



## Understanding the Children Act 1989 and Child safety

The Children Act 1989 forms part of a comprehensive legal framework designed to protect children and promote their best interests in a wide range of situations. During Child Safety Week understanding these legal aspects helps families and professionals create safer environments for children.



### Key Legal Protections Under The Children Act 1989

- General Safeguarding
- Purpose: Ensures child safety and nurturing environment
- Mechanism: Outlines parental responsibilities and legal guidelines for child protection



### Child Arrangements Order

- What it Does: Decides where a child lives, whom they spend time with, or have contact with
- Benefit: Provides stable environments, considers child's wishes, and maintains family relationships



### Prohibited Steps Order

- Purpose: Prevents a parent from making specific decisions without court approval, such as relocating the child abroad
- Impact: Ensures decisions like moving or significant life changes are made with judicial oversight to protect the child's best interests, where parents cannot agree



### Specific Issue Order

- What it Covers: Resolves disputes about education, medical treatment, or religious upbringing
- Advantage: Prioritises child's welfare in key life decisions, where parents cannot agree amongst themselves



### Emergency Protection Order

- When to Use: If a child is at immediate risk of harm
- Outcome: Offers rapid intervention to ensure the child's safety until a permanent solution is established



### Family Law's Role in Child Safety

- Protection: Legal professionals help obtain orders to safeguard children
- Prevention: Advocacy and legal measures prevent potential harm
- Support: Collaborative work with families to resolve issues and support children's welfare without court intervention when possible



### Welfare Checklist Considered By Courts

- Children's wishes and feelings
- Physical, emotional, and educational needs
- Effects of any changes in circumstances
- Child's background and any characteristics considered relevant
- Past or potential harm
- Parental capability
- Legal powers available to the court



### Principles Upheld by Family Courts

- Non-delay: Swift action is crucial as delays can adversely affect the child
- Non-intervention: Courts intervene only when necessary for the child's welfare