

## **Requests received from parents to change the surname of their child on school records:**

DfES circular 92/2000 provides guidance to schools as follows:

*“Problems can arise following the break down of a marriage in relation to the surname by which a child is known. A mother with whom a child resides following divorce may ask the school to change the child’s name in its records, perhaps to her maiden name. The basic legal position, however, is that she is not allowed to change the child’s surname without the consent of the father or of anyone else who has parental responsibility for the child. In such circumstances, a school should be cautious about making such a change in its records unless there is evidence – independent of the parent seeking to make the change – that consent has been given. The clearest evidence would, of course, be something in writing from the ‘other parent’ giving consent to the change”.*

In the majority of cases, it is appropriate to ask the parent who is requesting that a child’s name be changed on the school records to provide a letter of consent from the other natural parent of the child. A change of name deed is no guarantee that consent to a change of name has been given. However, cases sometimes arise where the ‘other’ parent is resident abroad or has lost contact with the child altogether. You may wish to discuss such cases with us before making a final decision to amend the school records.

Some cases will require considerable tact and diplomacy to resolve. If you are faced with a situation which is not straight forward then please contact Ann Bishop, Jeannette Adams or Mark Goswell on 823487 or 823494.

**RECOMMENDED PROCEDURE FOR SCHOOLS AFTER RECEIVING A REQUEST FOR A CHILD'S NAME TO BE CHANGED ON THEIR RECORDS**

