


# ACCESS TO JUSTICE & COVID-19




## DID YOU KNOW

**CUSTODY** means having responsibility for the day-to-day care of a child.

**ACCESS** is the right of a child and a parent (or relative) who do not live together to spend time with each other.

**GUARDIANSHIP** is decision-making until a child reaches the age of 18. It is advisable that Guardians make a will appointing a person to act as a guardian, in the event of their death.



## GOING TO COURT

Due to Coronavirus the family court service has been severely restricted. Priority has been given to applications for Safety and Barring Orders and to issues to do with domestic abuse.

The Family Courts are attempting to open up, but strict rules apply about making applications. For up-to-date information on waiting times for access, custody, guardianship and maintenance applications visit [www.courts.ie](http://www.courts.ie) or contact your local District Court.

### APPOINTMENTS AND COURTS DATES

If your query relates to an impending court date, you should be aware that in all but urgent cases court proceedings are not operating as normal and there is significant delay. You can call or email your local District Court for more up-to-date information.

### ACCESS AND CUSTODY DURING COVID-19

As and from 18th May 2020, breach of access orders are considered urgent by the Court, if the breach occurred during the Covid-19 outbreak.

Where a court order exists in relation to access or custody people are expected to adhere to its terms. Covid-19 should not be used as an excuse to deny access or to refuse to return a child to its primary carer. Children are allowed move between parents' homes for access. A copy of the court order should be on hand when travelling.

The Courts have made clear that when a child cannot spend time with the other parent contact must be established and maintained via Skype, Facetime, or telephone calls.

During Covid-19 it is important parents communicate with each other and come to an agreement in keeping with the best interests of their child. If this is not possible and you require assistance you can contact the national mediation service.

### MAINTENANCE & COVID-19

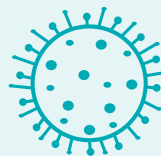
As and from 18th May 2020, enforcement of maintenance orders will be considered urgent by the Court, if the breach of the order occurred during the Covid-19 outbreak.

The Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection has issued a Notice for those in receipt of One Parent Family Payment who are no longer receiving maintenance for their child because the other parent has lost their job due to Covid-19 pandemic.

The Department advises the One Parent Family recipient to contact their local Intreo Centre and provide it with a letter stating they are no longer receiving the maintenance payment from the other parent.

The Department will then revise their One Parent Family payment on that basis for a period of 12 weeks.

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## LEGAL AID

In response to the coronavirus Covid-19 crisis, the Legal Aid Board set up a nationwide telephone information service. The lines are open from Monday to Friday 10.00am to 12.30pm and from 2.00pm to 4.00pm. The number to call is lo-call 1890 615 200

The helpline will give you information on how to apply for legal and mediation services, the financial eligibility criteria, what mediation is, how it works.

**Request a call back** - If you have difficulty making contact with the Legal & Mediation Information Helpline, you can email your contact details under the email heading - "Helpline Call Back" to [info@legalaidboard.ie](mailto:info@legalaidboard.ie) and they will get back to you.



## COURT BASED MEDIATION

There are court-based Family Mediation offices in Dolphin House Dublin, Naas, Limerick, Letterkenny, Nenagh, Clonmel, Cork, Carlow, Ennis, Tralee and Mullingar.

### CONTACT DETAILS

**DUBLIN:** 01 6725886

**CORK:** 021 4252200

**NAAS:** 01 4145180

**CLONMEL:** 061 214310.

**VISIT [LEGALAIDBOARD.IE](http://LEGALAIDBOARD.IE) FOR FURTHER CONTACT DETAILS.**



An Roinn  
Gnóthaí Fostaíochta agus Coimirce Sóisialaí  
Department of  
Employment Affairs and Social Protection



INTERNATIONAL  
DAY for the  
ERADICATION  
of POVERTY  
17 OCTOBER



United Nations



treoir

The National Federation of Services for  
Unmarried Parents and their Children

## CONTACT US CONFIDENTIALLY AT:

**T:** 01 670 0120 **E:** [info@treoir.ie](mailto:info@treoir.ie) **W:** [www.treoir.ie](http://www.treoir.ie)

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