

Neutral communication checklist

Run through it before sending anything to your co-parent. Thirty seconds now saves a week of fallout.

BEFORE YOU WRITE

- ☐ It is about the children: schedule, health, school, money or care.
- ☐ It is one topic. If there are two, this is two messages.
- ☐ I have waited at least an hour since whatever prompted it.

WHAT IS IN IT

- ☐ Dates, not "next weekend".
- ☐ Times, not "after work".
- ☐ A specific question or request the other parent can answer with yes, no or a date.
- ☐ A reply-by date if I need an answer.
- ☐ Something offered in return, if I am asking for a swap.

WHAT IS NOT IN IT

- ☐ "Always" or "never".
- ☐ A judgement about the other parent (irresponsible, selfish, lazy).
- ☐ Anything that happened more than a month ago.
- ☐ Anything about their partner, home or lifestyle.
- ☐ A threat about court, solicitors or money.
- ☐ Sarcasm, capital letters or an exclamation mark I would not use with a colleague.

BEFORE YOU SEND

- ☐ I read it out loud.
- ☐ If I received this, I could answer it without feeling attacked.
- ☐ It is under six sentences.
- ☐ I have checked it at peaceparent.com/tools/tone-checker, or Tone Guard in the app has passed it.

IF A MESSAGE ARRIVES THAT FAILS THIS CHECKLIST

Reply only to the part about the children, if there is one. Brief, factual, friendly, firm. Everything else needs no reply.

