



Foreign &  
Commonwealth  
Office

**Consular Directorate**  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
King Charles Street  
London SW1A 2AH  
**Email:** FOI/DPATeam.Consular@fco.gov.uk  
**Website:** <https://www.gov.uk>

28 February 2017

## **FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 - REQUEST REF: FOI 0139-17**

Thank you for your email of 03 February 2017 asking for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000. You asked:

*Please could you send me all the guidance used by staff issuing consular birth certificates:*

- 1) In the guidance, what references are there to the rules, regulations or laws in Japan for handling middle names on birth certificates, Koseki Tohon (Family register) or Passports?*
- 2) In the guidance, what references are there to the culture or common practice in Japan for handling middle names?*
- 3) If possible, for each reference, if a practice in Japan is described, please indicate whether it is believed to be a universal practice that should be expected every time, or it's a practice of which cases are known to exist, but which may not be universal.*
- 4) What sources were used to construct any guidance referencing law or common practice in Japan relating to middle names? If possible, please include a copy of these sources/communications.*
- 5) What, if any, guidance is given on requests to include a middle name on the UK consular birth certificates that does not appear on Japanese official documents?*
- 6) Specifically, when determining an application for a child born in Japan to a Japanese national mother and UK national father (a married couple) where the child has already been issued with a Japanese passport and koseki tohon with a first name and last name only appearing, what official guidance is provided to those determining an application for a UK consular birth certificates to be issued in a different name to that which appears on the Japanese koseki tohon and passport to the extent that a middle name in between the first and last names that appear on the Japanese koseki tohon and passport is added? I request a copy of the guidance.*



7) What guidance exists regarding the need or attempts to issue consular birth certificates with a name that matches the name on documents issued by other government departments, such as a UK passport?

### **Outcome of search**

I am writing to confirm that we have now completed our search and that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) does hold information relevant to your request.

There are two sources of guidance available to Registration Offices who make consular registration. Policy guidance covering the universal principles of consular registrations and country-specific guidance, which has been provided by our embassies to the Overseas Registration Unit, based in Milton Keynes.

Consular birth and death registrations are governed by legislation, The Registration of [The Registration of Overseas Births and Deaths Regulations 2014](#)

A consular birth registration is not a UK birth certificate and should not be used as such. Neither do they represent nor replace locally issued birth certificates. There is no requirement for a consular birth registration to be done for any birth that has occurred overseas. The original birth certificate issued by the authorities in the country in which the birth took place, along with a notarised translation if necessary, is sufficient for all purposes in the UK, including passport applications.

A consular birth registration is not a certificate of identity. A person does not acquire British nationality by virtue of having a consular birth registration.

### **Disclosure**

Q1 The country-specific guidance states that the practice of middle names does not exist in Japan. If the parents wish to have the child's name on the family register, the names are not separated by a space, e.g. SaraHana.

Q2 Please see answer to Q1.

Q3 The country-specific guidance does not record exceptions to the position in Q1.

Q4 Current records do not provide information on the source for this area of country-specific guidance, which has been built up over time.

Q5 Policy guidance states that generally a consular birth registration can only be done in the name as shown on the local birth certificate but does allow Registration Officers to exercise some flexibility on recording a child's name in a way that does not exactly mirror the name on a local birth certificate. In countries where naming conventions give no consideration to the parents' wishes concerning surnames, double-barrelled surnames or where middle names are not allowed, a child can be consular registered with the desired



name provided it is the name by which the child is to be known. Guidance states that different names should only be recorded at the express wish of the parents. Registration Officers are instructed to inform the parents that a consular birth registration does not take the place of a local birth certificate and that the child and parents may encounter difficulties with UK passport and other countries' authorities if there are discrepancies between the details on a local birth certificate and those on a consular birth registration. It will be for the child and parents to resolve any issues with the objecting department themselves.

The country-specific guidance makes the statement in Q1 above and gives an example of how middle names might be added to a consular registration, stressing that the name order cannot be changed. For a child registered in Japan as Kinosaki Eiko, we would allow Eiko Hannah Kinosaki, because to give the child that name in the Japanese documents would mean her being recorded as Kinosaki Eikohana.

The advice given on the Government's website also explains the circumstances where flexibility on names can be used for consular birth registrations at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/birth-registration-name-confirmation-form>

Q6 The country-specific guidance does not discuss the names on Japanese passports. As per the answer to Q5, policy guidance allows flexibility for middle names where local naming conventions do not allow for them and provided that it is the name, by which the child is to be known.

Q7 Policy guidance does not address this issue. Although stated policy allows some flexibility (as noted above), standard practice would be for Registration Officers to record on a consular birth registration document the names recorded on a British passport, if that passport had been issued before the consular birth registration.

