Minute Notary

Travel consent letter for a child

A parent or guardian sending a child under 19 across a border without both parents.

Tick as you go. A number in brackets points to the source of that line, listed at the end.

Does the trip call for one?

- [ ] The child is under 19 and is travelling abroad without both parents or persons with decision-making responsibility. [1]
  Even if a child is 16 or older and can apply for an adult passport, foreign authorities may still request a letter.
- [ ] The child is travelling alone, with only one parent or guardian, with friends or other family, or with a group. [1]
  That includes a child who travels with both parents for only part of the trip.
- [ ] The trip crosses any international border. [1]
  That includes the land border with the United States, even for a day trip.

What the letter usually includes

- [ ] The name of the child. [1]
- [ ] The names and contact information of the parents or persons with decision-making responsibility. [1]
- [ ] The full name, address and contact information of the accompanying adult, and their relationship to the child. [1]
- [ ] Where the child is travelling and for how long, with specific travel dates. [1]
  The Government of Canada publishes a template, as an interactive PDF and as a printable document, on the page listed under Sources.

Who signs, and how

- [ ] Every parent or other person with decision-making responsibility who is not travelling with the child signs. [1]
  That includes parents who are married, common-law, separated or divorced. A letter is recommended even if an order or agreement lets one parent decide travel alone.
- [ ] If neither parent is travelling, both sign one letter, or each signs a separate one. [1]

- [ ] Children from one family travelling together can share a letter. Use separate letters for children who travel separately for part of the trip. [1]
- [ ] Have the signature witnessed. [1]
  Any adult may witness it, but the Government of Canada strongly recommends a notary public.
- [ ] Keep the original signed letter for the trip. [1]
  Border officials may not accept photocopies or digital versions, and are more likely to question their authenticity.

What travels with it

- [ ] A copy of any relevant court order or parenting arrangement. [1]
- [ ] If the other parent has died: a copy of the death certificate. [1]
  A child travelling alone also carries a letter signed by the surviving parent.
- [ ] If the child is in temporary care: a letter signed by the appropriate child welfare agency representative. [1]
- [ ] Check the destination's entry and exit requirements, and contact its embassy, high commission or consulate before travelling. [1]
  Some countries have their own rules for children, and may treat a child as their citizen because of a parent.

Before you rely on this

A consent letter is not legally required in Canada, and no official format exists. The Government of Canada says it may not always be considered sufficient by a country's immigration authorities. If getting the other parent's consent is not possible or could be unsafe, you may wish to seek legal advice.

What we do

We commission your consent letter by video and email you the signed PDF. Please note that the Government of Canada recommends having a notary witness the signature and carrying the original signed letter, as border officials may not accept a digital copy. If you would like a signed paper original, we would be glad to prepare it on a mobile visit. Whether an airline or border officer accepts the letter is their decision, and confirming that is your responsibility.

Sources, read November 5, 2026

1. Government of Canada, Consent letter for children travelling outside Canada. Modified 2026-09-10. travel.gc.ca/travelling/children/consent-letter

The current version of this checklist is at minutenotary.ca/checklists/travel-consent-letter.