

Contents

Preface v

Table of statutes xv

Table of international instruments xxi

Table of cases xxv

Part One Theoretical perspectives and international sources

Chapter 1 Theoretical perspectives 3

(1) Introduction 3

(2) The children's rights movement and the children's liberationists 4

(A) Children's liberation 4

(B) Children should be allowed to be 'children' 5

(C) Children's autonomy and the parental role 7

(D) The changing nature of childhood 10

(3) Do children have any rights and, if so, which ones? 12

(A) International rights 12

(B) Children as rights-holders 13

(C) What rights do children have? 15

(D) Children's capacity for autonomy and the role of paternalism 19

(4) Conclusion 27

Bibliography 27

Chapter 2 International children's rights 31

(1) Introduction 31

(2) Rights theories and international human rights 32

(3) The United Nations and the aftermath of the Second World War 33

(4) The United Nations and children's rights 35

(5) The Convention on the Rights of the Child 36

(A) Classifying the Convention rights 36

(B) Internal inconsistencies 41

(C) Enforcement 43

(D) The reporting mechanism and the United Kingdom 45

(E) More effective enforcement procedures 48

(F) The practical influence of the CRC 49

(6) The European Convention on Human Rights	50
(A) The post-War background	50
(B) Incorporation of the European Convention on Human Rights into domestic law	51
(C) The European Convention on Human Rights and children's claims	52
(D) The European Convention on Human Rights and its interpretation – strengths and weaknesses for children	53
(7) The Council of Europe and children's rights	63
(8) Conclusion	66
Bibliography	66

Part Two Promoting consultation and decision-making

Chapter 3 Adolescent decision-making, Gillick and parents 71

(1) Introduction	71
(2) Child and adolescent developmental capacity for decision-making – the research evidence	72
(3) Child and adolescent capacity for decision-making – should the law on minority be liberalised?	74
(4) Adolescents, parents and the Gillick heritage	78
(5) Adolescents and parents – paternalistic U-turns	83
(6) Conclusion	87
Bibliography	87

Chapter 4 Child runaways, emancipation and rights to support 90

(1) Introduction	90
(2) Legal age limits and legal confusion	92
(3) Legal rights to leave home	94
(4) Leaving home – state assistance with financial support	100
(5) Leaving home – assistance with housing	104
(6) Children 'divorcing' their parents	109
(A) The child applicant	109
(B) Applying for leave	110
(C) Effect of a residence order obtained on a child's application	113
(7) Children's right to parental money	113
(8) The American experience of emancipation	115
(9) Conclusion	116
Bibliography	117

Chapter 5 Adolescent decision-making and health care 121

Introduction 121

Section A Adolescent decision-making – the general principles 122

(1) Adolescents' legal rights to consent to medical treatment	122
(A) Consent and adolescents under sixteen	122
(B) Consent and adolescents over sixteen	126
(2) Adolescents' legal rights to refuse medical treatment	127
(A) Overriding an adolescent's refusal to be treated	127
(B) Legal capacity to refuse life-saving treatment	132
<i>Section B Adolescent decision-making – the difficult cases</i>	135
(1) The control of fertility	135
(A) Contraception	135
(B) Abortion	138
(2) Treatment for mentally disturbed adolescents	141
(A) The background	141
(B) The mental health legislation	142
(C) Parental authorisation for admission and treatment	145
(D) The courts – gaining authority for admission and treatment	150
Conclusion	157
Bibliography	157

Chapter 6 Promoting consultation and decision-making in schools 161

(1) Introduction	161
(2) A right to education	162
(3) School attendance	165
(4) Pupils and school discipline	171
(A) Schools' powers and duties	171
(B) Exclusions	174
(5) School administration	184
(6) Sex education in schools	186
(7) Conclusion	191
Bibliography	192

Chapter 7 Children's involvement in family proceedings – rights to representation 197

(1) Introduction	197
(2) The requirements of international instruments	198
(3) Children whose parents split up	202
(A) The right to consultation	202
(B) Support for children on separation and divorce	204
(4) Children's involvement in family proceedings	210
(A) The background	210
(B) Private proceedings	215
(C) Public law proceedings	233

(D) Children seeing the judge in private	240
(5) Conclusion	242
Bibliography	242

Chapter 8 Children in court – their welfare, wishes and feelings 247

(1) Introduction	247
(2) The welfare principle – a reassessment	248
(3) The interplay between welfare, wishes and feelings and age	252
(A) Introduction	252
(B) Age and its interrelationship with context and risk	253
(4) A child's views – some problem areas	257
(A) Abducted children	257
(B) Indoctrinated children	260
(C) Abused children	265
(5) Conclusion	267
Bibliography	267

Part Three

Chapter 9 Children's rights versus family privacy – physical punishment and financial support 273

(1) Introduction	273
(2) Family privacy and the role of the law	273
(3) The child's right to care and control, the parents' right to discipline	276
(A) Introduction	276
(B) The current law	277
(C) Physical punishment – the historical background	279
(D) Pressure for further reform	282
(4) Parental duty to support the child	285
(A) The state's role of non-intervention	285
(B) The private maintenance obligation and the role of the state	291
(C) The private maintenance obligation and the role of the courts	301
(5) Conclusion	302
Bibliography	303

Chapter 10 Parents' decisions and children's health rights 307

(1) Introduction	307
(2) General principles	307
(A) Children's rights to healthcare and the best interests test	307
(B) Capacity to consent to medical treatment and the right to be consulted	312
(3) A child's right to life and the legal implications of life-threatening decisions	314

(A) A child's right to life – whom does it benefit?	314
(B) A child's right to life – withholding treatment from desperately ill children	314
(C) A child's right to life – treatment on demand?	319
(D) Should neonates or infants be denied the right to life?	321
(4) Caring for a child's health	326
(A) Decisions about general healthcare	326
(B) Organ and tissue donation	326
(C) Parents' culture and children's bodies	329
(D) Sterilising mentally handicapped adolescents	332
(5) Conclusion	338
Bibliography	339

Chapter 11 Education rights for children in minority groups 342

(1) Introduction	342
(2) Protection for separate education	343
(A) International protection for the concept of separate education	343
(B) State supervision of separate schools	347
(3) Collective worship and religious education	353
(4) Conclusions	357
Bibliography	357

Chapter 12 Educational rights for children with disabilities 359

(1) Introduction	359
(2) Equal access to education free from discrimination	362
(A) A new approach	362
(B) Difficulties of interpretation	363
(3) Early diagnosis	367
(A) No common approach	367
(B) A lack of inter-agency collaboration	368
(C) Legal accountability	370
(4) Disabled children and their right to inclusion within mainstream schools	371
(5) The disabled child's right to individuality and educational independence	374
(6) Conclusion	377
Bibliography	378

Chapter 13 Children's right to know their parents – the significance of the blood tie 382

(1) Introduction	382
(2) The lessons from adoption	383
(A) Knowledge of origins	383
(B) Adoptees' contact with birth parents	386

- (3) Unmarried fathers 390
- (4) Paternal identity disputes 394
- (5) Identity and names 398
- (6) Parental contact disputes 401
 - (A) A child's 'right' to contact 401
 - (B) The exceptional cases 406
 - (C) The blood tie – promoting or creating attachments through contact? 41
- (7) Conclusion 413

Bibliography 413

Chapter 14 Children's right to know and be brought up by their parents 419

- (1) Introduction 419
- (2) Disputes between birth parents and private foster carers 421
 - (A) Differences in approach 421
 - (B) No presumption favouring the birth parents 421
 - (C) The child's 'prima facie right' to an upbringing by a surviving birth parent 422
 - (D) The 'other thing being equal' formula 425
 - (E) Current legal incoherence and compliance with the ECHR 427
- (3) The blood tie, private foster carers and adoption 430
- (4) The blood tie, birth parents and adoption placements 434
 - (A) Parents who place their children for adoption 434
 - (B) Children adopted from care 440
- (5) Conclusion 443

Bibliography 444

Chapter 15 An abused child's right to state protection 447

- (1) Introduction 447
- (2) The background 447
- (3) The child protection process – what criteria should be used? 451
- (4) Prevention and avoidance of protective litigation 459
- (5) Removing the abuser and not the child 461
- (6) Proof of significant harm – children's rights or justice for parents? 467
 - (A) The evidence 467
 - (B) The standard of proof 471
- (7) The child's own perspectives 476
- (8) Conclusion 480

Bibliography 480

Chapter 16 Right to protection in state care and to state accountability 485

- (1) Introduction 485
- (2) The courts and local authority planning for looked after children 487

(A) The background	487
(B) Accommodated children	488
(C) Children removed into care	489
(D) Care planning – the role of the courts?	491
(E) Care proceedings – at home or away?	493
(3) Protecting children in residential care	494
(A) The risk of abuse	494
(B) The problems linked with ‘control’	496
(C) Control through secure accommodation orders	498
(4) The child’s own perspectives	501
(A) Consulting children	501
(B) Making complaints	502
(C) Leaving care	504
(5) State accountability to children?	505
(A) The background	505
(B) Can children sue local authorities?	505
(C) Calling local authorities to account for failing to implement care plans	509
(6) Conclusion	514
Bibliography	514

Chapter 17 The right of abused children to protection by the criminal law 519

(1) Introduction	519
(2) Background	520
(3) Joint interviewing and the search for evidence in the investigative stages	522
(4) The decision to prosecute	526
(5) Compellability of child witnesses in criminal trials	529
(6) Protecting child witnesses in criminal trials	532
(7) Outcomes for children if the abuser is convicted	536
(8) Conclusion	541
Bibliography	542

Chapter 18 Protecting the rights of young offenders 545

(1) Introduction	545
(2) Children’s rights versus society’s right to protection	545
(3) The age of criminal responsibility	550
(A) The international context	550
(B) A source of controversy	551
(C) Abolishing the doli incapax presumption	553
(D) Reappraising the age of criminal responsibility	555
(E) Criminalising young children’s behaviour – widening the net	556
(F) Alternative approaches	558

xiv *Contents*

(4) Diversion from court	560
(5) Separate courts and separate practice	563
(6) Separate dispositions	566
(A) Underlying concepts	566
(B) Incarcerating children	568
(7) Children who kill	580
(8) Conclusion	583
Bibliography	584

Chapter 19 Conclusion – themes and the way ahead 590

(1) A growing 'rights consciousness'	590
(2) Dangers of rights talk and dangers of caution	590
(3) The 'fragmented' child	594
(4) The socially excluded child? A rights-based remedy	596
(5) A Children's Rights Commissioner	599
(6) Conclusion	602
Bibliography	603

Appendix I UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 607

Appendix II Human Rights Act 1998 625

Index 641