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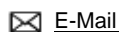
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Surge in separations forces school to cut back on reports

LARA BRADLEY

THE number of separated and divorced parents at a top fee-paying school has reached such an "unmanageable level" that it can no longer afford the cost of postage to send reports and news home to both parents of each child.

Underlining the dramatically changing structure of Irish families, the High School in Rathgar, Dublin, has written to parents to tell them they must cooperate in sharing all written material with their separated spouses.

The top Protestant mixed school previously sent copies of curricular information, yearbooks, notices and reports to both parents. But last week the Board of Governors decided the cost of keeping both parents informed was too high.

Some parents have expressed dismay at the move, believing it could cause even more discord between them in having to choose who gets the material concerning their children.

A letter to parents from the principal of the High School, B T Duffy, said: "We realise the difficulties and sensitivities involved in such situations and did provide such copies for a small number of people in the past.

"However, the volume of requests has now reached an unmanageable level within our current administrative resources. We must, therefore, request that separated parents nominate one parent to receive the information and arrange to pass it on to the second parent.

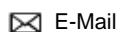
"In the interests of the welfare of the child [in most circumstances] we request that parents/guardians cooperate in this matter."

The move caused surprise among some well-heeled parents. One divorced father, who asked not to be named, said: "I get on fine with my ex-wife, but a lot of people don't and this could cause arguments. If, for example, an ex-husband pays the fees and the children live with their mother, this could cause trouble.

"Quite a lot of people are upset because the service they used to offer was really good, and surely it is worth the extra photocopying.

"Personally I would rather pay more to have the old service continued," he said.

The school was unable to provide a spokesperson to comment on the matter.

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