all children of the same relationship and his desire to support their learning is the same for them all.

While a school is not an investigative agency the Guidance spells out that it must be open to the reality of relationships within the scope allowed it by the legislation and does not default to an over-prescriptive, defensive attitude. For a variety of reasons of their own, many separated families never go anywhere near a lawyer far less a court.

### **What is a non-resident parent entitled to?**

While we have emphasised the importance of relationship-building between the school and both parents and carers to promote broader engagement there is a statutory entitlement for the non-resident parent enshrined in the [The Pupil's Educational Records \(Scotland\) Regulations 2003](#).

Educational Records are not spelled out but a non-resident parent should expect to be sent a his own copy of the child's annual school report and any correspondence concerning attendance/absence and any welfare/disciplinary issues.

It is generally accepted that the non-resident parent should receive his own notification of parents' nights at which he can discuss his child's general progress and attainment. A non-resident parent is entitled to ask for a separate appointment if it is inconvenient or unhelpful to attend along with the other parent. This is reasonably easy to achieve in primary school when the appointment will be with a single class teacher. It is more difficult when the child is at secondary school and usually has to book parent appointments with a succession of subject teachers.

It will depend on the state of his/her relationship with the non-resident parent whether the child wants to make separate appointments for each teacher. It is obviously better if the parents can co-operate and can be seen to be working together in the interests of the child. If it is genuinely impossible or likely to lead to conflict the non-resident parent should make an appointment with the child's named Guidance Teacher to discuss alternative arrangements.

Some schools have in the past appeared content to do the minimum – annual report and parents night notification.



However, Annexe B of the Guidance to the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act expects much more:

*20. Some parents and carers have shared care arrangements and it is important that schools know the details of these arrangements so that they can properly communicate with the home and keep parents fully informed. The more information available to the school, the easier it will be for them to accommodate individual family circumstances. Schools should consider how they can routinely keep parents informed in relation to: parents' evenings, attendance, exclusion, sports days and other school events, general information about the school and attainment information etc. regarding their child. In addition, parents should be fully involved in the planning processes in relation to meeting the child or young person's educational needs. It is important that education authorities and schools do as much as they can to support the continued involvement of parents who don't live with their children. In doing so, authorities and schools must be sensitive to the needs and wishes of both parents, who may not always agree. It is also important that education authorities and schools pay particular regard to the views of the child or young person in such circumstances.'*

### **When can the school refuse to provide records?**

"I wrote to my daughter's new secondary school to check that they had my contact details for her school report and information about parent's night. I had had both of these during her time at primary school and there had never been any problem. I had separate parent's night appointments and got to know her teachers pretty well. I have full Parental Rights and Responsibilities in terms of the Children (Scotland) Act even though her mother's hostility has made direct contact impossible. But she's still my daughter and I regard it as my duty to be aware of her progress. Maybe one day she'll appreciate that I showed all the interest I could. However the school replied that they wouldn't send me anything on the grounds that it might "cause distress". They refused to discuss how they had come to that decision or meet me to discuss it. They had taken advice from the council legal officers they said. I don't know whether it was my daughter or 'another person' who might be distressed. I don't know what enquiry the school made into this 'distress' or whether that's it for ever. Does she get to change her mind - if she even knows about it? I am now shut out and it was made clear to me that it wouldn't be in my interests to persist."

The general assumption in policy and law is that schools should treat both parents equally and that they should be entitled to the same information about their child.

[Section 6 of The Pupil's Educational Records \(Scotland\) Regulations 2003](#) sets out the statutory basis for withholding information.

First, the school is **not obliged** to provide the records unless they are supplied, on request, with any information as they may *reasonably* require in order to satisfy themselves as to the identity of the person making the request and to locate the information which that person seeks.

While it is quite proper and accepted that the burden of proof that he is who he says he is inevitably falls to the non-resident parent who approaches a school or pre-school nursery, it still doesn't feel good. The way in which the head teacher or, more often, the school reception staff

ask for the evidence they require can be the foundation of an enduring constructive relationship.

See Appendix A for suggested template letters for making contact with the school.

A non-resident parent is entitled to information about his children even if he has no direct contact unless there is a court order prohibiting it. The preferences of the parent with care should not be accepted as a veto unless it falls within the criteria set out in the Act under which the school is **not permitted** to disclose information. These are

- i. if its disclosure would, in the opinion of the school, be likely to cause significant distress or harm to the pupil or any other person.
- ii. that consists of a training/employment reference by the school for the purposes of the education, training or employment (prospective or otherwise) of the pupil.
- iii. that is covered by certain sections of the Data Protection Act 1998 (section 2, 30(2) or 38(I))

The grounds for withholding access to records were significantly changed by The Pupil's Educational Records (Scotland) Regulations 2003. The preceding School Pupil Records (Scotland) Regulations 1990 had to be updated to become compliant with new data protection legislation but in the process became less transparent. The 1990 regulations had set out the basis for a refusal to access that was not only more specific but also more transparent by requiring the matter to be tested by a health professional independent of the school and of the education authority.

The 2003 version replaces the phrase in the 1990 regulations "serious harm to the physical or mental health of the pupil" with the vaguer "significant distress" and deletes the requirement for examination by someone outside of the education authority.

We are aware that some schools have taken the view if the parent with care says it would cause her distress to share information with the non-resident parent then they have no choice but to accede. That is not necessarily true. In its 2007 [Guidance Note MC64](#) Glasgow City Council takes what could be considered an actively (rather than passively) neutral approach:

*Determining if disclosure will cause significant distress or harm to the child or young person or any other person is as follows:*

*That is a matter for the Head of Establishment has to determine on the basis of the information available and following advice where appropriate from Area Education manager and/or Chief executive's Legal and Administrative Section. **The presumption would be, however, that educational records be disclosed to the parent/carer making the request. An establishment cannot refuse to disclose records simply because one parent/carer and/or child or young person does not want the other parent/carer to have such access. Consent is not required from one parent/carer for disclosure of information to any other parent/carer.** [our emphasis]*

## What schools should do to engage with non-resident parents

The [Scottish Schools \(Parental Involvement\) Act 2006](#) imposes two key duties on each education authority in Scotland:

- a duty to promote involvement of parents in school education (section 1); and
- a duty to prepare a 'Strategy for Parental Involvement' (section 2).

### *(i) Duty to promote involvement of parents in school education*

The Act requires Scottish education authorities to **promote** (our emphasis) the involvement of parents in the education provided in public schools in their area.

The accompanying Guidance explains that 'involvement' generally refers to three areas:

- learning at home (Guidance, Section B, paragraph 7a)
- home/school partnership (Guidance, Section B, paragraph 7b)
- parental representation (Guidance, Section B, paragraph 7c).

### *(ii) Duty to prepare a 'Strategy for Parental Involvement'*

The Act requires Scottish education authorities to develop a strategy for parental involvement, and to include within that strategy their general policies for implementing the duties imposed upon them elsewhere in the Act.

Annexe B to the Guidance [HYPERLINK] provides a checklist that authorities should have regard to in developing their strategy for parental involvement. Some of the key paragraphs include:

#### *Fathers*

'10. Over time, consideration should be given by authorities and schools to the differing needs and circumstances of fathers, some of whom, research suggests, perceive barriers to their inclusion in schools. Mothers are often the primary carer so their impact on the child's development may be more obvious. ... Some fathers perceive barriers to their involvement and so authorities and schools must work hard to help break down these barriers in providing a warm welcome to all parents and ensuring that they receive the information they need in order to be able to support their child.'

#### *Non-resident parents and other parents/carers*

'18. ...The education authority strategy should take account of the varying family circumstances to which the definition of parent gives rise. For example, the Act's provisions can extend to parents who may not live with the child. It also includes parents who are liable to maintain the child. It can also include a person who has been allocated parental rights or responsibilities to be exercised on behalf of a natural parent. The education authority strategy, therefore, should include the arrangements they have in place to assist parents who do not live with their children, or others who have parental or caring responsibilities towards children, to be involved in their

education. This should include how they provide parents with advice and information on any matter relating to their child's education, on meetings involving the child, and on school activities. The circumstances of each individual case will differ so it will be necessary for education authorities to provide their schools with clear guidance on the matter. In doing so, authorities should ensure their guidance reflects the different circumstances covered by the above definition of parent.'

'19. Children's education and development can suffer if they are upset over their parents' separation. But adverse effects on children can be greatly reduced if parents are able to maintain a positive interest in their child's education and welfare. Schools and authorities, therefore, should do what they can to help non-resident parents maintain the relationship with their child's education. Schools may find it helpful to refer parents to *A Parenting Agreement for Scotland* [[HYPERLINK](#)], which provides advice to help separating parents agree on future arrangements for their children. It is not a legal contract and it is not intended to be enforced by a court. It is intended to help separated parents stay out of court by encouraging them to make practical and workable arrangements for their children by themselves.'

### [Standards in Scotland's Schools Act \(2000\)](#)

This Act sets out standards for Scotland's schools

Amongst other things, the Act places a requirement upon local authorities to prepare and publish an 'annual statement of education improvement objectives' (section 5(2)). This statement

'...shall include an account –

(a) of the ways in which the authority will seek to involve parents in promoting the education of their children;

(b) of the ways in which they will, in providing school education, encourage equal opportunities and in particular the observance of the equal opportunity requirements'

This underlines the requirements set out by the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act outlined above, that local authorities must develop a plan for how to engage parents in their children's education. Furthermore, it highlights that local authorities must plan for how to encourage equal opportunities for children through education.

### **What are my rights to be involved at my child's nursery?**

**CASE STUDY:** I wrote to the manager of the nursery where my three year old daughter had been enrolled (without any discussion with me, but let that pass). I thought it better to write and introduce myself as D's father and arrange an appointment to go in and meet the manager and staff rather than phone out of the blue. I'd explain that D stayed with me every other weekend and that I wanted to support her in her activities in the nursery. The next thing I knew was a text

from my ex-wife telling me the nursery had been in touch with her and any communication with them would have to be through her.

Apart from the discourtesy in communicating with my ex-wife before bothering to reply to me it seemed to illustrate an attitude that my relationship with the nursery would be contingent on the approval of my ex. I had expected to be asked to confirm that I was her father and that I had full Parental Rights and Responsibilities. Of course security is important. I didn't expect them to offer my ex-wife an effective veto. I know a nursery's legal obligation is to keep both parents actively involved for the benefit of the children involved but to be honest I still feel I am an afterthought and a bit of an irritation to them.

Nurseries are regulated separately from schools. The Care Inspectorate regulates early years services provided by the voluntary, statutory and private sectors, as defined in the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010. The Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act does not apply to these services. Registered services are regulated to ensure compliance with the Act and its associated regulations. However, nurseries must also take into account the National Care Standards for Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16. The National Care standards promote parental involvement in services and effective communication with parents and carers.

It is the stated view of the Care Inspectorate that the providers of registered care services should be aware of the need of all parents to have information which enables them to properly fulfil their parental responsibilities to their children, regardless of whether the child lives with them or not and that this should be reflected in their policies and procedures. The information about a care service should make it clear how parents and carers are expected to participate in the service and how the provider will communicate with them. Providers of care services may need to make enquiries to confirm the identity of any person who claims to be either a parent or having parental responsibility for a child and it may be that providers will need to consider taking legal advice if there is any doubt. In circumstances where a court order is in place which places limits on the rights of a parent, the service would be required to act in accordance with the order. Service providers should seek independent legal advice in any circumstances where they are unclear about their responsibilities.

## APPENDIX A

CASE STUDY: "I phoned up the school to say that my son's mother and I were now separated and that I wanted to give my contact details. The school receptionist came across as very hostile and reeled off a list of the evidence I'd need to give them to prove who I am. I felt like I was suddenly a stranger - even though I was the same dad I was before we separated - and probably a bit suspect."

If a non-resident parent isn't known to the school or even when the parents of children already at school have recently separated the initial contact often can set the terms of the relationship from that point on – for good or ill.

It is our recommendation that the initial contact with the school should be by letter or e mail rather than telephone call. The non-resident parent may be anxious and fearful while the school receptionist may be trying to do three things at once. It is a bad combination.

Schools and education authorities also have targets to meet for replying to correspondence. A paper trail is more useful than trying to recall the dates, times and content of telephone calls.

The templates below deal with the three main category of non-resident parent. There are other variations. It is important to be brief and stick to the facts that are relevant to the school in making its decision.

We recommend that the initial contact with the school should be in writing either by letter or e mail. We set out below three possible templates to cover: non-resident fathers who have Parental Rights and Responsibilities based on their marriage to the mother at the time the children were born; unmarried fathers who have acquired Parental Rights and Responsibilities through one of the routes set out in the Family Law (Scotland) Act 2006 [See Appendix A]; and unmarried fathers whose status as a parent is covered by the Education (Scotland) Act 1980.

It is better for both the school and the non-resident father to keep the letter brief and to the point. It allows the school to ask for documentary evidence without appearing to start from a point of suspicion. Non-resident fathers will certainly accept that the school cannot take the word of anyone who happens to phone up.

It helps remind the non-resident father that the aim of the exercise is to fulfil his obligations to support the children in their time at school.

**TEMPLATE 1: CHILDREN BORN WITHIN MARRIAGE**

14 High Street,  
Anyburgh  
AN49 1XP  
Telephone: 07777 777777  
e mail: myaddress@ xxxxxxxxxx

The Head Teacher,  
Anyburgh School,  
Anyburgh  
AN42 1XP

1<sup>st</sup> August 2014

Dear Mr/Ms Dominie,

Andrew Smith DoB 16.11.2006  
Jemima Smith DoB 16.11.2008

I am Jemima and Andrew's father. I'd like to introduce myself and make sure that you have my contact details as above.

Jemima and Andrew were born while their mother and I were married. I have full Parental Rights and Responsibilities and there are no orders of any kind modifying my PRR.

You may be aware that their mother and I are now divorced/separated. Of course I want to be able to support Jemima and Andrew both in their school work and also in involvement with the wider school community.

I would like to arrange to come in to the school to introduce myself to you and their class teacher [for primary schools]/their guidance teacher [for secondary schools] to discuss how best to keep up with their progress. Please let me know when would be suitable.

I'd like to make sure I'm on the relevant parent-school systems for keeping in touch.  
I would prefer/don't need separate appointments on parents night.

I am aware that the Guidance to the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006 urges schools to work hard to engage with fathers in general and non-resident parents in particular and the recently published National Plan for Parental Involvement (August 2018) sets out how schools should act positively to include non-resident parents.

Yours sincerely,

John Smith

**TEMPLATE 2: PARENTS NOT MARRIED BUT FATHER HAS PARENTAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

14 High Street,  
Anyburgh  
AN49 1XP  
Telephone: 07777 777777  
e mail: myaddress@ xxxxxxxxxx

The Head Teacher,  
Anyburgh School,  
Anyburgh  
AN42 1XP

1<sup>st</sup> August 2014

Dear Mr/Ms Dominie,

Andrew Smith DoB 16.11.2006  
Jemima Smith DoB 16.11.2008

I am Jemima and Andrew's father. I'd like to introduce myself and make sure that you have my contact details as above.

Although Jemima and Andrew's mother and I were not married I have full Parental Rights and Responsibilities in terms of the 2006 Family Law (Scotland) Act. [Either] My name is on the birth certificate [or] I have acquired PRR by legal agreement with their mother [or] I have a court order awarding me full PRR.

Of course I want to be able to support Jemima and Andrew both in their school work and also in involvement with the wider school community.

I would like to arrange to come in to the school to introduce myself to you and their class teacher [for primary schools]/their guidance teacher [for secondary schools] to discuss how best to keep up with their progress. Please let me know when would be suitable.

I'd like to make sure I'm on the relevant parent-school systems for keeping in touch.  
I would prefer/don't need separate appointments on parents night.

I am aware that the Guidance to the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006 urges schools to work hard to engage with fathers in general and non-resident parents in particular and the recently published National Plan for Parental Involvement (August 2018) sets out how schools should act positively to include non-resident parents.

Yours sincerely,

John Smith



**TEMPLATE 3: PARENTS NOT MARRIED AND FATHER HAS NOT ACQUIRED PARENTAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

14 High Street,  
Anyburgh  
AN49 1XP  
Telephone: 07777 777777  
e mail: myaddress@ xxxxxxxxxx

The Head Teacher,  
Anyburgh School,  
Anyburgh  
AN42 1XP

1<sup>st</sup> August 2014

Dear Mr/Ms Dominie,

Andrew Smith DoB 16.11.2004

Jemima Smith DoB 16.11.2005

I am Jemima and Andrew's father. I'd like to introduce myself and make sure that you have my contact details as above.

Jemima and Andrew's mother and I were not married and [Either] they were born before the 2006 Family Law (Scotland) Act [or] my name is not on their birth certificate. However I am their 'parent' in terms of the 1980 Education Act and therefore am entitled to be kept informed of their progress and invited to parents nights.

I would like to arrange to come in to the school to introduce myself to you and their class teacher [for primary schools]/their guidance teacher [for secondary schools] to discuss how best to keep up with their progress. Please let me know when would be suitable.

I'd like to make sure I'm on the relevant parent-school systems for keeping in touch.

I would prefer/don't need separate appointments on parents night.

I am aware that the Guidance to the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006 urges schools to work hard to engage with fathers in general and non-resident parents in particular and the recently published National Plan for Parental Involvement (August 2018) sets out how schools should act positively to include non-resident parents.

Yours sincerely,

John Smith