

Guide to making arrangements for your children during the Christmas period

1 Put your children's interests first!

We would advise you to try and put your children's best interests at the forefront of your considerations for their arrangements. Whilst you and your ex-partner may have differing views on what you should and should not be doing, your priority should always be the welfare of your children.

Thinking of things from the children's perspective is often helpful – how would they like to spend their Christmas with each of you?

Once you have a plan in place, sharing your plans with your children is a good idea, as knowing where they will be throughout the holiday will help them feel more secure.

2 Communicate with each other where possible

Communication between you, as parents, is essential, especially during the Christmas period.

If it is too difficult to discuss child arrangements face to face with your ex-partner, we would recommend written communications (preferably emails rather than text messages) about the arrangements for your children. Writing arrangements down reduces the risk of disagreement as it ensures that you have a clear record which can be referred to later if needed.

If the relationship has completely broken down, which means you cannot communicate directly with your ex-partner, you should contact a solicitor to assist you with agreeing arrangements formally.

3 Be organised

You should try to work together with your ex-partner to make child arrangements as early as possible. The sooner you communicate your suggested arrangements with one another, the better, as this will enable sufficient time to consider each other's proposals and reach a consensus.

Agreeing arrangements early (even if they are kept flexible) will provide some certainty and allow all of you to enjoy the run up to Christmas.

4 Listen and be willing to compromise

It is important to keep an open mind when having discussions with your ex-partner about the child arrangements during the festive period. We would advise you to be prepared to compromise in order to reach an agreement that is in the best interests of your children.

Perhaps you can agree that your partner has the children for the entirety of this Christmas and you can get that same privilege next Christmas.

Ultimately, a lack of willingness to compromise may result in communication with your ex-partner breaking down, making it extremely difficult to come to any agreements.

5 Seek professional advice if necessary

If you are unable to reach an agreement on the child arrangements during the Christmas period, we would suggest seeking legal advice to assist you in negotiating an agreement.

Lennons can also help you make an application to the court for a Child Arrangements Order which will set out the times that the children spend with each of you. However, court proceedings should always be considered a last resort.

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