



HARRIS COUNTY DOMESTIC RELATIONS OFFICE

Family Court Services Division

Supervised Visitation Program

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AGREEMENT TO PARTICIPATE IN SUPERVISED VISITATION AT THE DOMESTIC RELATIONS OFFICE

The Domestic Relations Office's Supervised Visitation Program (DRO) seeks to provide a safe and comfortable environment for children to visit with their parent and develop healthy relationships. By initialing below, I agree to abide each provisions in this Agreement. **Please initial beside each policy, print and sign your name on the last page.**

REGISTRATION POLICIES

1. _____ **Registration:** Visits are not scheduled until both parties complete registration.
2. _____ **Registration Fee:** A nonrefundable, annual registration fee of \$75.00 is assessed to each party at the initial registration and each year thereafter.
3. _____ **Fees for Services:** The fee for a Saturday visit is \$35.00. Choosing to visit for less than four hours does not result in the reduction of this fee. The number of 1st, 3rd and 5th weekends in a month will determine the amount due for that month. The total amount due for a month must be paid before the first Saturday of the month. Payment is accepted by credit card, money order, cashier's check or cash. Personal checks are not accepted. If the fee is not paid before the first Saturday of the month, a \$10.00 late fee will be collected. Failure to pay fees may result in termination of services or temporary suspension of services until fees are current. Fees are subject to change without notice.
4. _____ **Probation:** If the visiting parent is on probation, conditions of probation must be provided to the Domestic Relations Office before visits will be scheduled.
5. _____ **Violation of Policies:** The Domestic Relations Office has the right to deny supervised visitation services to a visiting parent for violation of policies or if participation poses a danger to the child, the visiting parent or others. Determination of the facts leading to a denial of services are at discretion of the Domestic Relations Office, including the visitation site supervisor.
6. _____ **Visitation Sites:** The Domestic Relations Office selects the visitation site taking into consideration the location of the child, custodial parent and visiting parent. If the visiting parent uses public transportation, consideration of site location may be given.
7. _____ **Guests:** Supervised visits are scheduled for the visiting parent. Guest of the visiting parent may attend a scheduled visit after the visiting parent completes four (4) visits. All guests must be relatives and approved by the Domestic Relations Office. Criminal History is completed on all parties and each requested guest. Information regarding a guest may be shared with the custodial party. The Domestic Relations Office has the final authority on approving the attendance of a guest. Guests must

sign-in at each visit. Guests are required to comply with the same rules established for the visiting parent. There is a \$10.00 visit fee due for each guest over five years of age. Guests are not allowed if the visit fee is not paid.

8. _____ **No Contact Provisions:** Harris County bail bonds prohibit contact with victims or witnesses in a criminal case. There will be no visits in these cases unless special provisions are secured from the District Attorney's office.

9. _____ **Cancellations:** Timely cancellation of a visit must be made by noon on Friday before scheduled visit by calling the main office at 713-274-7285. Contact after noon on Friday will be considered "late cancellation" and will result in a \$35.00 no-show fee. In case of an emergency the day of a visit, call should be made to site supervisor at least 1 hour prior to visit start time to avoid no-show fee. Site supervisor's cell phone numbers are on visit schedule. **Do not call the cell number except on visit date.** If parties mutually agree that a visit is cancelled both must notify the Domestic Relations Office to avoid no-show fees. If a parent has two consecutive no-shows, visits can be suspended and notification will be provided to attorneys.

VISITATION POLICIES AND GUIDELINE

1. _____ **Date/Time:** Group Visitation takes place on the Saturday following the 1st, 3rd and 5th Friday of each month (1st, 3rd and 5th weekends) from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. (four hours).

2. _____ **Bags/Purses:** Each bag, purse or other item brought in the visitation center will be searched.

3. _____ **Arrivals/Departures:** For the safety of all parties, the Domestic Relations Office prohibits contact between the custodial party and the visiting parent during arrivals and departures. Any violation of this policy or attempts by a party to see or have contact with the other party during visitation may result in the suspension of visits or termination of services. The **custodial party** or their designee is not allowed on the visitation site premises prior to the start time or ending time of the visit. The **visiting parent** is required to arrive 15-30 minutes prior to the scheduled visit and to leave approximately 10 minutes after the last child leaves and site is cleaned. Visiting parties are required to assist in cleaning the visitation facility. If the visiting parent is late, and has not called to advise of their lateness, the visit will be cancelled. The custodial party will not have the option to wait. If a visiting parent is unable to exercise the entire four-hour visit, they must notify the office by noon on the Friday preceding the scheduled visit so that custodial party can be notified.

4. _____ **Child Pickup:** If a child is not picked up within 15 minutes of the end of a visit, the custodial party or their designee will be charged \$10.00 for each additional 15 minutes.

5. _____ **Gifts:** The visiting parent may bring gifts for the child. The child should take these gifts home. However, the visiting parent and child may agree that a toy or game may be brought back and forth to visits by the visiting parent.

6. _____ **Drinks and Snacks:** Visiting parties may bring food and drinks to the visit. **All food and drinks must be unopened and in spill proof containers.** Baby bottles and baby food may be provided by the person delivering the child.

7. _____ **Animals:** No animals are allowed at a visitation site unless they are trained service animals.

8. _____ **Cell Phones:** No cell phones are allowed during a visit by the visiting parent, guest or child. Phones should be left in your vehicle or turned into a site supervisor at the beginning of a visit. If a call needs to be made during a visit, your phone will be given back for use in an outside location. Children cannot use a phone without permission from the site supervisor. The supervisor must be able to hear child's conversation. Phones are available in case of emergency.
9. _____ **Visit Supervisor:** Supervisors monitor, observe and document conversations, activities and behaviors of all participants during the visitation period.
10. _____ **Records:** Visitation records are only released upon service of a subpoena. A fee of \$1.00/page is assessed to the party/attorney requesting copies. Testimony offered by Domestic Relations Office employees is available at \$50.00 per hour with a minimum of four hours. A subpoena requesting testimony requires a deposit of \$200.00.
11. _____ **Child Abuse:** If a child discloses abuse or if physical signs of abuse are observed, a report will be made to the Texas Department of Family & Protective Services in accordance with the Texas Family Code. Supervisors will follow the direction given by Protective Services.
12. _____ **Child Items:** Playpens, blankets, diapers, change of clothes, baby food, etc. are the responsibility of the visiting parent. The custodial party should provide clear information regarding the child's special needs, diet and clothes or diaper sizes.
13. _____ **Contact Information:** Parties are responsible for providing the Domestic Relations Office with updated contact information, including home address, phone numbers, and e-mail address.
14. _____ **Photographs:** Photographs are generally allowed during visits. Any photos must be taken with portable cameras. Visiting parents must not take photos of any other program participants (worker, adult or child).
15. _____ **Alternative Competent Adult:** Each custodial party must designate an alternate competent adult to pick-up the children should they be unavailable. This adult must have a valid Texas driver's license provided upon request. Criminal history is collected on the selected adult. The Domestic Relations Office will notify the custodial parent if the alternate adult is not approved. The designated adult must comply with all of the DRO's rules.
16. _____ **Electronic Devices:** Electronic devices may only be used for games or movies. Devices should not be used for internet access. If an electronic device is used for taking photos or taking videos, the parent will not be allowed to bring the device back to the visit.

PARTICIPANT BEHAVIOR

1. _____ No parent will be allowed visitation if his/her behavior compromises a safe & comfortable environment. Threatening, aggressive or argumentative behavior with staff, a child or another visiting parent will result in immediate termination of the visit. Future visits may be terminated and a police report may be filed.
2. _____ Weapons are prohibited in our office and at visitation sites. Violation of this policy will result in termination of visitation and expulsion from the Domestic Relations Office.
3. _____ Visiting parents must watch, interact and be responsible for their children's behavior. Parents must set limits and redirect inappropriate behavior without use of physical force. Children may not interfere with another family's visits, harm other people, destroy property or engage in inappropriate behaviors.
4. _____ Visits are held in a group setting, making it impossible to hear all conversations. Visiting parents nor their guests cannot: (1) interrogate the child, (2) make negative comments about the custodial party or their family, (3) make promise they cannot keep (such as seeing child unsupervised, etc.) or (4) make other statements deemed inappropriate by visitation supervisors. Allegations of

inappropriate conversations will be investigated thoroughly. Violation of this policy may result in: 1) suspension of one or more visits; 2) a Court Report with copies to the attorneys and custodial party; or 3) termination of visits pending court review.

5. _____ Visit Supervisors will not discuss a party's case, concerns or complaints during a visit. Only questions relating to the well-being of the child during a visit will be allowed. Any other questions or information must be directed to the office during Domestic Relations Office business hours.

6. _____ If a visiting parent is suspected of intoxication due to active drug or alcohol use, the visit will be immediately terminated. Domestic Relations Office will require the visiting parent to provide a copy of a hair or blood test to resume visits. Future visits will be suspended pending the results of such a test. The visiting parent will be required to call someone to pick them up. For any parent suspected of active drug or alcohol use that leaves the site, law enforcement will be contacted, provided with vehicle information and the parent's driver's license.

7. _____ Parent must remain in the designated room and in a position that allows their actions to be seen at all times. No parent may accompany a child to the restroom without a visitation supervisor.

8. _____ No parent can leave the premises or return to their vehicle without approval by a visitation supervisor.

9. _____ Notes, gifts, etc. for the other party will not be allowed to be passed through the child. All communication directed to the other party must be given to a visitation supervisor to deliver after reviewing.

10. _____ No clothing with inappropriate language, symbols and/or pictures will be allowed in at the visitation site. Clothing must be appropriate for a visit with your child. Clothing should not be tight, revealing, too short or inappropriate.

OTHER RULES

1. _____ The custodial party bears the primary responsibility for preparing a child for the supervised visit. The child can visit the site prior to first scheduled visit and/or can meet with the staff. If a child refuses to enter the supervised site, a report will be prepared for the Court.

2. _____ I understand that information gathered during visit supervision may be released pursuant to a subpoena to attorneys, therapist, courts or other pertinent agency involved in my case.

3. _____ I understand the Domestic Relations Office's visitation schedules may vary from the court order. If the Domestic Relations Office is unable to provide services under precise terms of the court order and the parties do not agree with any changes, it is the responsibility of the parties to go back for court review.

I HAVE READ AND UNDERSTAND THESE POLICIES AND AGREE TO COMPLY WITH ALL PROVISIONS.

CAUSE NUMBER: _____

Print: _____ (CP/VP) Date: _____

Sign: _____ (CP/VP) Date: _____

