

Family Matters Mediation

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AGREEMENT TO MEDIATE

This is a three-way agreement between Family Matters Mediate Limited ('Family Matters') and the two parties to mediation.

We agree to use a Family Matters Mediator ("the Mediator") to help us to try to agree arrangements with the other person for our child/ren / our finances / our child/ren and financial arrangements. We understand that this agreement is legally binding on us, and we must pay all the fees due to Family Matters Mediate Limited.

CONDUCT OF THE MEDIATION

1. We will:
 - a. Treat each other and the Mediator respectfully, be fair to them and show them courtesy.
 - b. Leave fault and criticism out of all our discussions.
 - c. Co-operate in trying to reach agreement.
 - d. Think about each other's needs and the needs of our family as a whole.
 - e. Try to reduce the emotional and financial distress caused.
 - f. Keep the content of the mediation confidential – this includes all forms of social media. Posting details of the mediation on social media is a serious breach of this agreement and will mean the Mediator can end the mediation process.
 - g. Not make any form of sound or video recording or broadcast of our discussions without the Mediator's permission.
2. We understand that all the discussions within mediation with Family Matters are:
 - a. **Confidential.** The exceptions to this are information which relates to safeguarding of children and the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002.
 - b. **Privileged.** This means we cannot refer to any discussions or proposals suggested or discussed by either of us in any future court proceedings and that the Mediator cannot be required to give evidence or produce any notes or records made during mediation, unless the participants agree to waive the without prejudice basis on which the Mediation is conducted or the law imposes an overriding obligation of disclosure upon the Mediator.
3. We understand that:
 - a) The Mediator's role is to facilitate our discussions during the mediation meetings. The Mediator will be under no obligation to discuss issues or proposals with the parties individually before or between mediation meetings.
 - b) The mediation summary prepared after mediation is intended to help us to obtain legal advice. It is not a word for word report and will contain only what the Mediator considers are the key points from our discussions. Any changes to the mediation documents will only be made at the Mediator's discretion and at the next appointment. It is a confidential and legally privileged document and cannot be referred to in the court process.
 - c) It is sensible to think about obtaining independent legal advice from solicitors during and after the mediation is completed. We understand the Mediator can only provide factual information, not legal advice. We will notify any legal advisors acting for us of the appointment of the Mediator.
 - d) The Mediator will end the mediation session if either of us asks, or if the Mediator thinks it is appropriate.
 - e) If Family Matters prepares a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or Parenting Plan this is not a legally binding agreement. We understand that it is our responsibility to obtain legal advice on making any agreement legally enforceable through a Court Order or a Separation Agreement.
 - f) When mediation meetings take place with the parties located in separate rooms or separate online meetings ('shuttle mediation') financial or other relevant data disclosed to the Mediator by one party will be shared by the Mediator with the other party.

FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE RESPONSIBILITIES

4. For Financial Mediation we will:
 - a. Make full disclosure to each other and the Mediator of all joint and individual finances and provide all the paperwork which relates to them. We understand the financial information provided in mediation can be referred to in any future court proceedings.
 - b. Not take out any debt, transfer or dispose of any assets, except for everyday living expenses, unless agreed first with the other party.

FEES

5. If I am eligible for public funding (Legal Aid) Family Matters' charges will be met by the Legal Aid Agency.
6. **If I am not eligible for Legal Aid, I agree to pay Family Matters' fees and charges as set out in Appendix 1.** If one person is eligible for Legal Aid and the other private paying – the first hour of the first mediation appointment only is funded by the Legal Aid Agency for the person who is privately paying.
7. Family Matters will prepare an invoice for each private paying client prior to each meeting and/or document preparation task and payment is required in full before each meeting takes place or document is sent to a party. Family Matters reserves the right to cancel an appointment if payment has not been made in full before the meeting. Family Matters will not be under an obligation to provide any document to a party whose invoices have not been paid in full.

CANCELLATIONS

8. **We have been informed of and agree to the Family Matters Cancellation and Payment Policy as set out in Appendix 2.** If we cannot keep a mediation appointment, we will inform Family Matters promptly, giving at least forty-eight hours' notice as specified in the policy. Family Matters reserves the right to charge the full fees for missed appointments.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

The practice of the mediators at Family Matters is governed by their Membership Organisation and mediations are conducted in accordance with the Family Mediation Council (FMC) Code of Practice. [Click here](#) to read the Code. If you have any questions about the Code, please raise these with us.

Any concern we may have as to the practice of the Mediator will be raised with him or her in the first instance. It is the policy of Family Matters to resolve matters internally and informally according to Family Matters' complaints policy. If this is not possible, we are aware we can complain in writing to the relevant Membership Organisation whose complaints procedures are available on their websites. We consent to release of the mediation file to the Membership Organisation (and if necessary the FMC in the event of any appeal to them) should either of us wish to escalate a complaint.

Details of the relevant Membership Organisation of each Mediator are available on the Family Matters website at <https://familymattersmediate.co.uk/our-people-2/>

Family Matters' complaints policy is available on our website at <https://familymattersmediate.co.uk/complaints-policy/>.

Privacy Notice – for details of how we process your personal data please see our privacy policy at <https://familymattersmediate.co.uk/privacy-policy/>

Appendix 1 - Fees and Charges

Service provided	CHARGES
<p>Mediation Assessment and Information Meeting ('MIAM'). This is an individual one-hour meeting and is a requirement before an application to court can be made.</p> <p>Issue of the Court form for an application to court is included in the cost for this meeting. Note: we do not issue Court forms unless the meeting has been completed and all invoices are paid in full.</p>	<p>We charge £130.00 inc VAT per person</p>
<p>Mediation meetings per person.</p> <p>Our minimum appointment time is 1½ hours for each meeting. Family Matters Mediate recommend 1½ hours for your 1st mediation appointment about children and 2 hours for shuttle mediation sessions or mediations about finances.</p> <p>This cost includes the preparation of a Mediation Summary which you can take to a legal advisor for advice between your mediation meetings.</p>	<p>We charge £130.00 inc VAT per hour per person for meeting attendance.</p> <p>[minimum of 90 minutes]</p>
<p>Preparation of Documents</p> <p>Child cases</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parenting Plan - prepared at the end of your case. <p>Financial cases</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open Financial Statement – prepared after your first mediation appointment. • Memorandum of Understanding – prepared at the end of your case. 	<p>We charge £130.00 inc VAT per hour per person for all document preparation time.</p> <p>[minimum of 90 minutes]</p>
<p>Child Consultation Package</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mediation meeting with parents/carers in preparation for child meeting. • Meeting with child (or children). • Attendance at parents'/carers' feedback mediation meeting. 	<p>All meetings charged at £130 per hour per parent/carer.</p> <p>[minimum of 60 minutes for child meeting and 90 minutes for the parent/carer meeting].</p>
<p>Photocopying/printing if required for financial disclosure or other document requests.</p>	<p>£1 inc VAT per sheet</p>
<p>Disbursements, eg interpreters, accountants, actuaries, independent financial advisors, and other advisors</p>	<p>Re-charged at cost, plus VAT where applicable</p>

Appendix 2

The following does not affect your statutory right to cancel the Agreement to Mediate under the Consumer Contracts (Information, Cancellation and Additional Charges) Regulations 2013. For further information see the Instructions for Cancellation (Statutory) on our website at <https://familymattersmediate.co.uk/instructions-for-cancellation/> . However, after the statutory cancellation period has expired this cancellation and payment policy will apply, and if you fail to attend an appointment or do not cancel request for services within the times specified in this policy you may be required to pay fees.

Cancellation and Payment Policy

Thank you for choosing Family Matters as your mediation provider. We are committed to providing you with quality and affordable mediation. Some of our clients have had questions regarding responsibility for services provided. We have developed this cancellation and payment policy so that expectations are clear for everyone.

Legal Aid funded work

1. We provide Legally Aided mediation if you qualify following a means test (based on your capital and income) and you provide the necessary supporting documents. If you are not eligible for Legal Aid (ie you are privately funded) payment in full is expected prior to each mediation meeting (or at the initial individual meeting) as set out below.
2. All clients who seek legally aided mediation must provide proof of financial eligibility with documentary evidence of their capital and savings, income and outgoings. We are unable to access Legal Aid, under the Legal Aid Agency's regulations, unless this documentation is provided. If you are eligible but proof is not provided you will be treated as not eligible for Legal Aid until the necessary documents are provided. You will be given the option to end the meeting at this point. Any deposits will be refunded.
3. If you are Legally Aided and your circumstances change significantly e.g. you obtain full time employment or are in receipt of a large amount of money, inheritance or lottery win it is your responsibility to inform the Mediator for your case and your eligibility will be reassessed.

Payment for MIAMS

4. If you are assessed as not eligible for Legal Aid and wish to end the meeting at that point no charges will be made. If you are not eligible for Legal Aid and wish to proceed with the MIAMS meeting you will be charged in full in accordance with our private fee structure.
5. If you have paid for a MIAMS meeting but the other person is later assessed as being eligible for legally aided mediation we will, depending upon your wishes, either a) refund your payment or b) credit the amount against any other work for you.
6. Deposit payments for MIAMS - Please be aware that we will take a deposit of £20.00 for MIAMS. This payment is due no later than 7 days before the appointment. It will be repaid in full if you qualify for Legal Aid, and there will be no administration charges for this transaction. If you do not cancel the meeting by giving us at least 48 hours' notice or you fail to attend the meeting, we will not refund the deposit to you. If the deposit is not paid at least 7 days in advance of the appointment, the appointment may be cancelled by us. Where appointments are made and not attended, we retain the right to charge the full amount to secure the booking of another meeting in the future.

Payment for Mediation and for Preparation of Documents – Privately funded work

7. Payments for mediations are due no later than 48 hours before the date on which the meeting is scheduled to take place.
8. If you or the other person do not confirm attendance and make payment in full no later than 48 hours before the meeting is scheduled to take place, the meeting may be cancelled by us and any payments made refunded.
9. Where the Mediator prepares an Open Financial Statement of a Memorandum of Understanding following a mediation meeting an invoice will be issued for the time spent. Payment is required in full before the document is sent to a party. Family Matters will not be under an obligation to provide any documents whatsoever to a party whose invoices have not been paid in full.

Late Payment.

10. All invoices for work not already payable in accordance with paragraphs 7, 8 and 9 above are payable within 14 days of the invoice date, Partial payments will not be accepted unless agreed in advance. Please be aware that if a balance remains unpaid after the due date, we may refer your account to a collection agency.
11. We reserve the right to charge interest on any late payment, accruing each day at a rate of 8% per year.

Missed appointments

12. Our policy is to charge in full for missed appointments not cancelled at least 48 hours (excluding weekends and bank holidays) before the scheduled time. These charges will be your responsibility and billed directly to you. Please help us to serve you better by keeping your scheduled appointment.