



# /guide



## What can I do?

### MY CHILDREN DO NOT WANT TO VISIT MY EX-PARTNER

**It is a difficult situation for all involved if a child does not want to visit the other parent.**

First off, you should not react by stopping contact unless you have serious concerns for your child's welfare.

Instead, try to establish the reasoning behind the child's reluctance and speak to the other parent. Stopping contact if there is a court order in place can have serious consequences so please do speak to an experienced family lawyer.

#### **What makes a child not want to spend time with a parent?**

There can be a variety of different reasons. It may be linked to an emotional or behavioural reaction to the separation.

Or it can be a more practical reason: a difference in food or homework expectations at one home over the other. Often the reasons will relate to their age and understanding of the situation.

The most important thing is that you try and find the specific reasons why your child does not want to visit the other parent. Keep the conversation casual and listen to their worries. Whilst a child's wishes and feelings are not determinative, understanding their concerns will help to identify the reason for their resistance.

#### **What can I do if my child refuses contact?**

If your child is refusing to see the other parent, you have a responsibility to manage the situation as positively as you can.

You should encourage and promote contact and try to reassure your child that you both love them and that it is important for you both to spend time with them.

You may need to consider your behaviour, are you influencing your child's not wanting to see the other parent?

If possible, talk to your ex and seek their views on how to handle the situation.

Depending on the circumstances, it may be possible to have a family meeting to address the issue as a group. It may also be appropriate to consider a family therapist or counsellor for your child.

Depending on the age of your child, family mediation may also be an option for you.

## What are the consequences of stopping contact?

If you refuse to allow a parent contact, the other parent can issue a court application to establish contact. In this process, you will have to explain why contact was restricted or prevented.

If there is already a court order in place and you refuse contact, your ex-partner may apply for enforcement of the order and, if the court finds that there has been unjustified breaching of the order you may be held to be in contempt of court and there can be serious consequences to include a fine, unpaid work, payment of compensation and, for serious breaches, the court has the power to commit a party to prison.

If there is an order in place and you have concerns, you can make an application to the court to consider whether a variation of the existing Child Arrangements Order should be made.

## What if I have valid reasons for concern?

If you have safeguarding concerns or worries, for example, alcohol/drug misuse, domestic abuse, abduction or concerns regarding physical/emotional harm you should seek assistance from the Local Authority as to how to deal with this moving forward as well as approaching a family solicitor for legal advice.

## Need more information?

Call our Client Care Team on **0330 838 7456** to speak with one of our specialist family lawyers or visit [www.stowefamilylaw.co.uk](http://www.stowefamilylaw.co.uk)



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