



An Ghníomhaireacht um  
Leanaí agus an Teaghlach  
Child and Family Agency

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**Approved by Tusla Crisis Management Team**

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### **CMT Guidance on Travel for Children in Foster Care outside of ROI**

During this period of Covid 19 and with the easing of travel restriction in line with the National Roadmap announced by the government, issues pertaining to travel have arisen in fostering and children in care services. In line with the Government advice, Tusla are adhering to NPHE and government advice with regard to travel and therefore advise that only essential travel should take place.

Tusla's first advice to foster carers is to comply with public health guidance with regard to travel, in particular non-essential travel. Holidays are not considered essential travel.

Below are a number of factors that have to be considered in decision making with regard to children in foster care and foreign travel.

#### ***Care Status Implications***

- Foster carers must be advised that they require consent for children on full care orders from Tusla in order to travel abroad with a child in care and should not travel for any reason without consent.
- Foster carers with enhanced rights or guardianship must be advised that they are required to provide advance notification to Tusla in relation to any travel plans.
- Foster carers must be advised that they require consent from birth parent(s)/ legal guardians to travel with children in voluntary care or for children on interim care orders.
- In the case of interim care order the court must be notified of any intent to travel.
- In circumstances whereby the foster carer decides to take a holiday to a country that is not on the green list without the child the Social Worker should explain the implications of this including; the impact on the child, the implications of any required quarantine period i.e. the child cannot return to live with them until after quarantine, the ceasing of the fostering allowance for the period as the fostering allowance will follow the child to their new placement and any other relevant implications pertinent to the child's circumstances.

#### ***Essential Travel***

- If travel abroad is considered as ***essential*** the social worker must;

- In the case of voluntary consent for admission to care seek the consent of the birth parents/ legal guardians. They must also explain the potential impact on access during the travel and quarantine period. Children should not travel without consent.
  - If there is a section 18 Care Order in place, Tusla can give consent to the issue of a passport to the child, or to the provision of passport facilities for him/her, to enable him/her to travel abroad for a limited period.
  - If there is an Interim Care Order in place the SW will need parental consent and notification to the Court or else a specific Court Order authorising this.
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- Each request for travel abroad should be considered on individual circumstances, including the reason for travel and the circumstances of the child in care and the foster carers. The availability of an alternative placement must be considered and inform the decision making process.
  - Given legal requirements, the social worker may want to ascertain what the child's views and wishes are especially if they are older and may want to travel with the carer.
  - Any foster carers who are either guardians or have section 43a rights or both may have a section 43a Order authorising the carer to decide on travel although usually these Orders have "notification to Tusla in advance" requirements. However, given the current public health advice, all foster carers including those who are guardians or who rights, must also obtain consent from Tusla in advance.