

## **NOWELL MELLER SOLICITORS LTD FAMILY LAW SERVICE**

### **LEAFLET NO.2C – MAKING ARRANGEMENTS FOR YOUR CHILDREN**

When making arrangement for your children, it is important to think about which people are important to your them. You may want to include arrangements which include not just you as parents but also other members of the family, such as grandparents and other relatives as well as close friends.

#### **What are your aims in making arrangements for your children?**

Other parents have said:

- Our children have a right to a relationship with both of us
- We are both committed to our children spending time with each of us
- We are both committed to taking account of our children's wishes and feelings about the arrangements we make
- We will avoid drawing our children into our disagreements
- Our children have a right to a relationship with both of our families

There may be other aims that you think are important.

#### **Day-to-day arrangements**

- Where will the children live?
- When will they spend time with each of you?
- How will you tell them of the arrangements you have made for them? Will you tell them together or separately?
- How will you deal with any changes to these arrangements? It is a good idea to think about a minimum period of time for notifying the other parent of the changes, and how the children will be informed.

- Will anyone else look after the children (e.g. childminders, babysitters, relatives, new partners, friends and neighbours) and if so, when?
- Will there be phone calls, text messages and emails between each of you and the children?
- Are there any important rules that you consider essential for the children (e.g. bedtimes, when homework is done, staying out late, etc)? Do you each agree that these rules be followed?
- What arrangements have you made for your children to spend time with friends, relatives and other family members?
- Are there any other things that you need to agree (e.g. who will be responsible for the family pets)?

It may be a good idea to have a family diary or calendar with the arrangements filled in a month ahead.

### **What other things will you discuss with each other?**

Are there other key things which might affect your children and that you agree to discuss with each other. For example:

- Introducing your children to a new partner
- Moving house, especially if it is to another part of the country
- Medical treatment

### **Holidays**

- What are the arrangements for your children during the school holidays? You may want to think about bank holidays and teacher training days as well as school holidays and half terms
- Is there any agreement between you about either of you taking the children out of the country? If so, what is it?
- Where will your children's passports be kept?
- Are there any other agreements about holiday arrangements?

You should note that the consent of all those with parental responsibility is required before a child is taken out of the UK, no

matter how short the trip is, unless the court gives permission. A special rule applies if there is a Residence Order or Special Guardianship Order in force in respect of the child. The person in whose favour the order is made may remove the child from the UK for up to 1 month (Residence Order) or 3 months (Special Guardianship Order) without the consent of any other person with parental responsibility or permission of the court.

### **School or nursery**

Your children's school or nursery will need to know basic information about the arrangements you have made for them and what information they should send to each of you about their progress, and about school or nursery events.

It is best if you can agree the arrangements yourselves rather than leaving the school on a difficult position between you.

Here are some questions to think about:

- What will the school or nursery be told about the arrangements you have made for your children?
- Who will drop off and collect your children from school or nursery each day?
- Will you ask the school or nursery to keep you both informed about your children's progress and school events?
- Will you attend parents' evenings together or alternately?
- Will you attend sports days and other school or nursery functions together or separately?
- How will you approach choosing your children's schools?
- Are there any other school-related issues which might arise (e.g. GCSE choices, permissions and funding for school trips)?
- What are the arrangements for your children's out of school activities, such as sport and hobbies?

### **Religion or culture**

- What arrangements have you made about your children's religion or culture?

- What days and events are special to your children and to your family?
- What are the arrangements for your children on these occasions?
- If your children speak a language other than English how will you support them with this in the future?

## **Health**

- Who will be responsible for arranging routine medical appointments (such as vaccinations), routine dental check-ups, hospital appointments and any other regular treatment or therapy your child requires?
- If any of your children receive unexpected treatment, how will you keep each other informed?
- If one of you is ill and cannot care for your children as arranged, how will you approach this?
- Have you exchanged emergency contact details in case you need to get hold of each other very quickly?

## **Money**

- What regular payments are either of you making for the children's maintenance, and if so, to whom are the payments made?
- Who will pay for clothes and shoes for the children?
- Who will pay for school uniforms and equipment?
- Who will pay for travel (e.g. to see each of you and friends or relatives)?
- Who will pay for school trips?
- Who will give the children pocket money?
- Who will pay for large items (e.g. bicycles, computers, musical instruments)?
- How will you support the children through college, university or other training courses?

- How and when will you review these financial arrangements?
- Have you both considered making a will?

### **Changes to the arrangements**

Don't forget that arrangements will need to be reviewed from time to time. Family circumstances change and unexpected events happen, like family bereavement and a change of jobs or home. In any event, your children will want to make changes themselves as they grow older and their needs and priorities develop

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NOTE: The above is intended as a general guide for your information. It is NOT intended as a substitute for proper legal advice. Each case is different and advice cannot be given without a proper analysis of your own circumstances.

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