

Children in the Court System Policy



Approved by:	The governing Body	Date: 23.4.24
Last reviewed on:	23.4.24	
Next review due by:	April 2026	

Rationale

*In humility value others above yourselves
not looking to your own interests
but each to the interests of others
(Philippians 2: 3)*

We recognise that sometimes children are required to give evidence in criminal courts, for crimes committed against them or for other crimes they have witnessed. We will follow the age appropriate guides to support children 5-11 year-olds and 12-17 year-olds. Children could also be required to attend court or court proceeding in custodial trials.

We will follow these guides to ensure the correct process is followed and support and special measures are made available.

We understand that when child arrangements via the family courts are made following separation this can be a stressful and entrenched conflict in families and this can be stressful for children. We will follow the guidance of the Ministry of Justice in managing these situations.

Listening to children

We will always listen carefully to what children have to say about their case and about going to court. Children's views are important and **we will** listen carefully and act in the best interest of the child. Sometimes in cases such as child custody, the school will always remain neutral.

A child could read this guidance with the help of an adult who knows about court procedures and can answer their questions about being a young witness.

Going to court:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/708114/ywp-5-11-eng.pdf

Facilitating mediation or CAFCASS

Cafcass is an independent organisation tasked with looking after the interests of children involved in family proceedings. Cafcass work with children and their families and advises the court on what it considers to be in the children's best interests. On occasions, CAFCASS could ask school to facilitate meetings.

Staff at Highfield will facilitate CAFCASS meetings in a neutral space and follow advice from the court professionals. Staff will not interrupt, speak on behalf of the child or interject in any discussions between the child and court professionals. Staff will facilitate meetings and act as a chaperone if required.