

MODULE 8

Paperwork & Redaction

Right first time, for the court and the family



Why this matters

Paperwork is read by the parent, the local authority's legal team and the court — not just by us.



Remember this

“Assume a magistrate and the parent will read every page. Names, dates and signatures present; nothing confidential left in; nothing evidential taken out.”



What good looks like — ten paperwork checks (1–5)

1. Letters individually named, addressed, dated and signed (Head or named officer) — never 'Dear Parents/Carers'
2. A PDF of any sent email shows the recipient address and the delivery date and time
3. The attendance certificate shows the child's date of birth
4. For a G-coded PN, the certificate shows the first and last dates with a present mark after
5. N codes changed to the correct code within 5 days



Ten paperwork checks (6–10)

6. G-coded letters show the reasons were considered and state the holiday or other purpose
7. Parents' contact details and system-generated notes removed
8. Redaction protects confidentiality without removing evidence (third-party names, other parent's address, medical, GDPR)
9. Only relevant, sufficient evidence included; no irrelevant paperwork
10. Threshold correctly counted; where an exception is being considered, contact the local authority first



Common mistakes

- Missing signatures; wrong or missing dates
- Missing full names, addresses or email addresses
- 'Dear Parents/Carers' instead of named letters
- Insufficient evidence; irrelevant paperwork
- Redaction that removes the evidence



In practice

- Assume a magistrate and the parent read every page
- Redact: other pupils, other parent's address, medical, GDPR — never the evidence

Independent schools: The paperwork standards are identical for independent schools; the documents support a s444(1A) request.



Your takeaway

Top 10 paperwork errors sheet

Ten checks before the request leaves the school.



Before you submit

“Would this stand up in court?”

Offence proven · chronology clear · escalation justified · every line fact.

