

Greene County Domestic Relations Court Parenting Time Procedures

GENERAL PARENTING PRINCIPLES

During and after a divorce, there is often a crisis period (from several months to years) during which families are under great stress because of loss, conflict, or change. Most studies show, and psychologists uniformly agree, that the children who do best following divorce are from those families that maintain a low level of conflict. The absence of conflict is more critical than the amount of time either parent spends with the child. Although spouses may terminate their marital relationship, parents should never terminate their relationship with their children.

No specific parenting schedule will satisfy the needs of all children and all parents over the years. Critical to the success of any schedule is that each parent remain flexible, based upon the changing needs of children as the children grow older. The Court recognizes that each situation and each child is different. It is preferred that parents tailor the parenting schedule to meet the specific needs of their children. Consistency in the scheduled time is also helpful for both parents and for children of all ages.

Parents are the best judge of what meets the needs of their children. Although a child's wishes and concerns may be considered in determining parenting schedules, they are not the controlling factor. If a child indicates a strong opposition to being with the other parent, it is the responsibility of both parents to support and encourage parenting time. Both parents must deal appropriately with the situation by calmly discussing with the child his/her reasons. The parents must work together to alleviate the misgivings without confrontation or argument. If they cannot resolve the problem, the parents should seek the assistance of a counselor or other professional. It is the absolute duty of each parent to foster an environment which avoids such problems and to make certain that the children have a healthy ongoing relationship with both parents.

PROCEDURES

- 1. Parenting Time Exchanges:** The receiving parent has responsibility for transportation of the children for their parenting time and may use another adult well-known to the children for picking up or dropping off the children when necessary. Any person transporting the children may not be under the influence of alcohol or drugs, and must be a licensed, insured driver. All child restraint and seat-belt laws must be observed by the driver. Car seats should be exchanged when required.
- 2. Make-up Non-Residential Parenting Time:** Make-up days shall be given if an emergency prevents scheduled parenting time. All make-up parenting time shall be rescheduled and exercised within sixty (60) days.
- 3. Canceling or Choosing NOT to Exercise Parenting Time:** Each parent must give notice of his/her intent not to have parenting time, at least 24 hours in advance, unless a last minute emergency occurs. A parent who does not exercise a specific parenting time forfeits that specific time.

4. **Tardiness:** If the non-residential parent is more than thirty (30) minutes late without prior notification, that parenting time period shall be forfeited.
5. **Scheduling:** For children under the age of 16, parenting time arrangements are to be made solely between the parents and **NOT** through the children.
6. **School Work:** Parents shall provide time for children to study and complete homework assignments, even if the completion of work interferes with the parent's plans for the children. The residential parent is responsible for providing the non-residential parent all of the school assignments and books. Summer school which is necessary for a child must be attended, regardless of which parent has the child during the summer school period.
7. **Extracurricular Activities:** Regardless of where the children are living, their continued participation in extracurricular activities, school related or otherwise, should not be interrupted. It shall be the responsibility of the parent with whom the children are residing at the time to discuss the scheduling of such activities with the children and to provide transportation to the activities. Each parent shall provide the other parent with notice of enrolled extracurricular activities, address, and telephone number of the activity leader, if available.
8. **Order of Priority:** In the event parenting time allotted to the parents falls on the same day(s), the following is the order of priority of parenting time: (1) Summer Break*+; (2) Holidays; (3) Spring Break/Winter Break; (4) Mid-week & Weekend Parenting Time.

For example, Easter (Father's holiday) falls during the children's Spring Break (Mother's holiday). Father's Easter parenting time would take priority over Mother's Spring Break parenting time.

* For purposes of interpreting the holiday schedule, summer break begins June 1st and ends August 31st each year.

+ Exceptions to the Order of Priority are Father's Day and the minor child(ren)'s birthday(s), which are holidays or days of special significance that take precedence over Summer Break.

9. **Contact:** Each parent may have reasonable telephone and email contact with the children.
10. **Promptness:** Parents are expected to be prompt for all parenting time exchanges. If a parent is going to be late, he/she must contact the other parent and give a reasonable estimated arrival time. Chronic lateness may be a reason to modify the schedule. The children should be ready to leave with the parent at the scheduled time.
11. **Conduct:** A parenting time exchange is not the time for parents to air their grievances with the other parent. It is important for the children that the exchanges take place without any conflict between their parents.