**PARENTING 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
* 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
* 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].

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

**Communication questions:**

* 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)?

**Our decisions about communication:**

**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?
* 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?

**Our decisions about living and childcare arrangements:**

**Money and the children:**

* How will we share day-to-day 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:**

**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 education:**

**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:**