

Code of Conduct: Parenting Coordination

John-Paul Boyd Arbitration Chambers

Resolving disputes about family law issues is often stressful and can provoke a strong emotional response, especially when disputes concern children and how they are parented. Unfortunately, the conflict these disputes provoke is harmful to children's short- and long-term wellbeing and their ability to successfully adapt to their parents' separation.

Parenting coordination is a process that helps parents living apart implement parenting plans described in court orders, arbitrators' awards and separation agreements. The process involves a neutral professional, a parenting coordinator, who can help parents reach a settlement resolving parenting disputes, like a mediator, but also has the authority to make a determination resolving a dispute, like a judge or an arbitrator, if a dispute is urgent or can't be resolved by the parents' settlement.

While helping parents learn to resolve parenting disputes cooperatively and with a lot less conflict is a common, if not universal, goal of parenting coordination, the parenting coordination process can be just as stressful and emotional as other dispute resolution processes. This stress and emotion can make it harder to resolve parenting disputes through settlement if the stress and emotion results in parents becoming angry, inflexible and intolerant, or results in them saying or doing things to purposefully wound or punish the other parent.

This Code of Conduct is intended to encourage good behaviour in the parenting coordination process and, as a result, make the process faster and more efficient, increase the chance that disputes will be resolved by settlements, and reduce children's exposure to the conflict between their parents.

I, _____, understand and agree to the terms set out below.

1. My children and the wellbeing of my children are, and will remain, my most important priorities. I will do my best to put their needs and best interests ahead of my own when I make parenting decisions, when I deal with their other parent, when I resolve disagreements about parenting decisions with the other parent, and when I participate in the parenting coordination process.
2. I will follow the terms of my children's parenting plan, whether their parenting plan is described in a court order, an arbitrator's award or a separation agreement, carefully, cooperatively and in good faith.
3. I will participate in the parenting coordination process honestly and sincerely, and as cooperatively as possible. In particular, I will
 - a) follow the terms of our parenting coordination participation agreement carefully, cooperatively and in good faith, and

- b) follow the terms of all agreements the other parent and I make in the parenting coordination process, as well as the terms of all determinations the parenting coordinator makes, carefully, cooperatively and in good faith.
4. For so long as the other parent and I are involved in the parenting coordination process, I will not make complaints about the other parent
- a) to their friends and their family members, their employer, their union or employee organization, their colleagues and coworkers, their governing body, their school, their religious and community leaders, their landlord, or their insurers,
 - b) on the internet, in social media or to news media, or
 - c) to better business bureaux and trade organizations, government tribunals and agencies, regulatory organizations, or social and service organizations.
5. For so long as the other parent and I are involved in the parenting coordination process, I will not, except in cases of genuine urgency, make complaints about the other parent to the police or to child protection authorities without first speaking to the parenting coordinator about my complaint.
6. I will be polite, civil and courteous in all communications to the other parent and to the parenting coordinator. I will be business-like, brief, informative and factual in my communications with the other parent and the parenting coordinator. In particular, I will not
- a) use language which is abusive, insulting or accusatory,
 - b) use language which is derisive, mocking, sarcastic, scornful or contemptuous, or
 - c) make threats, including threats of emotional, physical or financial harm, threats of beginning or resuming court proceedings, or threats of complaints to government tribunals and agencies and regulatory organizations
- in my communications with the other parent, the parenting coordinator, and any other professionals involved in the parenting coordination process.
7. I will not withhold time, communication or contact with the children from the other parent except with good and urgent cause. I will not use or threaten to use the withholding of time, communication or contact with the children as a strategy in the parenting coordination process.
8. I will respect the privacy of the parenting coordination process. In particular, I will not
- a) discuss the other parent, disagreements about parenting decisions, the parenting coordinator, the parenting coordination process and the outcomes of the process on the internet, in social media or with news media,

- b) discuss disagreements about parenting decisions, the parenting coordinator, the parenting coordination process and the outcomes of the process with my children,
 - c) send communications I make or receive in the parenting coordination process to anyone other than the other parent, my lawyer, my parenting coach, my counsellor or therapist, and the parenting coordinator,
 - d) record any communications or meetings in the process without first getting the consent of everyone involved to the recording of the communication or meeting,
 - e) allow anyone, including my children, to be present during any meeting in the process, or to see or hear any part of any meeting, or
 - f) allow anyone, including my children, but excluding my lawyer, my parenting coach, my counsellor or therapist, my spouse or partner, and such other people as the parenting coordinator may direct, to read the memoranda, agreements and determinations prepared by the parenting coordinator.
9. I will promptly produce any information, records and reports relating to myself, my children, my children's parenting plan and the parenting coordination process that the parenting coordinator may request from time to time.
10. I will promptly sign any authorizations and releases that may be needed for the parenting coordinator to communicate with and obtain information from other people that the parenting coordinator may request from time to time.
- I commit to follow both the letter and the spirit of this Code of Conduct for so long as the other parent and I are involved in the parenting coordination process.
- I have read and understood the "Communication Guidelines" posted at <https://www.boydarbitration.ca/communication-guidelines>.

Signature

Date