

Things to think about when talking about your Parenting Plan

If you are separating, you may wish to organise the practical arrangements for your children. Most families won't need to ask a court to decide and will be able to sort that out together, either with or without a mediator.

A 'Parenting Plan' is a voluntary agreement and you can choose what you wish to include in your Parenting Plan.

We have set out below the things that are most commonly discussed in mediation with us, so that you can have a think about what you might like.

Your notes

Living arrangements in term time

What are term time living arrangements?

How will the children spend time with each of their parents?

How will they get to and from each house?

How will you make sure your children have what they need when with the other parent?

If a visit needs to be postponed, who will explain this to the children and how will another visit be organised?

Living arrangements in school holidays and half terms

How will the arrangements change during the school holidays, inset days or Bank Holidays?

Holidays away – can you each take them abroad?

Who will obtain and look after their passports?

Arrangements for special days

What will happen at Christmas?

How will you arrange other special days, such as birthdays (yours and theirs)

Mother's/Father's days?

Are there any other special days you need to consider?

Religion

Under what faith/religion/culture with the children be raised, if any?

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What does this mean on a day to day practical level?

Schooling

What school(s) are the children attending or what school(s) might you like them to attend?

How might you make decisions about schooling/exam choices/Uni etc.?

Will you ask the school to keep you both informed of your children's progress?

Will you go to parent's evenings or other school events together? How could that be organized?

Does the school have both of your numbers in case of emergency?

How will you address any problems at school?

How will you make sure homework is done?

How will you ensure continuity of the children's out of school activities?

Contact with others and care by others

With whom do you want to ensure your child remains in contact? For example, grandparents, Godparents, other relatives, friends?

Who else may look after them or drive them?

Is there anyone you don't want the children to see?

Care and discipline

How will you discuss rules for your children with each other and with them? E.g. smoking, drugs, alcohol, cycling to school, wearing helmets whilst cycling, bedtimes, going to shops alone, staying out late etc.

How will you listen to your child's wishes about their care and decisions concerning them?

Your relationship

What would you like the children to know about your separation? Who will tell them?

How would you like friends and family to talk about you to the children?

If you start a new relationship, when, how and what would you like the children to be told?

Communication

What will be the arrangements for phoning or receiving phone calls from one parent, while staying with the other?

How will you as parents keep each other informed about illness, upset or other issues that come to your attention in relation to the children?

Are there any specific agreements that you want to make e.g. not bad-mouthing each other in front of the children, ensuring that the children do not experience conflict between you etc.?

Child maintenance

What are your arrangements for child maintenance?

Do you intend that your child support arrangements are to cover all costs related to your children, or are there any special arrangements e.g. school uniform, school trips, university, large items such as a bicycle, computer, mobile phone?

Review of arrangements

How will you review your arrangements for your children and take into account their changing needs?

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