



**FRIEND OF THE COURT
FOR THE
FIFTIETH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT COURT OF MICHIGAN**

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James P. Lambros
Chief Circuit Court Judge

Elizabeth C. Chambers
Friend of the Court

LONG DISTANCE PARENTING TIME POLICY

The Court must grant parenting time according to the best interests of the child. Michigan law requires the Court to presume that a strong relationship with both parents is in the child's best interests. Accordingly, the Court will enter a parenting time order for parenting time unless it finds by clear and convincing evidence that parenting time would endanger the child's physical, mental, or emotional health. Parenting time will be granted in a frequency, duration and type reasonably calculated to promote a strong relationship between the child and the parents.

Please note that the schedule below is a guideline only. This schedule is not a court order unless adopted as part of a court order. These guidelines do not apply strictly to every family; they may be modified to fit the circumstances and the distance separating the parents. If parents agree on parenting terms, the Court will follow those terms unless it determines, on the record, that the parenting terms are not in the best interests of the child. **Note: The Friend of the Court cannot enforce agreements between the parties that are not in a written court order.**

The Long Distance Parenting Time Policy is for parents who live more than two (2) hours and less than five (5) hours driving time from each other one-way, and the eldest child of the parties is school age. Where the driving time is more than five hours or the child(ren) is younger, a parenting plan will need to be established on an individual basis.


The parenting schedule is as follows:

1. The non-custodial parent shall have weekend parenting time (three overnights) whenever the child(ren) has a Friday or a Monday school holiday. The non-custodial parent shall be solely responsible for transportation during these parenting time periods. Parenting time shall begin and end at 6:00pm. The custodial parent shall provide a copy of the school calendar to the non-custodial parent every fall so that arrangements for extended weekend parenting time can be made in advance.
2. The non-custodial parent shall have the spring school vacation in odd numbered years. Spring school break is defined as 6:00pm the day school recesses until 6:00pm the day before school resumes.
3. The non-custodial parent shall have the first half of the summer school vacation in even numbered years and the second half of summer vacation in odd-numbered years. Summer vacation is defined as 9:00am two days after school recesses for the school year until 6:00pm one full week before the new school year resumes.
4. The non-custodial parent shall have Thanksgiving holiday in even numbered years. Thanksgiving shall be defined as 6:00pm on Wednesday until 6:00pm on Sunday.
5. The non-custodial parent shall have the Winter (Christmas) school vacation in odd numbered years. Winter school vacation is defined as 6:00pm the day school recesses until 6:00pm the day before school resumes.
6. Responsibility for transportation costs for spring, summer, Thanksgiving, and Winter parenting time shall be shared equally, i.e., the parent receiving the child(ren) shall be responsible for picking the child(ren) up from the other parent's residence, the parties shall meet at an agreeable mid-way point, the parent receiving the child(ren) shall provide for one way airline ticket, or the cost for round-trip airfare shall be split equally.

However the parents choose to arrange transportation, the child must be returned to the residence of the custodial parent at a reasonable time on the evening before school is to resume.

7. Additional reasonable parenting time upon a minimum of seven days' advanced written notice whenever the non-custodial parent is in the geographical area of the child(ren).
8. Whenever the child(ren) is within twenty-five (25) miles of the non-custodial parent's residence, the custodial parent must notify the non-custodial parent and offer time for the child(ren) to be with that parent.
9. Telephone/Internet Contact. The non-custodial parent shall have reasonable contact with the child(ren) by telephone or electronic mail. When the child(ren) is with the non-custodial parent for extended periods of time, the custodial parent shall have similar reasonable contact.
10. Late Pickup. Parties are allowed a 30 minute grace period for parenting time exchanges in unexpected circumstances. After 30 minutes, if the child is still at home, parenting time shall be allowed if pickup is at a reasonable hour. If a parent appears later than 30 minutes or is habitually late for exchanges, the other parent may file a written parenting time complaint with Friend of the Court.

The foregoing policy is adopted May 5, 2017.



Hon. James P. Lambrs
Chief Circuit Court Judge



Elizabeth C. Chambers
Friend of the Court for Chippewa County