

I'm Wondering...



What is Parental Responsibility?

You might be wondering... what it means when the Minister has parental responsibility:

When children are in care, parental responsibility is sometimes given to the Minister until they turn 18.

This does not mean:

- the government is your parent
- your parents stop being your parents
- your family disappears

It means the Minister is legally responsible for making certain decisions to help keep you safe.

You might be wondering... what decisions they might make about you?

Parental responsibility means who is allowed to make big decisions about a child's life.

These decisions can be about:

- Where you live
- School
- Health and medical care
- Safety

It does not decide who you love or who matters to you

Here's one way to think about it

Parental responsibility is about decision-making, not belonging. Even when the Minister has parental responsibility:

- Your parents are still your parents
- Your family history still belongs to you
- Your connections still matter

No law can change who your family is.

One thing to remember:

Family time is important, and so is your safety.

You are not in trouble for wondering about how this works.

How some children might feel?

- Confused
- Upset
- Things are Unfair
- Like things have been taken away
- Like you don't belong anywhere
- Different at different times

All of these feelings are allowed.

For adults supporting this child

- Explain roles clearly and avoid mixed messages.
- Prepare the child before and after contact.
- Do not ask the child to manage adult feelings.

This is about support and emotional safety, not observation alone.

If you want to...

- If you want to know who makes which decisions, you can ask.
- If you want help understanding what your parents can still decide, you can ask that too.
- If you feel mixed up about who your parents are, you can talk about that.
- If you don't want to talk right now, that's okay.

You don't have to sort this out on your own.