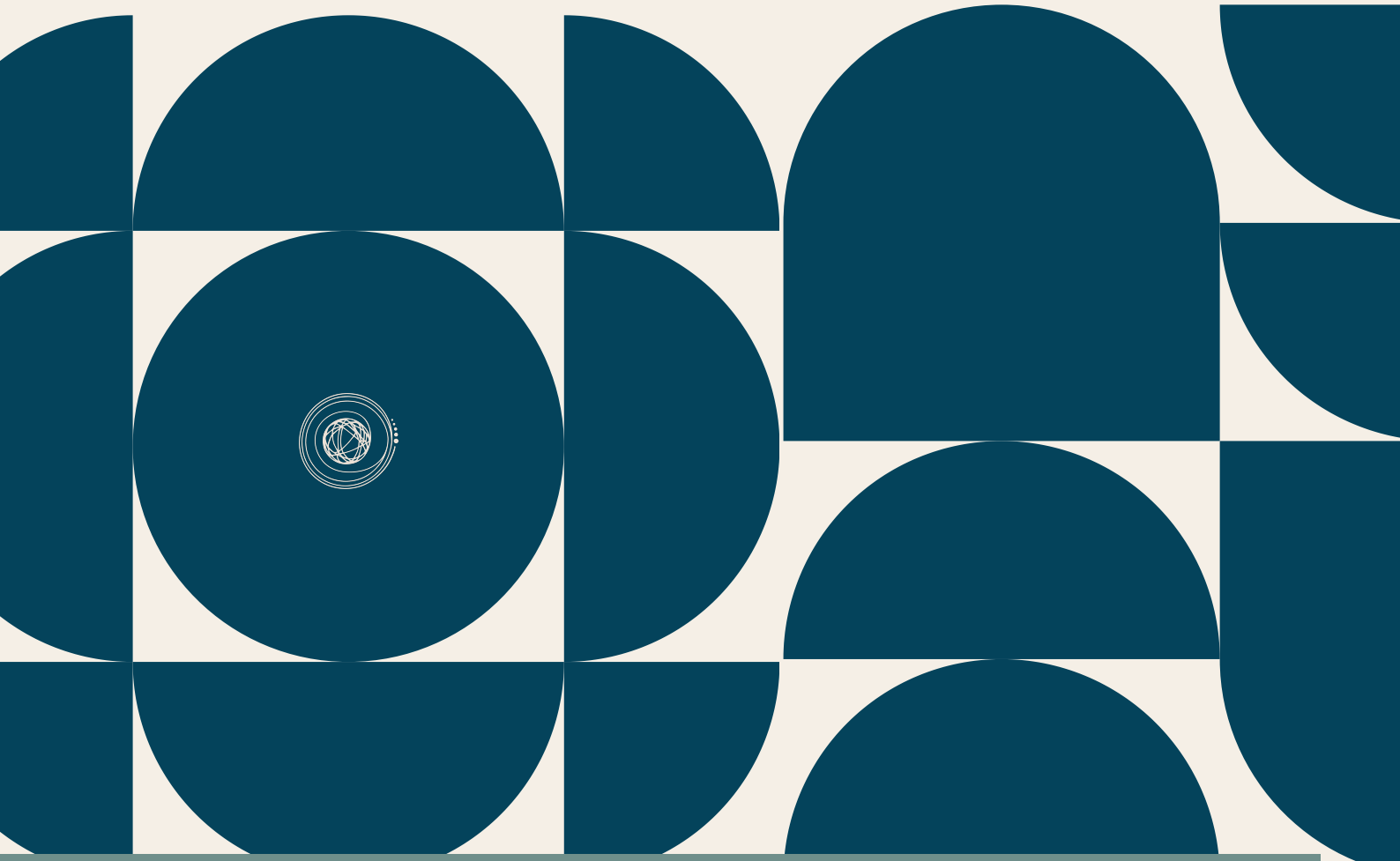
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Communicating When Parenting Across Two Homes

A short practical guide

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Introduction

Communication with your child's other parent can, at times, feel incredibly difficult, especially when there are heightened emotions, conflict, hurt, stress, or change.

Especially in the early days after separation, and maybe years, many parents are trying to manage huge changes in practical arrangements while also managing grief, frustration, uncertainty, or ongoing tension. During these times, communication can easily become difficult.



We are often told that co-parenting is the best approach for children. While this can be true, many parents — particularly in the early stages of separation — may find co-parenting extremely difficult and instead move towards parallel parenting.

This is not necessarily because they do not want to co-parent. For many complex and nuanced reasons, they may simply not be emotionally able to do so yet. Conflict, hurt, mistrust, stress, trauma, or ongoing legal and emotional challenges can make direct collaboration feel overwhelming or unsafe.

For some families, parallel parenting can provide stability, reduce conflict exposure for children, and create the emotional space needed while parents adjust to a new dynamic



Whatever way you are parenting right now, that is okay.

There is no perfect or right way to navigate separation and parenting. Every family situation is different, and parenting approaches may also change over time.



This short guide is here to support you in creating calmer, safer, and more child-focused communication — wherever you currently are in your parenting journey.

Practical Communication Guide

Texts & WhatsApp Messages

Before sending a message, ask yourself:

- Is this clear?
- Is this necessary?
- Is this respectful?
- Would I say this calmly in person?



Try to keep messages:

- Brief
- Neutral
- Practical
- Focused on one topic

Long messages often increase misunderstanding and defensiveness.

Try to avoid:

- Paragraphs written in anger
- Sarcasm
- Bringing up old conflict
- “You always…” / “You never…”
- Sending multiple messages in quick succession
- Using children to pass messages

nina@thesecretmajority.co.uk

Helpful examples

Instead of:

"You're always late and it's disrespectful."



Try:

"Pickup was 20 minutes later than planned today. Can we keep to the agreed time going forward?"

From accusation → to observation

Instead of:

"You never communicate properly."

Try:

"Can we keep communication brief and focused on arrangements?"

From criticism → to solution-focused communication



Instead of:

"Fine. Whatever."

Try:

"I've read your message and will come back to you later."

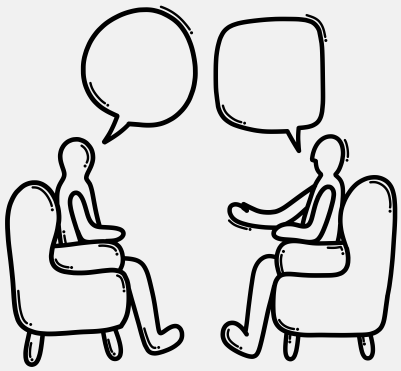
From emotional shutdown and withdrawal → to regulated pause.

Talking Face-to-Face

Face-to-face communication can feel harder because tone, body language, and emotion are involved.

When conversations begin to feel emotionally heightened:

- Slow down
- Lower your voice
- Pause before reacting
- Stay with the current issue
- Avoid trying to “win” the conversation





Helpful reminders

You do not need to:

- Defend yourself constantly
- Prove your point
- Resolve every disagreement immediately
- Continue conversations that are escalating

Sometimes the healthiest communication is:



- Shorter
- Calmer
- More boundaried

Shared Events

Shared events can feel awkward, emotionally charged, or uncomfortable — particularly early after separation. That is normal.

Helpful approaches

Keep interactions polite and brief
Focus on the event, not the relationship
Avoid difficult conversations in public spaces
Do not use events to discuss conflict
Give each other emotional space where needed

You do not have to behave like close friends to create a calmer environment.

If communication feels difficult

It can help to:
Arrive separately
Sit separately if needed
Agree beforehand how information will be shared
Keep conversations practical and respectful

Reducing tension is often more important than forcing closeness.



If Communication Breaks Down

Sometimes communication becomes repetitive, hostile, emotionally exhausting, or feels emotionally unsafe.

During these times:

- Reduce unnecessary contact
- Keep communication written where helpful
- Use structure and boundaries
- Focus only on practical matters
- Pause conversations that are escalating

For some families, parallel parenting may feel more manageable than close co-parenting.

That is okay.



Remember



Communication after separation is rarely perfect. Is there even such a thing as perfect!

There may be hurt, stress, grief, anger, misunderstanding, or ongoing tension underneath conversations.

So, he goal is not flawless communication.

The goal is communication that is:

- Clearer
- More regulated
- More sustainable over time
- Emotionally safe

Even small changes in your communication can make really difficult situations feel more manageable.

For support, family mediation or resources around separated parenting communication, emotional regulation, and co-parenting dynamics please get in touch and we'd love to have a chat with you.

www.thesecretmajority.co.uk

CONTACT US



THE SECRET MAJORITY

resolution associate

www.thesecretmajority.co.uk

nina@thesecretmajority.co.uk