Changing a Minor Child’s Name by Deed Poll in Singapore

Minor Deed Poll · https://help.law.com.sg/faq/minor-deed-poll-guide/

To change the name of a child under 21 in Singapore, both parents must sign a Deed Poll on the child's behalf, save for limited exceptions. The child cannot sign it himself, and ICA is not notified automatically.

This guide consolidates our frequently asked questions on Deed Polls for minors, including ICA's requirements, single-parent situations, children without NRICs, and what parents must do after the Deed Poll is signed.

What age is considered a minor?

A person is a minor if he or she is under 21 years of age as at the date of the Deed Poll.

Can a minor sign a Deed Poll to change his own name?

No. For minors below 21 years of age, the Deed Poll must be signed by two parents, with exceptions. Your child generally does not need to attend at our office; see does my child need to attend at your office.

Why must both parents sign the Deed Poll?

Based on ICA's policy, the child's name is an important symbol of his identity and his relationship with his parents. Hence, both parents should sign the Deed Poll for their child save for exceptions.

For a change of a minor's name via Deed Poll, both birth parents' consent must be sought. Accordingly, we require both parents to sign the Deed Poll, except in the following situations.

When can one parent sign alone?

Only one parent may sign the Deed Poll where:

1. She is a single parent as per the child's birth certificate;
2. He or she has an Order of Court empowering him or her to unilaterally change the child's particulars; or
3. The other parent has died and did not appoint a legal guardian for the child.

You may be required to email ICA a copy of the Order of Court, Birth Certificate, or death certificate, together with the completed declaration form, to ICA_IC_Unit@ica.gov.sg after your online application has been submitted.

If you have sole custody, note that sole custody by itself may not be sufficient; see can I change my minor child's name if I have sole custody. A Deed Poll signed by only one parent some years ago may also now be rejected by ICA; see why my child's Deed Poll signed by one parent is now rejected by ICA. In some cases ICA may require a further deed known as a Deed Poll for Right of Entry; see what is a Deed Poll for Right of Entry.

What are ICA's requirements for changing a minor's name?

If both parents sign the Deed Poll for a minor, the Immigration & Checkpoints Authority (ICA) will process the change of name without query and without requiring a declaration form.

If only one parent signs the Deed Poll, ICA requires that parent to complete and sign a form to declare either one of the following:

1. He or she is the sole parent (per birth certificate);
2. That parent has an Order of Court which empowers him or her to change the minor's particulars unilaterally; or
3. The other parent or legal guardian is no longer alive and has not appointed any legal guardian in respect of the minor.

The declaration form is to be completed at ICA and not at Loh Eben Ong's office. However, where a Deed Poll is signed by one parent (except for a single parent as evidenced by the child's birth certificate), that parent must sign Loh Eben Ong's internal declaration form for internal record

purposes.

Can I change my child's name on the Singapore birth certificate?

Child below one year. Parents may apply to alter their child's name before the child turns one year old, provided that the child's name has not been previously altered. Only the child's parent or legal guardian may apply to alter the child's name at ICA. Unless required by ICA, you do not need a Deed Poll. If you have any enquiry about this governmental policy, please check with ICA directly.

Child one year and above. If a child is one year and above, the parents cannot change the child's name in the child's Singapore birth certificate. You will only be able to change the name in the child's passport and/or identity card at ICA, and you may need a Deed Poll for such change. If in doubt, please clarify with ICA.

I am a single mother; can I change my child's surname?

Typically, you do not need a Deed Poll to effect a change of name in a child's birth certificate if the child is less than one year old. However, please contact ICA on its policies and procedures.

Difficulty may arise if you are the only natural parent (mother) stated in the child's birth certificate and the child's surname is yours, and you wish to change the surname of the child to that of another person (eg. your boyfriend). Based on experience (subject to error and caution), ICA may not allow the single mother, whether with a Deed Poll or not, to change the surname of her child to another person's surname unless that other person takes a DNA test to evidence that he is the natural father.

You are strongly advised to seek ICA's directions before engaging us to prepare your Deed Poll. If we have inadvertently prepared a Deed Poll for you based on your instructions and you have issues with the change, we will not refund any fee paid by you.

My child has no NRIC yet; how do I use the Deed Poll?

Amendment to the name on the child's Birth Certificate will not be allowed after one year from the date of birth. Should parents wish to change the child's name, they may obtain a Deed Poll to effect the change. After making a Deed Poll for your child, notify ICA as soon as possible so that your child's

new name is updated in ICA's records, or ICA may require you to amend the Deed Poll based on its policies.

If your child does not have an NRIC, it is good practice for the parents to do the following:

1. Change the name of your child in the passport, or apply for a new passport for the child, so the new name is updated in ICA's records; or
2. Go to the Registry of Birth at ICA to update the name with the Deed Poll (note that if your child is above one year old, you cannot change his name in the Birth Certificate, but only ICA's record).

The Deed Poll should be produced together with the Birth Certificate for official transactions (eg. school registration, application for passport) for the new name to be reflected. The Deed Poll should also be produced during the child's IC registration for the new name to be reflected on the NRIC.

If the child has an NRIC, you should attend at ICA to change his name within 28 days from the date of the Deed Poll.

Can we change our child's religion or race in a Deed Poll?

No. A Deed Poll cannot be used to change your child's religion or race. Please make your enquiries to ICA.

Does ICA automatically know about my child's change of name?

No. The Deed Poll is a physical document executed in a law firm, and the law firm has no obligation to communicate the change to anyone. The onus is on you to notify the various authorities of the change of name. ICA and other relevant authorities have no knowledge of the change of name unless you notify them.

By notifying ICA of your child's change of name, in the event there are issues in changing your child's name via a Deed Poll, ICA will raise them at the time of your application to change your child's particulars. Please note that even if your child's Deed Poll has been accepted by the school, this does not mean that ICA will automatically accept the Deed Poll.

For the full checklist of steps after signing, see what should I do after I've done a Deed Poll.

Caution

This guide involves government policies and procedures, and we do not make any representation or warranty that the above is accurate or free of errors. Policies may change over time. Please check with ICA directly on its policies and procedures before relying on any information here.

How do I start my child's Deed Poll?

To engage us, see Deed Poll fees and how to engage us. You can apply online at law.com.sg/deed-poll-online or get an instant quote with our fee calculator at law.com.sg/deed-poll-quote.