

## Confidential

Dear Headteacher and/or SENCO

As always we look forward to working in partnership with you over this academic year. Feedback from schools, and educational psychologists, suggests that there is some frustration around the time it can take, in a minority of instances, for young people to be seen by our service.

One of the key reasons for delay is difficulty in obtaining parental consent. As you will be aware, prior to the psychologist discussing a pupil in detail or working with them directly we need to ensure that we have written consent from everyone who holds parental responsibility for that child or young person. We appreciate that this can, in some circumstances, be hard to obtain, but as a service we have a legal obligation to do so.

Schools may find it helpful to refer to the Department of Education guidance *Understanding and dealing with issues relating to parental responsibility* (2016).

In seeking consent and completing the Core Information and EPS Consent form it is the school's responsibility to discuss the reasons for requesting EP involvement and what is hoped for in terms of outcomes with parents. It would be helpful if you could:

- Discuss the reason for referring a young person with parents *prior* to seeking their consent. The 'View of Issues and Strengths' section of

Derbyshire County Council Children's Services Department complies with the Data Protection Act 1998 and values the importance of your information and will safeguard it and keep it accurate. Wherever possible we obtain your consent before sharing your information so we can ensure you get the most appropriate care and support in the right circumstances

Jane Parfremment, Strategic Director of Children's Services Department, County Hall, Matlock,  
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the information form should always be completed and form the basis of any discussion with the family.

- Provide parents with a copy of the EPS leaflet and data protection sheet. Copies of these will be shared at Support and Planning Meetings.
- Ensure that all those with parental responsibility sign the form. If you are aware that this is only held by one person, for instance due to a bereavement then please indicate this on the form or let the EP know.
- Give us the name, current address and telephone number of any person with responsibility who does not live with the child so that we can make further enquires. There are instances when we are obliged to write to parents who are no longer living in the authority or country this may slow the process.
- Let us know if the pupil is in care or placed with prospective adopters. In these instances it is likely that we will require the form to be signed by the child's social worker and make further enquires with social care regarding who holds parental responsibility.

I am aware that it can be frustrating for schools when consent forms are returned requesting more information and a further signature. Hopefully the guidance above will cut down on the need to do this. If you are unsure about getting consent in a complex situation please do speak to your individual school EP for further information. Psychologists have been advised that they should not see pupils for assessment where there are outstanding issues around consent, this may in some cases lead to appointments being cancelled.

If you would like to discuss this or any other aspect of our work please do speak to the psychologist linked to your school. Alternatively you are always welcome to call me directly.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Dawn Davies Hull', written in a cursive style.

Dawn Davies Hull  
Senior Educational Psychologist  
High Peak and Derbyshire Dales