

Items in red should be customized to each individual case.

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF GWINNETT COUNTY
STATE OF GEORGIA

Plaintiff,	:	
	:	
	:	
	:	CIVIL ACTION
v.	:	FILE NO.
	:	
	:	
	:	
Defendant.	:	

**INTERLOCUTORY ORDER TO INITIATE A MANDATORY
CO-PARENT COMMUNICATION PROTOCOL**

The above and foregoing matter is pending in this Court and it has been determined that for good cause, the best interests of the child(ren) will be served by requiring the parents to participate in a specific co-parent communication protocol from this date forward.

Therefore, IT IS ORDERED that the parties immediately begin using the following protocol to communicate co-parent information about the children.

FREQUENCY

Parties will exchange weekly email messages, with the initiating parent sending the weekly email to the receiving parent by [Sunday at 9:00 pm].

The other parent will have 24 hours to respond to the initiating parent’s message by [Monday at 9:00 pm].

If the responding parent does not have any questions in his/her response to the initiating parent, no more emails are necessary for that week. If the responding parent has questions in his/her response, the initiating parent will have 24 hours to respond to those by [Tuesday at 9:00 pm]. At that point, no more email messaging shall take place until the following [Sunday at 9:00 pm].

It is recommended that each parent refrain from responding too quickly, taking advantage of the 24-hour period to respond to the other's messages and allowing enough time to think through a respectful and business-like response (much like one would respond to an employer or co-worker in a business setting).

Each parent has a responsibility to maintain a working email address, to keep the other parent informed of the email address he/she desires to use for the weekly email communications, and to check his/her email inbox for an initiation and/or response email from the other parent within the deadline timeframes.

EMAIL FORMAT

On [**Sunday**], the initiating parent will use the following format as a guide for the first message:

FYI (for your information)

- Statement
- Statement
- Statement

RR (requested response)

- Question
- Question
- Question

On [**Monday**], the responding parent will use the above format, AND add the following section if there are RRs in the initiator's message:

RR ANSWERS (requested response answers)

- Answer
- Answer
- Answer

The final email on [**Tuesday**], if one is needed, will only use the RR ANSWERS (as in **Monday**) format to wrap up the communication for the week (no more FYIs and no more RRs in the **Tuesday** message). At this point in the week, no communication is necessary (phone, email, text, etc.) unless it is an emergency or courtesy, as explained below.

DEFINITIONS

Communicating co-parent information is defined by anything that needs to be shared between parents in order for each parent to fulfill the court-ordered parenting plan. Information that does not pertain to the parenting plan is not required to be communicated, however, if the lack of communicating is likely to cause the child to be placed in the middle of his/her parents' conflict, a parent should choose to either communicate with the other parent or figure out how to be solely responsible in order for the child to be protected from the conflict.

Initiating parent is the parent who begins the email stream each week.

Responding parent is the parent responding to the initiating parent.

FYI (for your information) statements are those made to the other parent that informs him/her of (1) important information about the child (e.g. *Johnny had a sore throat on Tuesday*), respectfully stated opinions (e.g. *I am concerned that...*), or clarifications to avoid confusion (e.g. *Please confirm that...*).

RR (requested response) questions are those that either parent is entitled to have answered per the court ordered parenting plan (e.g. *What week will you be taking Johnny on vacation this summer?*). These should not be opinionated questions (e.g. *Why did you feed Johnny candy all weekend?*). Those kinds of opinionated questions should be made into respectful statements and put into the FYI section (e.g. *I am concerned that...*).

RR ANSWERS (requested response answers) are statements that directly answer the questions from the other parent. If they cannot be answered right away, a date should be provided when they will be answered.

DEFAULT WHEN NO COMMUNICATION IS NEEDED

In any given week, if either or both parents have no information to give or questions to ask of the other, email messages should be sent by the deadlines, simply saying, *FYI: None* and/or *RR: None*.

ALTERNATING INITIATION

Parents will alternate initiating the weekly email with the Plaintiff initiating every [Sunday] in the month of _____, and the Defendant initiating every [Sunday] in the following month, and so forth.

TEXTING FOR EMERGENCY OR COURTESY

Parents will only use text messaging for emergencies (e.g. *I'm on the way to the hospital with Johnny*) or courtesy communication (e.g. *Traffic is heavy and I will be ten minutes late*). No other form of communication may be used in emergencies or for courtesies (email, phone, in-person, or other forms of social media) unless text messaging is not possible or it is clear it has failed. Each parent has a responsibility to be aware of checking text messages when the children are with the other parent or the other parent is in route to pick up the children.

COMMUNICATION IN THE PRESENCE OF THE CHILDREN

Parties will make every effort to be civil and respectful in acknowledging each other in the child(ren)'s presence (such as at school events, activities, or exchanges) but will refrain from conducting co-parent business in the presence of the children. All co-parent business should be conducted using the weekly email protocol, which requires both parents to be proactive and anticipate the week ahead so as not to place the children in the middle of any potential co-parent conflict.

SO ORDERED, this _____ day of _____, 20__.

Name of Judge
Judge, Superior Court of Gwinnett County

Name of Attorney

Counsel for Plaintiff

Name of Attorney
Counsel for Defendant

Name of Guardian ad litem
Guardian ad litem