

## Children Matters: Abduction

The Child Abduction Act 1984 makes it a criminal offence for anyone connected with a child under the age of sixteen to take or send that child out of the United Kingdom without appropriate consent.

Persons connected with a child are parents, guardians and persons with a residence order or who have parental responsibility.

The appropriate consent is the consent of the mother, the father (if he has parental responsibility), guardian and anyone with a residence order or parental responsibility, or the leave of the court.

In general, a child's father only has automatic parental responsibility if he is or has been married to the child's mother or he was recorded as the child's father on the Birth Certificate for children born after 1 December 2003. A person with a residence order may take or send the child out of the United Kingdom without the appropriate consent for up to a month at a time.

## UK PASSPORT OFFICE

Normally the Passport Office will issue a passport for a child at the request of the mother, father (provided he has parental responsibility) or person with parental responsibility. Please see our separate fact sheet for more information on who has parental responsibility.

There are special rules if you have adopted a child, are fostering a child or the child was born through assisted reproduction or surrogacy. For further information, please see <https://www.gov.uk/get-a-child-passport>.

You can ask the Passport Office not to issue a passport for a child. However, the Passport Office will usually only stop a passport if you have a Court Order to do so.

You should contact Her Majesty's Passport Office to find out if it will be possible to stop someone obtaining a passport:-

Her Majesty's Passport Office - Passport Advice line

Telephone: 0300 222 0000

Textphone: 0300 222 0222

Text Relay: 18001 0300 222 0000

Monday to Friday, 8am to 8pm

Saturday, Sunday and public holidays, 9am to 5:30pm

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

More detailed information can be obtained from the International Child Abduction and Contact Unit, the Foreign & Commonwealth Office, or by contacting Reunite, a charity organisation which provides a telephone advice line offering practical information on the issue of parental child abduction and international custody disputes.

Contact details for each are:-

### **International Child Abduction and Contact Unit:**

[www.justice.gov.uk/guidance/protecting-the-vulnerable/official-solicitor/international-child-abduction-and-contact-unit/Foreign & Commonwealth Office](http://www.justice.gov.uk/guidance/protecting-the-vulnerable/official-solicitor/international-child-abduction-and-contact-unit/Foreign%20&%20Commonwealth%20Office)

Tel: 020 7911 7127

### **Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

[www.gov.uk/government/organisations/foreign-commonwealth-office](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/foreign-commonwealth-office)

Tel: 020 7008 1500

### **Reunite**

[www.reunite.org](http://www.reunite.org)

Tel: 0116 2556 234