

# We're all going on a summer holiday – or are we?

**C**hristmas is over, Half-term has been and gone, Easter is right around the corner. You may even be planning your summer holiday. For those with children it can seem as if the countdown to the next school break is never-ending. For separated parents, this brings with it the risk of issues regarding the arrangements for the children which need to be discussed and agreed with the former spouse or partner. Indeed, what should be a time of leisure and excitement can often involve additional strain on many people when making arrangements to spend time with family and friends, especially if the whereabouts of the children during those times is yet to be agreed between the parents.

**Here are some thoughts and tips which may be useful when trying to agree arrangements for your children:**

## Communication

There can often be a temptation to use the Holidays (particularly the first one after a separation) to make a point to your former partner or spouse about how well you and the children are doing following the separation. However, this is only likely to increase animosity between you and it is almost certain that it will not benefit the children.

Therefore, my tip for communication during the holiday period is to keep it to a minimum, potentially with messages limited to dealing with the children's arrangements only. Also, a simple message to the other parent when you have the children in your care about the children having a nice time should be fine but there is no need for the message to dwell on any other point or for it to imply that you or the children are not missing the other parent.

## Arrangements for children

For any parents thinking about the arrangements for their children over a holiday period, it is understandable if this feels difficult to address with your former spouse or partner. My first tip for dealing with children arrangements over any holiday period is to avoid any sense of competition. It can be all too easy to want to provide a 'better' Easter, Summer or even Christmas for your children, but as a parent your focus should be on what will make the holidays best for the children – and this likely involves quality time with both parents.

For some parents, their arrangement means that they alternate Easter. Some parents may not have the ability to take the children on holiday. If you find yourself in such a situation, then try not to worry about this or feel 'left-out'. Instead, try to make the most of your time with the children on the day(s) you will be spending with them. You can

even include a full repeat of Easter Day or at least a repeat of some of the activities. I suspect many children would not complain about having a second Easter-egg hunt!

## Compromise

Another tip is to be prepared to compromise on some aspects of the arrangements in order to reach an agreement with the other parent. You will no doubt each have your own wish list and it requires compromise on both sides to reach an agreement that works for both parties.

## Legal advice

Finally, if you are concerned about being able to reach an agreement with your former partner or spouse about the arrangements for the children over holiday periods or if discussions have not yet led to an agreement, then you may wish to consider taking legal advice about this.

As solicitors, we are used to advising on arrangements for children and will be able to assist you with this. Your solicitor will also be able to consider with you the methods by which you may be able to negotiate a settlement with the other parent, including through solicitors, at mediation or, if necessary, by way of a Court application.

We are always happy to assist with such matters. The key, however, is that the earlier you seek legal advice, the more useful it is likely to be.

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## THE DETAILS

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