

KEEPING THE SCHOOL INFORMED

Family circumstances can keep changing. Schools need to know what these changes are and if any court orders have been made which will affect the child(ren)'s education.

Pupil's records need to be kept up to date.

Please let school know:

- What court orders already exist
- When a new court order is made
- Whenever people with parental responsibility change address.

GETTING FURTHER ADVICE

If your family includes step-parents or unmarried fathers who would like to know how to get PARENT RESPONSIBILITY ask at your:

- Citizen's Advice Bureau
- Law Centre / Solicitor
- County or Magistrates Court

Your school's Education Welfare Officer can also help you to find the right advice.

For advice on how the Children Order can affect your child's education in Belfast, please contact the Education Welfare Service:

IN THE NORTH

93 Cliftonville Road
Belfast BT14 6JQ
Tel: 9035 1320/9035 1149/9074 1646

IN THE SOUTH AND EAST

Ulidia Resource Centre
Somerset Street
Belfast BT7 2GS
Tel: 9049 1058

IN THE WEST

Whiterock Library
195 Whiterock road
Belfast BT12 7FW
Tel: 9024 7966/9023 4096/9023 8770



Belfast Education and Library Board



Children (Northern Ireland)
Order 1995

Parental Responsibility

The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 became law on 4 November 1996. It aims to strengthen the relationship between parents and their children even if parents have separated or divorced or even if the courts have said there should be no direct contact.

The Children Order also gives children rights to be listened to whenever welfare decisions are made about them and sometimes the right to take their own independent action through the courts.

SCHOOLS AND PARENTS

The law says schools must register the names of all actual parents if married because they each hold PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY for their children. Parental Responsibility never ends, even if the parent no longer lives with the child, unless there has been an adoption. It is still held by each parent, even if they are separated or divorced. The law also says schools must register the names of any other person having parental responsibility for a child.

Teachers cannot care for your child properly unless they know who, under the law, has responsibility and authority for him/her and where they live.

PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

IS

All the:

RIGHTS

DUTIES

POWERS

RESPONSIBILITIES and

AUTHORITY

which by law a parent of a child has in relation to the child and his/her property.

Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995
Article 6 (1)

The law says schools should keep persons with parental responsibility informed about their children's education by:-

- Sending them all copies of their child's annual report
- Inviting them all to the school to discuss their child's progress
- Involving them all in decisions about their child's education

The law says that all persons with parental responsibility for a particular child must be treated equally.

GETTING PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

When actual parents are unmarried, the law says **only** the mother has **parental responsibility** for the children. However, an unmarried father can get his share of parental responsibility either by:-

- jointly registering the birth of the child with the mother (applies on or after 15 April 2002)
- marrying the mother
- signing a legal agreement with the mother
- getting a Parental Responsibility Order from the court.

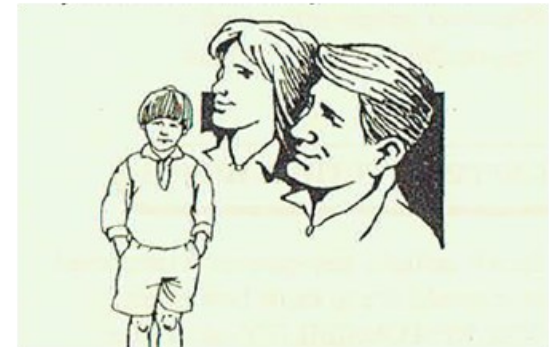


Other adults who live with a child, like step-parents, co-parents or grandparents can get a share in Parental Responsibility by asking the court for a Residence Order. This gives them responsibility and authority for the child as long as they stay living together.

The original parents only ever lose their share of Parental Responsibility when their child is adopted. They always hold Parental Responsibility however many other people share it with them

WHY GETTING PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY MATTERS

- You are able to have a say in decisions about the children in your family. Schools have to consult with you first when making decision on such things as admissions, transfer, GCSE options etc.
- It will help teachers, doctors and others to know who to contact when decisions have to be made.
- It can strengthen the relationship between you and the children you look after.



THOSE WITHOUT PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

The law also says that people who care for children, but do not have Parental Responsibility, eg step-parents, other relatives or foster parents, should take sensible everyday decisions for their best welfare.