



CLIENT RESOURCE

School Year Emergency Contact & Authorization Agreement

A fill-in, dated, signable worksheet you can send your co-parent today.

SETTLE THE LOGISTICS. START THE SCHOOL YEAR CLEARLY.

Use this worksheet to organize emergency contacts, pickup permissions, communication rules, and standing school-year arrangements in writing.

CAPE FEAR FAMILY LAW

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Every August, the same fight starts over again in thousands of North Carolina households. Who goes on the emergency form. Who can pick the kids up. Whether the new spouse gets listed. Who the school calls first.

It is a fight worth ending permanently, because it is not actually a legal fight. It is a logistics fight that has been dressed up as a legal one - and logistics fights can be settled in writing, in an afternoon, without anybody filing anything.

That is what this document is for. Fill it in, sign it, send it, and put it behind you.

Read This First: The Emergency Form Is Not a Custody Order

Most parents treat the school's emergency contact form as though it decides something. It does not. It is a school administrative document. It tells the front office who to call and who may collect a child. It does not grant legal rights, it does not override a custody order, and being left off it does not take away a parent's rights. What actually governs is your custody order, the school's own policy, and the law on student records. So do two things: give the school a copy of your operative custody order so nobody in the front office has to interpret your family, and use this worksheet to settle the logistics between yourselves.

How to Use This

- ☐ Fill in everything you can. Leave the disputed items blank rather than guessing at what your co-parent will accept.
- ☐ Send it before the school year starts if you can, and before the first conflict if you cannot.
- ☐ Send it by email or through your co-parenting app - something with a date stamp. Not a text, not a hallway conversation, not a note in the backpack.
- ☐ Ask for changes rather than agreement on the first pass. "Tell me what you'd change" gets a response. "Sign this" gets ignored.
- ☐ Both parents sign and date. Each of you keeps a copy. Give the school a copy of the final version along with the custody order.
- ☐ Revisit it every August. Kids change schools, people change numbers, and a document nobody updated is a document nobody follows.

EMAIL SCRIPT

The Email That Actually Gets a Response

How you send this matters as much as what is in it. The version below works because it is short, it does not relitigate anything, and it asks for input instead of demanding a signature. Copy it, change the names, send it.

COPY AND PASTE THIS

Subject: School year contact list - can you look this over?

Hi [Name],

Before school starts I want us to be on the same page about the emergency contact and pickup list so neither of us gets a surprise call we can't answer.

I filled out the attached as a starting point. It is not a legal filing and it doesn't change our custody order - it is just the logistics: who the school calls, in what order, and who is allowed to pick up the kids.

Take a look and tell me what you'd change. If there's something on here you don't agree with, leave it off and we'll talk about that piece separately rather than holding up the rest.

Once we've both signed it I'll send a copy to the school along with the order.

Thanks, [Your name]

Why That Email Works

It names the shared risk instead of the disagreement - neither of us gets a call we can't answer. It preempts the objection you would otherwise get, which is that you are trying to change custody by the back door. It asks for edits rather than a signature, which is a far lower bar to clear. And it separates the easy items from the hard one, so a single dispute over one name does not sink the whole list.

When Not to Send This

If there is a domestic violence protective order, a no-contact order, or a custody order that restricts contact between you, do not use this worksheet to open a negotiation. Talk to your attorney and to the school separately. The same is true if you have a genuine safety concern about who might collect your child. Pickup restrictions in that situation belong in a court order and in a direct conversation with school administration - not in a document you are asking the other parent to agree to.

SECTION 1

The Children and the Parents

Children covered by this agreement

Child 1 - name, date of birth, school, grade

Child 2 - name, date of birth, school, grade

Child 3 - name, date of birth, school, grade

Child 4 - name, date of birth, school, grade

Parent 1

Name

Cell

Work / alternate

Email

Home address

Employer and typical work hours

Parent 2

Name

Cell

Work / alternate

Email

Home address

Employer and typical work hours

Tip

Use the same names and contact information you give the school. The goal is one reliable, shared reference for the school year.

SECTION 2

The Contact List

Build it in tiers. Most disagreements happen because everyone is arguing about one name while twelve uncontroversial ones sit unresolved behind it.

Tier 2 - adults we both agree on

Extended family and trusted adults that both parents accept without argument. Start here, because it is the easy list and finishing it builds momentum.

Name	Relationship	Best phone	May pick up	May be called	Notes

Tier 3 - each parent's own list

Adults nominated by one parent. The default rule that solves ninety percent of this: each parent's nominated adults may be called and may pick up during that parent's custodial time, unless there is a specific reason otherwise. You do not have to love each other's people. You have to be able to reach someone when a child spikes a fever at 1:40 p.m.

Parent 1's list

Name	Relationship	Best phone	May pick up	May be called	Notes

Parent 2's list

Name	Relationship	Best phone	May pick up	May be called	Notes

SECTION 3

The Standing Rules

This is the part that actually stops the fighting. Decide the rule once, in advance, so nobody has to negotiate it while a child is sitting in the nurse's office.

Who gets called, and in what order

- ☐ The parent whose custodial time it is gets called first.
- ☐ If that parent is not reached within _____ minutes, the school calls the other parent.
- ☐ If neither parent is reached, the school works down the Tier 2 list in the order written above.
- ☐ Whichever parent is reached notifies the other the same day. Both of us do this, every time, without being asked.

Any exception to the above

Pickup

- ☐ Routine daily pickup follows the custody schedule.

Early release days and teacher workdays

Unscheduled closings and weather days

Sick days - who is called, who collects the child, and who stays home

- ☐ If the parent on duty cannot get there, they may send an adult from the lists above and will notify the other parent.

Stepparents and long-term partners

Handle this as a logistics question, not a status question. Whether someone may collect a child from school says nothing about anyone's legal standing, and treating it as a proxy war over that is how this whole document dies.

Adults in Parent 1's household who may pick up

Adults in Parent 2's household who may pick up

Any limitation either parent asks for, and the reason

Communication, Records, and Forms

- ☐ Both parents are listed on all school communications, portals, and mailing lists.
- ☐ Whoever receives school communication the other did not receive forwards it the same day.
- ☐ Conferences, IEP or 504 meetings, and school events: both parents are notified and both may attend.

Who submits the annual forms

- ☐ Either parent may update their own contact numbers with the school and tells the other when they do.
- ☐ Neither parent removes the other, or anyone on the agreed Tier 2 list, from any school list without discussing it first.

If the Real Problem Is Bigger Than a Form

If your disagreement is actually about an IEP, an evaluation, a diagnosis, a medication, or who gets to make educational decisions, this worksheet will not solve it - and you should not try to make it. That is a legal custody question. Our guide [When One Parent Disagrees](#) walks through it.

RELATED RESOURCE

When One Parent Disagrees

See the related Cape Fear Family Law guide for decision-making disputes.

[*Add link here \(IEP Disagreement Guide\)](#)

SECTION 4

The Agreement

Sign, date, and each keep a copy.

We are the parents of the children named in Section 1. We agree to the emergency contact list, the pickup authorizations, and the standing rules set out in this document for the ____ - ____ school year.

We understand and agree that:

- ☐ This is an agreement between us about school logistics. It does not modify, replace, or override any custody order, and nothing in it changes either parent's legal rights or decision-making authority.
- ☐ Either of us may propose a change at any time, in writing. Until we agree to a change in writing, this document stands.
- ☐ A copy of this agreement and a copy of our operative custody order will be provided to each child's school.
- ☐ We will review and re-sign this before the start of each school year.

Parent 1

Signature

Printed name

Date

Parent 2

Signature

Printed name

Date

If Your Co-Parent Won't Sign

Send it anyway, and keep the sent message. A dated, reasonable, written proposal that went unanswered is worth a great deal more than a year of remembering that you tried. If this ends up in front of a judge, the parent who put a workable plan in writing and got silence back is in a materially better position than the one who did not. Then talk to a lawyer about whether these terms belong in a consent order instead of a handshake.

FINAL CHECK

Before You Send It

If Safety Is the Real Issue

If you or your child are in immediate danger, call 911. National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-7233, available 24 hours a day. If there is a protective order in place, or if there is someone you genuinely fear may try to take your child from school, do not handle it with this worksheet. Bring it to your attorney and to school administration directly. Pickup restrictions that matter belong in a court order, and school staff need to know about them from you rather than discovering them in a disputed document.

One Last Thing

You are not going to agree on everything, and you do not have to. Settle the twelve things you agree on, leave the one you don't for another day, and get the school year started without a fight nobody wanted.

Your kid does not need you to win this. They need somebody to answer the phone.

How Cape Fear Family Law Can Help

If your co-parent won't sign it, won't honor it, or is using school access as leverage, that is not a logistics problem anymore. Schedule a confidential consultation and we will tell you whether this belongs in a consent order, a motion, or a conversation.

Read more: Who should be on your child's school emergency contact form after

separation? Cape Fear Family Law educational resource - see the firm website for the related article. [*Hyperlink the blog link here](#)

Legal Disclaimer

No Attorney-Client Relationship: Downloading, completing, or signing this worksheet does not create an attorney-client relationship with Cape Fear Family Law. That relationship is formed only when both parties sign a written engagement agreement.

Information, Not Advice: This worksheet is provided for general informational purposes only and is not legal advice. It is a private agreement between parents about school logistics. It is not a court order, it does not modify any custody order, and it is not a substitute for one.

School Policy Varies: Individual schools and school districts set their own procedures for contact forms, pickup authorization, and records. Confirm your school's requirements directly.

No Guarantee of Results: Past results do not guarantee future outcomes.

Office Responsibility: Cape Fear Family Law is responsible for the content of this advertisement. Our principal office is located in Wilmington, North Carolina.