**Consent Policy Document**

All mothers and most fathers have legal rights and responsibilities as a parent - known as ‘parental responsibility’ (PR).

A father usually has PR if he is:

- married to the child’s mother at the time of the birth AND/OR named on the birth certificate (for births after 1 Dec 2003).

Both parents retain PR if they later divorce.

A parent can have PR for a child they don’t live with; this does not mean that they necessarily have a right to have contact with them. However, the parent that the child lives with still needs to keep the other parent updated about their child’s well-being and progress.

A father can apply for PR by getting a PR agreement with the mother or through the courts.

A step-parent does not have automatic PR and will need to apply to the courts for this.

It is possible for one parent with PR to make decisions and give consent in their child’s best interests (Children Act, 1989, Section 2 (7)), without the consent of the other parent. However, at Wiltshire Psychology we prefer both parents to be aware of what is happening with their child and to be jointly involved in making decisions. This is because we are unable to deny requests for information from a parent; hence it is best to be open and honest from the outset. It can be extremely disruptive to the child's therapy if both parents cannot agree to support it and so we seek to gain a consensus at an early stage. Our work with any child or young person will always be in the best interests of the child, not either parent, despite the fact that the sessions may be privately funded.

Written information shared with parents will be agreed by the child/young person (as appropriate) and will be identical.

Both parents will be asked to sign a consent form prior to their child’s initial assessment appointment; at least one parent must have PR.

We are happy to discuss any concerns or questions that this may raise for you in your specific situation.