

# **Erie County Court of Common Pleas**

## **Domestic Relations Division**

### *Child Centered* **Rules and Schedules For Long Distance Parenting Time**

#### **A. GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF LONG DISTANCE PARENTING TIME:**

##### **1. Preservation of the Parent/Child relationship:**

- a. Raising children is both an amazing privilege and an awesome responsibility.
- b. Divorce, dissolution, or legal separation actions terminate or limit the legal relationship between parents only. Absent a specific court order the privileges and the obligations of a parent/child relationship remain intact. Unless special circumstances exist, both parents remain full parents, with rights, and just as importantly, with obligations and responsibilities, to their minor child(ren).

##### **2. Co-parenting pursuant to a Long Distance Parenting Time Order:**

- a. In order for children to have a full parent/child relationship with each parent both parents must be engaged in the ordinary tasks of child rearing. Positive involvement with both parents furthers the child's emotional and social development, academic achievement, and overall adjustment.
- b. Because long distances can weaken the relationships between children and parents the parties should explore all options prior to adopting a long distance parenting schedule.

##### **3. Long Distance Parenting Time Rules and Schedules:**

- a. Prior to adopting any long distance parenting time schedule the parents are encouraged to openly and honestly consider matters such as: their work schedules, schedules of their child(ren), the development and individual needs of their child(ren); sibling bonds; transportation time and costs; the school and work activities and responsibilities of the child(ren); the presence of supportive family and friends in each city, and the gains or loss of extended family as a result of operating under a long distance schedule; and, all other unique circumstances of their family to develop a plan tailored to them.
- b. Even after agreeing on a long distance schedule, the parents will need to remain open to working with one another to modifying their agreements to address the inevitable challenges that life and children bring. No specific long distance parenting schedule will satisfy the needs of a child and parents over the years.
- c. When parents cannot agree on times a written parenting time schedule can alleviate conflict by providing children and parents with predicable, consistent, positive contact.
- d. Accordingly, unless otherwise specifically ordered in the Judgment Entry which incorporates this document, or unless otherwise agreed by the parents in advance, the Long Distance Parenting Time Rules and Schedules contained herein shall apply.

#### 4. **Definition of Long Distance Parenting:**

- a. **Travel time less than 90 minutes between homes:** During all times during which the parents reside within 90 minutes of one another then, absent agreement or Court Order to the contrary, the default schedule to be used is the Court's Standard Parenting Time Rules and Schedules rather than the Long Distance Parenting time Rules and Schedules.
- b. **Travel time between 90 minutes to 4 hours:** If the parents reside more than 90 minutes, but less than 4 hours from one another then, absent agreement or Court Order to the contrary, the default schedule shall be Schedule 1 listed herein.
- c. **Travel time over 4 hours:** If the parents reside more than 4 hours from one another then, absent agreement or Court Order to the contrary, the default schedule shall be Schedule 2 herein.

### B. **TEN SIMPLE RULES GOVERNING PARENTING TIME:**

There are ten (10) general rules for successful co-parenting that apply to most, if not all, families dealing with a divorce, dissolution, or legal separation. The rules may be simple to understand, but they can be difficult to consistently implement. Parents that co-parent under a parenting time schedule are encouraged to review the rules when disputes arise.

#### 1. **Parents need to mutually respect and support each other:**

- a. ***Let go of the past.*** For some parents this may be the hardest rule to implement. Hurt and anger must be set aside for the child(ren)'s well-being. Your feelings may be valid or justified. However, co-parenting is not about your feelings or frustrations with the other parent. Successful co-parenting does not require that two adults apologize, forgive, or even like each other. It only requires that both parents are motivated to focus on the growth and well-being of their child(ren). The co-parent relationship must transition to a *child centered* relationship.
- b. ***Adverse feelings should not dictate parental behavior.*** While it may be natural to be hurt and angry, your feelings should not dictate your behavior. The behavior you display can detrimentally impact your child(ren).
- c. ***Model appropriate behavior.*** Good or bad, children learn from watching their parents. You are modeling and teaching your child(ren) how to deal with difficult situations. You are also teaching your child(ren) how to treat people, how to build honest and safe relationships, how to solve problems, how to communicate effectively, and how to repair hurt emotions.
- d. ***Be respectful of the other Parent.*** Speak about and act in a respectful manner toward the other parent in front of the child(ren), or when the child(ren) can hear conversations taking place.
- e. ***Learn to work together.*** Parents are encouraged to work together to establish rules and guidelines that make the companionship beneficial for both parents and the child(ren). Flexibility, cooperation, and mutual respect are key to successful parenting time schedules and exchanges.
- f. ***Learn to present a united front.*** Even though parents may have different parenting styles parents should work to present a united front in handling problems with a child. While in the presence of their child(ren) each parent shall refrain from taking a side with decisions or actions of the other parent has made.

- g. **Support the other parent.** Co-parenting will, at times, challenge you. Understand that it will also challenge your ex-partner. Expect that mistakes will be made along the way. Despite them, support the other parent.
- h. **Inappropriate interactions can damage your child.** Witnessing conflict between parents is damaging to a child. Parents are imperfect, but your child(ren) need and love them anyway. Conflicts or altercations between parents that a child observes or becomes aware of can cause anxiety or depression in the child.
- i. **Inappropriate interactions can detrimentally affect the care your child(ren) receives.** Parents cannot be their best when having to parent under duress. Consequently, a parent may not be able to fully focus on child-care while trying to process thoughts and feelings regarding a co-parent who is less than supportive of their role and relationship with their children.
- j. **Don't try to "one-up" the other parent.** Avoid buying excessive gifts or offering unusual freedoms to the child(ren) in an attempt to win favor.

## 2. Parents need to effectively communicate with each other:

- a. This may be the second hardest rule to implement. Many parents separate because they can no longer deal with one another. This, cannot be the case when it comes to the child(ren). Communicating with one another is necessary for the duration of your child(ren)'s childhood, if not longer.
- b. **Commit to meeting/talking consistently.** Do not ignore requests by the other parent to communicate about parenting issues. Ignoring texts, calls, app messages or other requests from your ex-partner seeking to address parenting concerns will only add to the anxiety when finally meeting.
- c. **When possible communicate directly with your co-parent.** Communicating through family members, new partners, or other third parties is an open invitation for miscommunication.
- d. **Do not communicate through your child(ren).** Even on simple issues, as tempting as it may be, do not communicate through your children. Further, do not involve your child(ren) in sending, receiving, for reading texts for you with the other parent.
- e. **Communication should be outside the presence of the child(ren).**
- f. **Select and agree on communication time and method.** Some information can be easily conveyed through a quick text. Other issues require more lengthy conversation. Attempt to agree on a time during which you can have meaningful discussion outside the presence of the child(ren). If you absolutely cannot converse try communicating in writing through e-mail, text, or other app messaging. Be mindful that written communications can be misinterpreted. Read written communications carefully before sending them to make sure that they are appropriate.
- g. **Communicate Effectively.**
  - i. **Be concise and respectful.**
  - ii. **Stay calm.** It may seem impossible to stay calm when dealing with an ex-partner who has hurt you in the past or knows how to "push your buttons." If your negative emotions start to take over it can become very difficult to focus on your child(ren).
  - iii. **Don't drag up the past.** Parents should be able to openly discuss matters involving their child(ren) without fear that the other parent will begin raising personal or past issues.

- iv. **No name calling.** If your communication deteriorates to the point where names are being used, take a step back, stop the communication, and agree to try again after the parties have time to de-escalate.
- v. **Actively Listen.** Communicating with maturity starts with listening. Even if you disagree with the other parent, you should at least be able to verbally convey that you have understood their point of views. Listening does not signify approval. It simply gives your co-parent the opportunity to express their thoughts and opinions.
- vi. **Take turns speaking and avoid interruptions.** If you are interrupting you are not actively listening.
- h. **Matters to communicate about.** No plan can outline all of the matters that need to be discussed by the parents as the child(ren) grow. A few critical issues include, but are not limited to, the following:
  - i. **Current Contact Information.** Each parent shall keep the other parent informed of their current residence address as well as provide the other parent with emergency contact information such as phone, e-mail, text.
  - ii. **Upcoming Changes.** Keep the other parent informed of important changes in the parent's life that could potentially impact the child(ren), including but not limited to: moving to a new home, changing work hours due to a new job, a potential change in day-care providers, or introducing a new partner. Do this before talking to your children.
  - iii. **Critical Information on child development.** If the parties are co-parenting an infant, in addition to medical appointments and information, it is important to communicate regarding the infant's developmental milestones; the proper integration of foods into the child's diet; the child's sleep schedule; as well as concerns regarding potential allergic reactions to things such as foods, medicines and environmental factors such as soaps or detergents. As the infant grows discussions need to be had on readiness and joint efforts for potty-training. Years later, the parties should discuss the child's readiness for school.
  - iv. **Don't limit your conversations to problem issues.** You are co-parents. You should communicate about the joys as well as the challenges of raising your child(ren). Check in periodically with your co-parent simply to see how the child(ren) are doing. Further, convey positive things that the child(ren) have done or said.

### 3. **Parents need to Compromise and Cooperate with each other:**

- a. **Learn to compromise.** Newly married couples learn to compromise. Newly separated parents must learn to compromise as well.
- b. **Agree on basics.** Although parents are unlikely to agree on every decision, they need a basic level of agreement on material issues involving health, education and discipline. If each home has similar rules on matters such infant and toddler nap times and feeding schedules, bedtimes, chores, screen time, and discipline it will help the child(ren) adjust to transitions between the two households.
- c. **Accept that there will be differences.** Just because your co-parent isn't doing everything the way you would do it doesn't mean that they are doing it wrong. Parents may have different parenting styles and do not need to have identical rules.
- d. **Compromise does not mean renegotiating the critical terms of your parenting arrangement.**

- e. ***Compromise opens the door to needed flexibility for life events.*** Life happens. Emergencies arise. Children grow and develop in ways that we do not anticipate or plan for. Accordingly, adjustments should be made in the best interest of the child(ren).

#### **4. Parents need to let their Child(ren) be Child(ren):**

- a. ***Don't involve children in adult problems.*** Your child(ren) never need to know the details or reasons for your separation or your financial settlement or agreement. The focus should be on maintaining existing routines and relationships.
- b. ***Shelter your children.*** Shelter the child(ren) from the struggles that are properly the responsibility of their parents.
- c. ***Never use your Child(ren) as messengers.*** When you use your children to convey messages to your co-parent it puts them in the center of your conflict. The goal is to keep your child out of your relationship issues. Also, children are not always the best communicators. They may change or distort the message. They may not convey the message at all. Further, they may end up being the recipient of any angry or emotional outburst from the other parent. Avoid these potential problems by not using the child as a messenger.
- d. ***Maintain your child(ren)'s community of support.*** Maintaining existing relationships and routines with extended family members, friends, school, and other activities adds to children's sense of stability, continuity and predictability in their lives.

#### **5. Parents need to make exchanges less stressful for the child(ren):**

- a. ***Select an appropriate exchange point.*** Parents do not need to always use the other parent's home as an exchange point. If you and your co-parent are in high conflict and the previous strategies aren't helping, try to avoid face-to-face exchanges. Maybe you take your child(ren) to daycare or school in the morning, and the other parent picks them up in the afternoon.
- b. ***Prepare for exchanges in advance.*** Both parents shall, to the best of their ability, prepare the child(ren) physically and emotionally for all companionship contact. Check and make sure each child has all necessary items ready for the exchange. Items such as medicines, school materials, clothing, along with items the child wants to take or share should all be ready to go.
- c. ***Stay positive prior to the exchange.*** No one wants their child(ren) to be miserable. For your child(ren)'s sake, you should want them to have a great time with the other parent. Let them know that.
- d. ***Model positive, appropriate behavior at the time of the exchange.*** Avoid difficult conversations or comments when you exchange the child(ren). For the sake of the child(ren), exchanges of the child(ren) should be cordial rather than confrontational.
- e. ***Don't burden your child with your emotions.*** Saying things like, "I miss you" or "I am going to be lonely without you" might seem harmless, but it puts an emotional burden on your child. Your child should not feel obligated to make you feel better at a time that might be emotionally confusing or challenging for them.
- f. ***Properly handle any opposition by the child(ren).*** Some children become upset during exchanges. This behavior does not necessarily mean that the other parent is not a good parent or that the child does not want to be with the other parent. If a child indicates a strong opposition to being with the other parent, both parents are responsible for encouraging the child to have a positive relationship with both parents.

- g. Parenting time shall not be used by either parent to check on the other parent.
- h. ***Don't interrogate the child(ren) after an exchange.*** Neither parent shall interrogate the child(ren) during or following the parenting time as a means to gather information regarding the other parent or activities of the other parent. Gaining information in this manner can feed into parental anger and put the child(ren) in the middle. Children often feel manipulated by this practice and develop loyalty conflicts when being interrogated about the other parent.
- i. ***Don't attempt to establish secret alliances.*** At no time shall either parent ask the child(ren) to keep a secret or withhold information from the other parent.
- j. ***Let your Child(ren) share special parenting moments without tension.*** Your child(ren) should not feel guilty about sharing a positive experience they had with the other parent.

## **6. Transportation:**

- a. The parent beginning their parenting time shall be responsible for picking up and transporting the child(ren) for the parenting time.
- b. The parent responsible for transportation may, in their sole discretion, designate a third party known to the child(ren) to transport the child(ren) on the parent's behalf. Further, if a child is a licensed, insured driver, the child may complete the transportation. Any person transporting the child(ren) for parenting time shall have a valid driver's license and be insured. Further, the child(ren) shall be properly restrained in the manner required by law during such transport.
- c. 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. The parent completing their parenting time shall not be required to wait longer than thirty (30) minutes for the other parent to appear.
- d. Unless otherwise specifically directed herein, absent agreement to the contrary, the parent in possession of the child(ren) is responsible for providing the child(ren) with transportation to and from any appointment, activity or event scheduled for the child while in their care.

## **7. Illness, Emergencies, and medical issues:**

- a. ***Child illness or emergency.***
  - i. Parents are expected to follow the parenting time schedule despite any illness of a child, unless both parents agree that this would not be medically advisable.
  - ii. A child who is confined to bed rest pursuant to a doctor's instructions is presumed too ill for parenting time exchanges to take place. Any parenting time that is missed due to the illness of a child shall be made up the following week or as the parties may mutually agree.
  - iii. Prescription medications and instructions for special care shall travel with the child.
  - iv. If a child misses school due to illness or due to an emergency such as a snow day or other emergency school closure, the parent who is exercising parenting time at the time of the child illness or emergency shall be responsible for arranging any substitute childcare necessitated as a result thereof.
- b. ***Medical treatment and appointments for the child(ren).***
  - i. Both parents shall timely give the other parent copies of insurance cards for medical/optical/dental/pharmacy coverage as well and advise the other parent of any changes in insurance coverage.

- ii. Both parents shall keep the other parent advised of the names and addresses of current medical providers for the minor child(ren).
- iii. Both parents are responsible for communicating dates and times of all routine medical, dental, vision, wellness, and behavioral health appointments for the child(ren) to the other parent.
- iv. Both parents are encouraged to attend all medical/health/wellness care appointments for the minor child(ren) regardless of whose parenting time the appointment falls within.
- v. Parents should not schedule non-emergency medical appointment during the other parent's parenting time without first discussing the matter with the other parent. If this cannot be avoided the parent scheduling the appointment shall be responsible for providing transportation for the minor child to and from the appointment.
- c. **Parent illness or emergency.** If a parent needs to cancel their parenting time due to an unforeseen emergency or illness of the parent, then they need to let the other parent know as soon as possible so that proper arrangements can be made.

## **8. Supervision and care of the Child(ren) during parenting time:**

- a. **Minimize packing.** Children living with a co-parenting plan should feel as if they have two separate places that they can call home. If a child's first activity when they get home is unpacking that can make the child feel like a visitor. Further, it can create stress for the child and the parent, trying to make sure that everything was packed. Consequently, successful co-parenting should strive for minimal packing.
- b. **Clothing for the Child(ren).** Each parent is expected to maintain suitable clothing for the child(ren) during their periods of parenting time.
- c. **Supplies for the Child(ren).** Each parent is expected to maintain necessary and customary supplies for the child(ren) to use while the child(ren) is in their care, including but not limited to such things as diapering products, toiletry and grooming supplies, normal over the counter medications and school supplies.
- b. **Items belonging to the Child(ren).** Toys, games, and clothing given to the child(ren) belong to the child(ren). As such, the child(ren) shall be freely allowed to take toys, games or clothing with them to the other parents house, regardless of who purchased the item for the child(ren). Each parent shall return all items that are sent with or brought by the child(ren) at the end of the parenting time.
- d. **Child-care/Day-Care.**
  - 1. The parent in possession of the child(ren) is responsible for seeking, and covering the cost for, any child-care needed during that parent's parenting time.
  - 2. The parents are encouraged to use the same non-relative day-care provider.
  - 3. Except for children under age (3) as specifically addressed in Section C herein, the possessory parent may, but is not required, to ask the other parent to care for the child(ren) when the possessory parent is unable to care for the child(ren) during their scheduled parenting time.
  - 4. Absent agreement to the contrary, care for the child(ren) outside of the parent's regularly scheduled parenting time is not a substitute for them to care for the children during their regularly scheduled parenting time.

5. If the parent being asked to care for the child(ren) is unavailable, they shall not be treated in a punitive manner, or asked for details and/or verification as to why they cannot watch the child(ren) during the requested time.

## **9. School and Activity Issues:**

- a. Each parent must provide time for the child(ren) to study and complete homework assignments, papers or other school-assigned projects, even if the completion of this work interferes with the parent's plans with the child(ren).
- b. Both parents shall timely give to the other parent copies in their possession of grade reports, disciplinary notices and/or communications, including information regarding school pictures.
- c. Each parent is responsible to set up his or her own online access to school records and information, if available.
- d. Scheduled periods of parenting time shall not be delayed or denied because a child has other scheduled activities (with friends, work, lessons, sports, etc.). Accordingly, neither parent shall schedule activities for the child during the other parent's parenting time without first discussing the matter with the other parent in advance. It is the responsibility of the parents to discuss activities important to the child(ren) in advance, including time, dates, cost, and transportation needs, so that the child(ren) are not deprived of activities and maintaining friendships.

## **10. Address Financial Issues Separate from Parenting time:**

- a. ***Costs and Expenses must be addressed separately.*** The primary purpose of these "Child Centered Rules and Schedules for Parenting Time" is to allocate time between parents in the best interests of the child(ren) when the parents have not been able to allocate time by agreement. Except when specifically addressed in the schedules herein, the allocation of costs and expenses is a separate issue beyond the scope of these schedules and rules. To avoid conflict and successfully co-parent the allocation of costs and expenses cannot be ignored and must be addressed separately.
- b. ***Each parent is obligated to share in the financial responsibility of raising their child(ren).*** The responsibility in raising your child(ren) goes beyond spending quality parenting time together. Successful co-parents each share in the financial responsibility of raising their children.
- c. ***Plan ahead.*** Conflicts are avoided then parents agree in advance on a plan allocating costs and expenses rather than waiting to discuss payment after expenses have been incurred or are due.
- d. ***Reduce Agreements to writing.*** Parenting Plans or Shared Parenting Plans should address how costs and expenses are to be allocated between the parents for all expenses including but not limited to: school tuition; school uniform costs; school lunch costs; the payment of school fees and related expenses; extracurricular activity expenses; cell phone expenses; car insurance expenses; providing gas money or covering repair costs for a child(ren)'s vehicle; and, payment of an allowance to the child(ren).
- e. ***Address expenses when establishing child support.*** If the parties are unable to come to an agreement in a parenting plan or shared parenting plan then each party should address the allocation of expenses when establishing child support. Child Support can be adjusted



(deviated) based on a number of factors, including but not limited to the allocation of expenses.

- f. ***Address expenses for health insurance and medical expenses.*** Finally, the parties must understand their obligations in providing health care coverage, paying cash medical, and paying for uninsured medical expenses.
- g. ***Submit shared financial responsibilities in a timely fashion.*** Most families need to budget and plan payment of expenses on a monthly basis. Conflicts can be reduced or avoided if shared expenses are provided to the other parent in a timely fashion rather than at the last minute when a bill is due. Each parent should understand and comply with the requirements for timely submitting bills for direct payment, or reimbursing the other co-parent.
- h. ***Timely meet your financial responsibilities.***
- i. ***Keep your child(ren) out of any financial disputes.*** Do not involve your child in serving as a messenger or asking about details regarding your co-parent's financial obligations.
- j. ***Do not withhold parenting time as a result of unmet financial obligations.***

## **C. LONG DISTANCE PARENTING TIME SCHEDULES**

### **1. In General:**

- a. Each parent develops their own unique relationship with each one of their children. Long distance parenting time should allow for the development of that individual bond despite the constraints brought on by physical distance. To allow those individual bonds to form, rather than keep the children together, under the long distance parenting schedule each child should follow the schedule based on their age.
- b. For the purposes of all Parenting Time Schedules, including those for vacation, holidays, and days of special meaning "Parent 1" is the residential parent and legal custodian and "Parent 2" is the other parent. If any part of this Standard Parenting Time Order is incorporated as part of a "Shared Parenting Plan" then "Parent 1" is the residential Parent for School Purposes, and "Parent 2" is the secondary residential parent.
- c. Parent 2's parenting time is determined in part on the amount of time needed to travel to complete an exchange of the child(ren). When travel time is between ninety (90) minutes to four (4) hours, Parent 2 is awarded parenting time in accordance with Schedule 1 herein. When travel time exceeds four (4) hours Parent 2 is awarded parenting time in accordance with Schedule 2 herein.

### **2. Telephone/Email contact/other social media communication with the child(ren):**

- a. Parents may communicate with the child(ren) during the other parent's scheduled parenting time, at least twice a week, but no later than 8:00 PM or as otherwise agreed.
- b. Each parent shall encourage free communication between the child(ren) and the other parent, and shall not do anything to impede or restrict that communication.

### **3. Schedule 1 – Travel Time between 90 minutes to 4 hours:**

#### **a. Ordinary Parenting time for children from birth to age 2:**

- i. Parent 2 shall have parenting time with the minor child(ren) on the first, third, and fourth weekends of every month beginning on Friday evening at 7:00 p.m. through Sunday evening at 7:00 p.m.
- ii. The start time shall be extended to a later hour on Friday to accommodate Parent 2's travel time after work on Friday evenings. Parent 2 shall provide evening if Parent 1 with a work schedule documenting the need for an extended pick-up time

#### **b. Ordinary Parenting Time for children from age 2 through Kindergarten:**

- i. Beginning at the age of two (2) the parents shall equally share parenting time.
- ii. Beginning at age two (2) the parents should begin alternating weeks. Parent 1 shall have the child the first full week following the child's second (2<sup>nd</sup>) birthday, with Parent 2 having the following week thereafter.
- iii. The parent having the child for the week is deemed the "possessory parent." The other parent is the "non-possessory parent."
- iv. Absent advance agreement by the parents, a week begins Sunday at 7:00 p.m. at which time the exchange of the child(ren) should take place.
- v. To aid the child(ren) in the transition to equal parenting time, while maintaining regular contact with each parent, the non-possessory parent may have weeknight parenting time with the child(ren) on two (2) evenings during the week. The parenting time for the non-possessory parent shall be from 5:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m. on Tuesday and Thursday evenings.
- vi. The non-possessory parent is responsible for providing dinner for the child(ren) during these parenting times and is responsible for all transportation for the weeknight parenting time.
- vii. The parent finishing parenting time for the week shall advise the parent picking up the child(ren) for parenting time of the non-possessory parent's intent to exercise weeknight parenting time during the week.

#### **c. Ordinary Parenting Time for school aged children (Kindergarten to Age 18):**

- i. Once the child(ren) reach school age, traveling more than 90 minutes before and after school is not practical. Accordingly, Parent 2's parenting time shall revert back to the first, third, and fourth weekends every month during those months in which the child(ren) are attending school.
- ii. In addition to weekend parenting time Parent 2 may exercise parenting time with the child(ren) each Wednesday from 5:00 pm. until 8:00 p.m. Parent 2 shall be responsible for providing dinner for the child(ren) during these weeknight parenting times as well as assure that the child(ren) complete any homework due the next day. Parent 2 is responsible for all transportation for the weeknight parenting time.
- iii. Parent 2 shall notify Parent 1 no later than forty-eight (48) hours in advance as to whether Parent 2 intends to exercise any weeknight visitation during the week.

d. **Ordinary Parenting Time during school breaks for school aged children (Kindergarten to Age 18):**

- i. ***Winter Break:*** Parent 2 is awarded one (1) full week of parenting time during the Christmas/winter break for the school aged child(ren). Parent 1 is awarded the balance of any winter break. The parties are each obligation to review the school calendar and plan for the parenting time to take place so as not to interfere with the other parties holiday parenting time during the winter break.
- ii. ***Spring Break:*** Parent 2 is awarded one (1) full week of parenting time during any spring break scheduled in the child(ren)'s school calendar. Parent 1 is awarded the balance of any spring break.
- iii. ***Summer Break:*** During even numbered years Parent 2 is awarded the first full seven (7) consecutive weeks of parenting time during the school aged child(ren)'s summer break. In odd numbered years Parent 2's parenting time shall be during the last seven (7) weeks of the child(ren)'s summer break. Parent 1 is awarded the balance of the summer break. Parent 1 may exercise parenting time with the child(ren) each Wednesday from 5:00 pm. until 8:00 p.m. during Parent 2's seven (7) week parenting time. Parent 1 shall be responsible for providing dinner for the children during these parenting times and is responsible for all transportation for the weeknight parenting time. Likewise, Parent 2 may exercise parenting time with the child(ren) each Wednesday from 5:00 pm. until 8:00 p.m. during Parent 1's summer parenting time. Parent 2 shall be responsible for providing dinner for the children during these parenting times and is responsible for all transportation for the weeknight parenting time. Holiday or a scheduled vacation take priority over any weeknight visitation during the summer break.
- iv. ***Adjustments for Child Work and Summer Activities*** Flexibility in scheduling is necessary due to the growing demands and activities of a teenage child. With an older child the parties should consider the teenage child's wishes and shall attempt to make reasonable accommodations for the teenager's participation in academic, athletic, and extracurricular or employment.

e. **Vacations**

- i. Starting at the age of 2, each parent is entitled to two (2) one (1) week periods of uninterrupted vacation time with the child(ren) each year. The two (2) weeks can be taken separately, or together for one (1) two (2) week period. Where Parents are alternating weeks under the Long Distance Parenting Time schedule the following rules apply:
  - a.) If a parent wishes to exercise vacation time in separate weekly increments, the vacation time shall be taken during the week that the parent is already scheduled to have the child(ren).
  - b.) If a parent wishes to exercise vacation time for one (1) two (2) week period, the alternating schedule shall be adjusted so that the parent missing their week of ordinary parenting time shall have the child(ren) the week immediately following the two (2) week vacation period in lieu of making up the missed week.

- ii. Vacation time can occur in the summer, spring, or winter breaks for school-aged children, or at any time for younger children. Vacation time shall not interfere with school schedules.
- iii. The parent wishing to take vacation time with the child(ren) must notify the other parent at least sixty (60) days before the proposed vacation dates, providing the other parent with information about the destination, times of arrival and departure, and method of travel.
- iv. Vacations shall not conflict with the holiday schedule. Holidays and days of special meaning take precedence over vacation schedules.

f. **Days of Special Meaning**

- a. **Child's Birthday:** The child's birthday shall be spent with the parent who has regularly scheduled parenting time on that day.
- b. **Mother's Day and Father's Day:** Unless otherwise specifically agreed upon or ordered by the Court, Mother's Day shall always be spent with the mother, and Father's Day shall always be spent with the father. Unless the parties agree otherwise, the time shall be from 9:00AM to 7:00PM. Mother's Day and Father's Day shall take precedence and priority over Ordinary Parenting Time and vacations.
- c. **Other:** Parents are strongly encouraged to agree on division of time concerning other days of special meaning that are important to their individual families such as parent birthdays, annual family reunions, or family celebrations for grandparent birthdays or anniversaries.
- d. Parents shall encourage their child to remember the other parent on special occasions.

g. **Holiday Parenting Time**

- a. The holiday schedule takes precedence over the normal weekly schedule and vacations.
- b. Parents are encouraged to modify holiday companionship by agreement to reflect the customs and traditions of their family.

<b>Holiday</b>	<b>Even-Numbered Years</b>	<b>Odd-Numbered Years</b>	<b>Time Period</b>
Easter	Parent 1	Parent 2	10:00 AM to 7:00 PM
Memorial Day	Parent 2	Parent 1	10:00 AM to 7:00 PM
July 4 <sup>th</sup>	Parent 1	Parent 2	10:00 AM to 7:00 PM
Labor Day	Parent 2	Parent 1	10:00 AM to 7:00 PM
Thanksgiving	Parent 1	Parent 2	10:00 AM Thursday to 7:00 AM Friday
Christmas Eve	Parent 2	Parent 1	7:00 PM on 12/23 to 7:00 PM on 12/24

Christmas Day	Parent 1	Parent 2	7:00 PM on 12/24 to 10:00 AM on 12/26
New Year's Eve	Parent 2	Parent 1	7:00 PM on 12/31 to 10:00 AM on 1/1
New Year's Day	Parent 1	Parent 2	10:00 AM to 7:00 PM

#### 4. **Schedule 2 – Travel Time over 4 hours:**

##### a. **Ordinary Parenting time for children from birth to age 2:**

- i. Parent 2 shall have parenting time with the minor child(ren) on the third weekend of every month beginning on Friday evening at 7:00 p.m. through Sunday evening at 7:00 p.m. The parties are encouraged to adjust start and ending times as needed to accommodate the lengthy travel time.
- ii. Parent 2 is also awarded additional parenting time with the child(ren) for up to four (4) hours per day for each day in which Parent 2 is visiting/staying within one (1) hour of Parent 1's home. At least three (3) days in advance of any such parenting time Parent 2 must provide Parent 1 with the that specific dates and times Parent 2 intends to exercise the parenting time, and shall provide Parent 1 with the address that Parent 2 will be staying/visiting at. Parent 1's holiday and vacation parenting time take precedence over Parent 2's additional parenting time in accordance with this section.

##### b. **Ordinary Parenting Time for children from age 2 through Kindergarten:**

- i. Beginning at the age of two (2) the parents shall equally share parenting time.
- ii. Beginning at age two (2) the parents should begin alternating weeks. Parent 1 shall have the child the first full week following the child's second (2<sup>rd</sup>) birthday, with Parent 2 having the following week thereafter.
- iii. The parent having the child for the week is deemed the "possessory parent." The other parent is the "non-possessory parent."
- iv. Absent advance agreement by the parents, a week begins Sunday at 7:00 p.m. at which time the exchange of the child(ren) should take place.
- v. Given the length of travel time, unless otherwise agreed by the parties, no weeknight parenting time is awarded during this time.

##### c. **Ordinary Parenting Time for school aged children (Kindergarten to Age 18):**

- i. Once the child(ren) reach school age, Parent 2's parenting time shall revert back to the third weekend every month during those months in which the child(ren) are attending school.

- ii. Parent 2 is also awarded additional parenting time with the child(ren) for up to four(4) hours per day for each day in which Parent 2 is visiting/staying within one (1) hour of Parent 1's home. At least three (3) days in advance of any such parenting time Parent 2 must provide Parent 1 with the that specific dates and times Parent 2 intends to exercise the parenting time, and shall provide Parent 1 with the address that Parent 2 will be staying at. Parent 1's holiday and vacation parenting time take precedence over Parent 2's additional parenting time in accordance with this section.

d. **Ordinary Parenting Time during school breaks for school aged children (Kindergarten to Age 18):**

- i. ***Winter Break:*** Parent 2 is awarded one (1) full week of parenting time during the Christmas/winter break for the school aged child(ren). Parent 1 is awarded the balance of any winter break. The parties are each obligation to review the school calendar and plan for the parenting time to take place so as not to interfere with the other parties holiday parenting time during the winter break.
- ii. ***Spring Break:*** Parent 2 is awarded one (1) full week of parenting time during any spring break scheduled in the child(ren)'s school calendar. Parent 1 is awarded the balance of any spring break.
- iii. ***Summer Break:*** During even numbered years Parent 2 is awarded the first full eight (8) consecutive weeks of parenting time during the school aged child(ren)'s summer break. In odd numbered years Parent 2's parenting time shall be during the last eight (8) weeks of the child(ren)'s summer break. Parent 1 is awarded the balance of the summer break. Given the length of travel time, unless otherwise agreed by the parties, no weeknight nor weekend parenting time is awarded to either parent during this time.
- iv. ***Adjustments for Child Work and Summer Activities*** Flexibility in scheduling is necessary due to the growing demands and activities of a teenage child. With an older child the parties should consider the teenage child's wishes and shall attempt to make reasonable accommodations for the teenager's participation in academic, athletic, and extracurricular or employment.

e. **Vacations**

- i. Starting at the age of 2, each parent is entitled to two (2) one (1) week periods of uninterrupted vacation time with the child(ren) each year. Where Parents are alternating weeks under the Long Distance Parenting Time schedule the following rules apply:
  - a.) If a parent wishes to exercise vacation time in separate weekly increments, the vacation time shall be taken during the week that the parent is already scheduled to have the child(ren).
  - b.) If a parent wishes to exercise vacation time for one (1) two (2) week period, the alternating schedule shall be adjusted so that the parent missing their week of ordinary parenting time shall have the child(ren) the week immediately following the two (2) week vacation period in lieu of making up the missed week.
- ii. The parent wishing to take vacation time with the child(ren) must notify the other parent at least sixty (60) days before the proposed vacation dates, providing the other parent with information about the destination, times of arrival and departure, and method of travel.

- iii. Vacation time can occur in the summer, spring, or winter breaks for school-aged children, or at any time for younger children. Vacation time shall not interfere with school schedules.
- iv. Vacations shall not conflict with the holiday schedule. Holidays and days of special meaning take precedence over vacation schedules.

f. **Days of Special Meaning**

- i. **Child's Birthday:** The child's birthday shall be spent with the parent who has regularly scheduled parenting time on that day.
- ii. **Mother's Day and Father's Day:** Unless otherwise specifically agreed upon or ordered by the Court, Mother's Day shall always be spent with the mother, and Father's Day shall always be spent with the father. Unless the parties agree otherwise, the time shall be from 9:00AM to 7:00PM. Mother's Day and Father's Day shall take precedence and priority over Ordinary Parenting Time and vacations.
- iii. **Other:** Parents are strongly encouraged to agree on division of time concerning other days of special meaning that are important to their individual families such as parent birthdays, annual family reunions, or family celebrations for grandparent birthdays or anniversaries.
- iv. Parents shall encourage their child to remember the other parent on special occasions.

g. **Holiday Parenting Time**

- i. The holiday schedule takes precedence over the normal weekly schedule and vacations.
- ii. Parents are encouraged to modify holiday companionship by agreement to reflect the customs and traditions of their family.

<b>Holiday</b>	<b>Even-Numbered Years</b>	<b>Odd-Numbered Years</b>	<b>Time Period</b>
Easter	Parent 1	Parent 2	10:00 AM to 7:00 PM
Memorial Day	Parent 2	Parent 1	10:00 AM to 7:00 PM
July 4 <sup>th</sup>	Parent 1	Parent 2	10:00 AM to 7:00 PM
Labor Day	Parent 2	Parent 1	10:00 AM to 7:00 PM
Thanksgiving	Parent 1	Parent 2	10:00 AM Thursday to 7:00 AM Friday
Christmas Eve	Parent 2	Parent 1	7:00 PM on 12/23 to 7:00 PM on 12/24
Christmas Day	Parent 1	Parent 2	7:00 PM on 12/24 to 10:00 AM on 12/26

New Year's Eve	Parent 2	Parent 1	7:00 PM on 12/31 to 10:00 AM on 1/1
New Year's Day	Parent 1	Parent 2	10:00 AM to 7:00 PM