

PARENTING ORDERS

Part of the YOUTH OFFENDING series



Parenting is a challenging job and support can be useful at different stages as your child grows up, especially if your child has not been going to school, has seriously misbehaved at school or is getting into trouble with the police. In these cases you may be contacted by your local Youth Offending Team (YOT) or Local Education Authority (LEA) to assess what help you need, including a possible Parenting Order.

Free Parentline
0808 800 2222
Free Textphone
0800 783 6783

Website
www.parentlineplus.org.uk
Email
parentsupport@parentlineplus.org.uk

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WHAT IS A PARENTING ORDER?

This is a Court Order which is designed to give you support and guidance. It aims to help you prevent your child from offending and/or antisocial behaviour and/or help you get them to attend school everyday, and/or address issues of behaviour at school after they have been excluded.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I AM GIVEN A PARENTING ORDER?

You must attend a parenting programme which may last up to three months. The programme will help you deal more effectively with your child's behaviour and provide support and guidance.

The Court may add other requirements lasting for up to 12 months, for instance:

- That you make sure your child is at home during set hours.
- That you make sure that she or he attends school regularly and on time.
- A residential programme could be included in the Order if it is considered to be more beneficial than a non-residential programme and to be a reasonable requirement given your family circumstances.

WHO CAN BE GIVEN A PARENTING ORDER?

Any parent or carer that a young person lives with can be given a Parenting Order - so this may include a stepparent.

A parent who is not living with the young person but is in regular contact may also be issued with an order separately from their other parent. Both parents may receive the same order or a separate one depending on the circumstances.

HOW DOES THE COURT DECIDE TO ISSUE A PARENTING ORDER?

An assessment will involve someone from your YOT or LEA arranging to talk to you to gain an understanding of the problems and issues that may have contributed to your child's behaviour leading up to the Court appearance. They will consider your suitability for a Parenting Order or whether you will be offered help on a voluntary basis.

The YOT or LEA will try to recommend support that is the most helpful to you and your family. In addition, they may provide a written report to the Court.

If your child is under 16 years old, the Court will consider family circumstances before issuing a Parenting Order and this information should be included in the report provided by your YOT or LEA. For older children, 16 and 17 years, the Court will use its discretion on whether it obtains further information.

WHAT IS A PARENTING CONTRACT?

Before a Parenting Order is considered the YOT or LEA will normally offer you support on a voluntary basis. If a more structured approach is felt to be needed this may involve a Parenting Contract.

A Parenting Contract is a written agreement between the YOT or LEA and the parent. This agreement states what needs to be done to reach certain goals. The responsible officer in the YOT or LEA will plan how to reach these goals.

It is important to keep the requirements of a Parenting Contract as the YOT or LEA and magistrates will consider a parent's past commitment to a Parenting Contract when considering a Parenting Order.

CAN I APPEAL?

Yes.

Where you appeal to will depend on where the order was imposed. Most Parenting Orders are made in the Magistrates' Court and appeals to the Crown Court.

WHAT IF I DON'T GO TO THE COURT?

A Parenting Order can be made without the parent or guardian in Court in specific circumstances.

As a supportive parent it is best for your child if you go with them to Court. It gives you a chance to express your views if the Court asks for them.

A Court can also issue you with a summons so that you must attend.

You will also be able to get legal advice from your solicitor about being placed on a Parenting Order and on your rights to appeal against it.

WHAT IF I DO NOT KEEP TO THE CONDITIONS OF THE PARENTING ORDER?

A responsible officer will be allocated to you for the period of the Parenting Order. Any difficulties you have complying with the conditions of the Parenting Order must be discussed with them.

If you cannot attend any appointments made, for example if you are ill, you should telephone the named responsible officer and explain the reasons why you cannot attend. You may be asked for a sick note if you are ill.

If you do not comply with any conditions of the Parenting Order without giving a reasonable excuse to the responsible officer you may be in breach of the Parenting Order.

This means you will be given a written warning and if you still fail to comply a 'Review Meeting' will be called. If after these procedures you still do not comply with the order you may be prosecuted. If you are convicted the Court can:

- Fine you (up to £1,000)
- Issue a Community Penalty

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FURTHER HELP

Citizens Advice

Details of your local CAB can be found in the telephone directory.

→ Website: www.citizensadvice.org.uk

Parentline Plus

A national charity offering information and support to parents.

→ Parentline:

0808 800 2222

→ Textphone (if you are deaf, hard of hearing or have a speech impairment):

0800 783 6783

→ Email:

parentsupport@parentlineplus.org.uk

→ Website:

www.parentlineplus.org.uk

You can also contact or ask:

→ Your local Youth Offending Team or your social worker.

Parentline Plus: 520 Highgate Studios, 53-79 Highgate Road, Kentish Town, London NW5 1TL
Free Parentline: 0808 800 2222

Free textphone for people who are deaf, hard of hearing or have a speech impairment: 0800 783 6783

Web: www.parentlineplus.org.uk Email: parentsupport@parentlineplus.org.uk

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