

The 'Voice of the Child'

Working with a family to agree a child access plan for the child and parent who do not live together

When parents have a child they expect that they will raise, parent and support their child together until the child becomes an adult. However things change for some families and for whatever reason communication between parents break down. This at times can result in parents having difficulties agreeing on issues that affect their child such as access for the child and the parent who doesn't live with the child.

Meetings will take place in (1) Kells Family Resource Centre, Old Carrick, School, Lord Edward's Street, Townparks, Kells, Co Meath or (2) An Tobar, Retreat Centre, Ardbracken, Navan, Co Meath. During some meetings there may be another professional present.

Process of creating a child access plan

1. Meet with the parent who requests the service.
2. Meet with the other parent.
3. Meet with the child to hear their views on access with their other parent. *Another professional will also be present at this meeting.*
4. The child may request to meet with their parent (who they don't live with) to discuss access and what they would like to get from access.
5. Try to agree an access plan between everyone for the future.

Terms and Conditions for parents during this process

- Parents will be expected to arrive on time for their meetings.
- During meetings there will be no aggressive or intimidating behaviour from either parent towards a child or adult. If a parent doesn't act respectfully and follow guidance the meeting will be cancelled. We will write to that parent's solicitor letting them know why the meeting was cancelled and another appointment will be made.
- Parents are asked not to involve their child in adult issues **for example** (1) giving out about the other parent (2) asking questions about the other parent and what the other parent is doing or saying etc. (3) If there is more than one child in the family and another child doesn't attend a meeting with their parent, the child attending the meeting is not to be asked why the other child didn't attend etc. (4) The parent meeting their child is not to be asked leading questions/suggestions about why they are in this situation or to make suggestions/promises about future plans.
- Parents do not meet during this process. If a child requests to meet with their other parent. The parent bringing their child to a meeting with their other parent is asked not to be early and just to arrive at the correct time. The parent attending the meeting with their child is asked to be in the building 10 minutes prior to the meeting. If either parent is running late they need to contact us and let us know they are running late.

- When the parent is meeting with their child it's important to have quality time between parent/child without distractions. Therefore parents are asked during meetings to keep their phones turned off. Also during this process it wouldn't be appropriate for the parent coming to meet with their child to bring presents.
- Our focus is to come up with a child access plan that is agreeable to everyone therefore we will not get involved in he said/ she said issues as this can distract from the focus of our role. If a parent needs support we will give them details of appropriate services that can support them work through their issues.

I am aware that:

- All of my information will be password protected, will be kept in a secure place and will be confidential to each individual and any agency we may need to contact in the course of our work. There are two exceptions
 1. If it came to our attention that a child is at risk then we will have to report this concern to Tusla and both parents will be informed of this referral (if appropriate to do so).
 2. If we became aware of a parent being a risk of harm to themselves or someone else we will need to inform the appropriate services and supports.
- We will work with your family in a respectful, professional and child centred manner. Given the very nature of this service there may be times that parents are not happy (from their perspective) with the service they are provided with especially when the child is our focus and parents may not be happy with the outcome. However it's essential that parents/children let us know the areas that we can improve our service through giving us constructive positive/negative feedback. Any feedback will be gladly accepted and will **not** impact or reflect on the focus of the work or the interaction that is taking place with the family.

Fee Structure

- The fee per meeting is €70 (*It must be agreed between parents who is paying the fees which expected to be paid prior to each meeting*)
- The fee for attending court is €500 and is payable by the parent who summons us to court. If we are summoned to court the fee must be paid at the times of the summons.

I agree to allow Loreto Martin to proceed to work with my family. I agree to the conditions outlined above.

Name and DOB of child/children:

Name of the parent the child/children reside with?

Signed by parent:

Date: