

Your Parenting Plan.

Refer to the Parenting Plan Guide
before starting your plan.



We are the parents of:

_____ [child's name] _____ [date of birth]
_____ [child's name] _____ [date of birth]
_____ [child's name] _____ [date of birth]
_____ [child's name] _____ [date of birth]

We respect each other as parents and our significance in the lives of our children.

We have drawn up this Parenting Plan to assist us in providing a loving, stable, caring and safe environment for our children, in line with their age and needs.

We recognise our children's rights to:

- emotional and physical safety, stability and security;
- feel loved by both of us and significant family members;
- know and be cared for by both of us and significant family members; and
- develop independent and meaningful relationships with each of us.

As parents we accept responsibility for:

- our children's physical care, health and safety;
- our children's emotional stability;
- our children's changing needs as they grow and mature;
- protecting our children so they are not exposed to harmful parental conflict that is prolonged or aggressive;
- co-operating with each other to make decisions in our children's best interests; and
- respecting our children's relationship with each of us.

We have an existing Parenting Plan dated _____ [insert date].

We will review this Plan on _____ [insert date] (optional).

Safety

We have considered our safety and welfare and that of the children and agree that we can safely work together.

_____ [signature of parent] _____ [date]
_____ [signature of parent] _____ [date]

Questions to ask about...

communication

- What parenting decisions do we need to consult each other on?
- What parenting decisions don't we need to consult each other about?
- How are we going to behave towards each other in front of the children? We want them to know we are getting along and have them in mind.
- How are we going to share important information with each other, (for example, school reports, health issues)?
- Do we need regular meetings to discuss parenting issues?
- How do we find out what the children want to happen, and make sure that they have a say in what we decide?
- At what times is it OK to call the other parent and when isn't it OK?
- How will we settle disputes?
- Should we discuss how we talk to the children about the other parent?
- How will we talk to the children about the arrangements we have made?
- What do we do about emergencies, (for example, medical, dental, or accidents)?
- How will we make sure our children stay in contact with supportive friends or relatives from the other side of the family?
- How will we introduce new partners to our children's lives?
- Are there any important rules that we consider essential for the children, (for example, bedtimes, when homework is done, staying out late)? Do we agree that these rules are followed?
- How do we work together to make the big decisions, (for example, school, course selection and careers advice)?

Questions to ask about...

living and childcare arrangements

- Will there be a main place where the children will live and if so, where will it be?
- If neither of us can look after the children, who will be the alternative carers?
- What about school holidays?
- Are there times when it is not convenient to ring our children?
- What sort of communication will we have with the children – phone, text, email – and about how often and when can they expect it?
- How much time can each child spend with each parent?
- What days can they be with each of us?
- How do we make sure that the children can share special days – birthdays and religious festivals – with both of us?
- How do we make sure that the children have enough time with their brothers and sisters?
- What different ideas are there for maintaining close and meaningful contact, even when children and parents are separated for long periods of time?
- How will we manage the arrangement when one parent works long hours?
- What clothes and other belongings will be taken and returned at changeover?
- How will we arrange pick-up and drop-offs?
- Who will take them to regular sporting engagements on weekends? After school?
- When and how are we making sure the children are seeing their grandparents?
- Will anyone else look after the children (for example, childminders, babysitters, relatives, new partners, friends and neighbours)? If so, when?
- What are the arrangements for the children during the school holidays? (Consider bank holidays and teacher training days as well as school holidays).
- How do we make sure that we both have holidays with the children, and plan for taking the children abroad if we agree?

Questions to ask about...

money and the children

- How will we share day-to-day for costs for clothes, school trips and larger items like computers and musical instruments?
- How will pocket money be handled?
- What will we do if our financial positions change?
- How will financial arrangements change as the children grow up, (for example, making provision for college or university)?

Our decisions about...

money and the children

Questions to ask about...

education

- How will we deal with the school and get them to send notices, reports and other material related to our children's progress to both of us?
- How can we get involved separately, as parents, in the school?
- How should we make contact with school counsellors so that they know about our separation and how it might affect the children?

Our decisions about...

money and the children

Questions to ask about...

other issues

- Who organises routine health issues?
- Are there long term health issues that we need to consider?
- What do we agree about religious practice and upbringing?
- Are there any other cultural issues that we need to make sure are respected?
- Are there any sporting or artistic commitments that we need to account for?
- Are there arrangements needed for the family pets?

Our decisions about...

other issues

Principles for your Plan

- Think about the needs of each of your children.
- Your Plan will be unique – no two parents and no two children are the same.
- The Plan should be practical, simple and as concrete as possible.
- You can make it as detailed as you like. The more detailed it is, the clearer it will be, but you may need to review it more often.
- It's really important to let your children have a say.

Your completed Plan

When you have completed your Parenting Plan you should photocopy it and both keep a copy for reference.

Using the Parenting Plan

You can find more guidance, including guidance for professionals, about the Parenting Plan on the Cafcass website: www.cafcass.gov.uk/grown-ups/parenting-plan.

You can also find more information and useful online tools to help negotiating child arrangements and sustain effective co-parenting relationships by visiting the Co-Parent Hub, <https://click.clickrelationships.org/home/parenting-apart/>, a free online resource for separated families linking together expertise from across the family justice system.

Going forward

Changes and review

As your circumstances change, your Plan will need to reflect the changes. You can review your Parenting Plan at any time, providing you both agree. Some parents prefer not to set a formal review date.

