

PR holders

1. Collection of Children from School

- At the end of the school day, the school will release a child to:
 - Any person with parental responsibility (PR), or
 - A person authorised by a PR holder,
Unless:
 - Alternative arrangements have been notified in writing and agreed by all known PR holders, or
 - A court order specifies otherwise, or
 - The school has safeguarding concerns about the collecting adult.

- **If a PR holder attempts to collect a child against existing arrangements** (eg at an unusual time or by a PR holder who doesn't usually collect)
 - - A staff member will:
 - Meet the parent/person requesting collection.
 - Call the PR holder who normally collects the child (in the requester's presence).
 - Explain the situation and seek verbal agreement.
 - If agreed:
 - The child may be released.
 - Log the verbal permission in the comms record.
 - If not agreed—or if there are concerns about abduction/disruption:
 - Refuse release.
 - Notify police/local authority immediately.

- **Conflicting collection instructions:**
 - Follow the most recent written agreement or court order.
 - If none exists, maintain the current routine unless safeguarding requires otherwise.
 - If disputes persist, require PR holders to resolve legally/through mediation.

2. Disputed Consent for Activities (Trips, Counselling, etc.)

Where PR holders disagree on consent (e.g., for trips, counselling, or medical care), the school may:

- Proceed with one PR holder's consent if:
 - The activity is essential to welfare, education, or safeguarding (e.g., mental health support, curriculum trips).
 - There is no court order prohibiting it.
 - Withholding participation would harm the child's well-being.
- Document:
 - Reasons for overriding an objection.

- Evidence of the child's needs (e.g., SEN, pastoral risks).
- Attempts to contact the dissenting PR holder.
- Exceptions:
 - Court orders always override school decisions.

3. Safeguarding Principle

- The school's primary duty is to the child's best interests (*Children Act 1989*).
- In urgent welfare cases (e.g., suicide risk), the school may:
 - Involve social services/police without delay.
 - Disregard parental disputes if necessary.

General Rule for All Disputes

- Maintain the status quo until:
 - PR holders provide a written agreement, or
 - A court order is issued.

This advice has been issued by Browne Jacobson LLP – Specialist Education law solicitors.