

Authorising carers to make certain decisions

Information for schools, kindergartens and child care providers

Introduction

This sheet provides information for schools, kindergartens and child care providers about the decisions a foster carer, kinship carer or residential carer can make when a child in their care is the subject of a Children's Court order. The *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* allows for the authorisation of carers by Child Protection to make certain decisions about the child.

Child Protection is required by law to administer the order the child is subject to and prepare a case plan for the child that includes all the significant decisions regarding the child's care and wellbeing. The child will have a case planner, who is responsible for ensuring appropriate decisions are made about the child while they are in out-of-home care, and a case worker. There may be a care team supporting the placement.

If you require any additional information about carer authorisations please contact the child's case worker whose contact details are provided below.

What is an authorisation instrument?

Carers are provided with an instrument of authorisation by the case planner that specifies the type of decisions the carer can make in relation to a particular child. The authorisation is valid while the child resides with the carer and the court order remains in force. Carers will provide the relevant school, kindergarten or child care provider with a copy of the authorisation instrument, with the order attached, to verify that they have authority to make particular decisions. If the order is extended, a letter will be provided verifying this.

What types of decisions can be made?

Care decisions

Carers make many decisions about a child's day-to-day care such as the clothes the child will wear and their routine. They are expected to make these decisions and authorisation is not required.

Decisions of a short-term nature

There are times when routine decisions are needed about issues of a short-term nature. Carers may be authorised to make decisions about specified issues that are more than everyday care decisions. Examples include consenting to school, kindergarten or child care activities, incursions and excursions, routine medical care, work experience and camps within Victoria that will occur during the placement. Carers need to be able to make these types of decisions so they can respond to a child's needs in a timely way.

Decisions of a long-term nature

Decisions about major long-term issues also need to be made from time to time. A major long-term issue in relation to a child means an issue about the care, wellbeing or development of a child that is **of a long-term nature**. This includes issues about the child's education (both current and future), religious and cultural upbringing, health or name, **of a long term nature**.

If the Children's Court has made a care by Secretary order or long-term care order for a child, the child's carer may be authorised to make some long-term decisions. This may happen if the overall permanency objective is for long-term out of home care or permanent care. It is more likely if the child is living with their intended long-term carer. Examples include consent to enrol at, or transfer to, a different school, kindergarten or child care provider; decisions about major health issues, for instance engagement of the school's psychologist to address mental health issues; assisting the child to select their year 11 or 12 subjects; and participating in a school trip overseas.

Who should I contact if I have any questions?

If you have any questions, please contact the child's child protection practitioner.

The child protection practitioner is: _____

Phone: _____

Additional information

Link to other fact sheets on the authorisation of carers:

<http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/cpmanual/library/information-sheets/information-sheets-for-clients/authorising-carers>

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