

FRIEND OF THE COURT STANDARD PARENTING TIME POLICY

11th Judicial Circuit Alger, Luce and Schoolcraft Counties

The following is the Court's and the Friend of the Court's definition of "reasonable and liberal" parenting time. In Court Orders that contain that language, the Friend of the Court will expect the parents to follow this policy if disagreements arise.

This parenting time policy does not take precedence over the specific language contained in a valid Court Order or Judgment of Divorce as to parenting time. This policy will not be strictly enforced unless it is incorporated into or made a part of a Court Order or Judgment.

Extra-curricular activities of the children, whether held during the school year or during the summer vacation, need to be discussed by both parents BEFORE they are enrolled or placed in any activity. Neither parent has the right to enroll the children in activities without first discussing the programs with the other parent. These activities do not take priority over scheduled parenting time unless agreed to by the visiting parent.

Halloween is not a Holiday. However, if parents have young children and choose/agree to make it one, the parents need to decide what year they will each have and it must be in writing, signed by both parents and a copy sent to the Friend of the Court Office.

*NOTE: Both parents should use common sense during vacation/parenting time periods so the children may take part in the holiday activities, i.e. picnics, fireworks, kid games, parades, etc. There may be school the next day and children need their rest, but if before the divorce/separation it was your practice to take the children to fireworks and family get togethers until 11:00 p.m., then there is no reason not to continue that practice now after you are divorced or separated.

A. Non Custodial Parent (NCP) Parenting Time

1. 1st, 3rd and 5th weekends of each month starting on Friday after school at 4:00 p.m. until Sunday night at 6:00 p.m. If the parents can agree on other pick up and drop off times this is acceptable with the Friend of the Court, otherwise it will be as stated above.
2. Each parent will have their respective Father's Day OR Mother's Day WEEKEND from Friday at 4:00 p.m. to Sunday at 6:00 p.m. and their respective Birthday Days every year. If the parent's birthday falls on a school day, then from after school until 6:00 p.m. If it falls a non-school day, then from 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.
3. The following holidays in **odd numbered years:** (HOLIDAYS TAKE PRIORITY OVER A REGULAR SCHEDULED WEEKEND PARENTING TIME). Parents are free to set their own times for parenting time based on their circumstances, work schedules and that of their children. The suggested times contained in this policy are set as being reasonable but may be changed by agreement of the parents. Parents need to be on time for pick ups and drop offs. DO NOT BE LATE. Your children are waiting for you

to be there on time and return them home afterwards.

- a. All of the child(ren)'s birthdays. If a child's birthday falls on a school day, parenting time will be from after school until 6:00 p.m. If their birthday falls on a non-school day, then from 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.
 - b. Easter/Spring Break, the NCP will have both school vacation breaks. The school calendar will be used to determine this time. The NCP will have the children on both breaks from 4:00 p.m. on the day the children are out of school until 6:00 p.m. the day before school resumes. The spring break may not always coincide with the Easter holiday time, which will then be Good Friday through Easter Sunday.
 - c. July 3rd from 9:00 a.m. through July 5th at 12:00 noon.
 - d. Thanksgiving Holiday (four days) from 4:00 p.m. Wednesday to Sunday at 6:00 p.m.
 - e. The second half of the Christmas Vacation starting at 1:00 p.m. on the day that is equal to one-half of the total school vacation days through the day before the children return to school. This time includes New Year's Eve and New Year's Day. (Example-if there are 12 days of vacation, each parent gets 6 days and the children would change custody on December 27th or 28th at 1:00 p.m. and be returned at 6:00 p.m. the day before school starts)
 - f. The Custodial Parent (CP) will have the above holidays in even numbered years.
4. The Non Custodial Parent (NCP) parenting time for **even numbered years** will be as follows:
- a. Memorial Day and Labor Day which includes the full 3-day weekend starting at 4:00 p.m. on Friday through 6:00 p.m. on the holiday itself, or on the day before school resumes.
 - b. The first half of the Christmas vacation period starting after school the day the child(ren) are released for vacation through Christmas Eve and Christmas Day until 1:00 p.m. on the day that is equal to half of the total school vacation period (usually around December 27th or 28th). If school is out at noon, then pick up will be at 1:00 PM. If there is a full day of school, then pick up will be at 4:00 PM.
 - c. The custodial parent (CP) will have the above holidays in odd numbered years.

B. Summer Vacation – The NCP should have at least 70% of summer school vacation with the child(ren) as determined by the school calendar. As an example, if there are 10 weeks of school vacation, then the NCP will have 7 weeks of parenting time. If there are 13 weeks of vacation, then the NCP will have 9 weeks of parenting time. The vacation can be taken in 2 or 3 week blocks. The parties are going to have to communicate on this well in advance and a

schedule should be in place by April 1st of each year with a copy being sent to the FOC Office. The length of time should coincide with the age/maturity of the child. The normal weekend parenting time ceases in favor of the summer weekly block time. The Friend of the Court expects both parties to know what parenting time they are entitled to according to their court order.

C. Transportation of Children - Each parent will be responsible for 50% of the transportation of the children. The CP will drop off the child(ren) at the NCP's home or designated place. The NCP will then return the children to the CP's home or designated place. (In some cases it may be necessary to have exchanges take place at a State Police Post or other law enforcement agency.) If there is a long distance between the parents, parents will meet halfway at a rest area, restaurant, shopping mall, etc. This will take some communication between both parents. The Court and the Friend of the Court strongly encourage and it is permissible to use third parties (family members, grandparents, relatives and friends) in the transporting of the children if the parents cannot transport. If one parent has to drive the full distance to pick up the children then the other parent shall make a full trip to return the children.

If the parents live more than four hours away, one way, parenting time will end at 12:00 noon (this does not include travel time) the day before school starts, regardless if it is a Holiday and if the Holiday falls during the school year (September-June). This will allow the parents travel time to insure that the child(ren) are home between 8:00 PM - 9:00 PM, which the Friend of the Court considers to be a reasonable hour, the day before school starts.

When driving to pick up or return the children always allow sufficient time for weather and general Holiday traffic conditions. Generally, each parent should only wait 30 minutes past the designated pick up or drop off time for the other parent to arrive. If parents have cell phones and you are running late, call the other parent. Treat each other with common respect and courtesy.

If parents live a long distance from each other, the parties should look for long weekends each month for the child(ren) to spend a meaningful 3 to 4 day weekend due to parent-teacher conferences, teacher in-service or training day, built in snow days, etc.

D. The Parents should mark the calendar for 3-4 months in advance with all holidays, birthdays and weekends as to where the child(ren) will be living. Attached is a Holiday Parenting Time Schedule Worksheet to assist you. By doing this each parent will have notice of the parenting time 30-90 days in advance and there will be plenty of time to switch days/weekends if needed.

E. The Court's makeup Visitation Policy is in effect and a copy is attached. Both parents will make arrangements to view the "SMILE" (Start Making It Livable for Everyone) tape.

F. The Parents are free to change or switch holidays, weekends or summer weeks but they must be in writing and signed by both parties. A copy should be sent to the Friend of the Court office. Each parent should keep a copy of the signed agreement. In absence of a signed agreement, the parents' parenting time order will be enforced as written. **(THE FRIEND OF THE COURT OFFICE WILL NOT AND CANNOT ENFORCE VERBAL AGREEMENTS BETWEEN THE PARENTS.)**

G. The Custodial Parent must provide sufficient and appropriate clothing for the child(ren) for the length of the stay with the other parent, taking into consideration the time of year and weather conditions. It is the responsibility of the Non Custodial Parent to make sure that all the clothing that was sent be returned at the end of the parenting time period.

- H. If there are any disputes over visitation, they will be resolved by the Friend of the Court and his decision will be binding on both parents until modified by the Court on a properly filed motion by either parent.
- I. Parenting time scheduling is very important to the child(ren) and both parents. It is going to take open and honest communication between the parents and the child(ren). Don't make plans with the child(ren); talk with the other parent first. The CP is to contact the NCP and use the parent in lieu of day care services, if at all possible.
- J. The above mentioned dates and times are considered to be minimums and not maximums and both parents should work together to ensure that the child(ren) can spend as much time as possible with both parents.
- K. The Court's Make-Up Policy is attached and will be enforced if there is any denied parenting time.

Date

ROBERT A. SEID, JR.
Friend of the Court

We hereby approve of this Friend of the Court Parenting Time Policy.

Date

HONORABLE CHARLES H. STARK
Circuit Court Judge

Date

HONORABLE WILLIAM W. CARMODY
Family Court Judge

Date

HONORABLE W. CLAYTON GRAHAM
Family Court Judge