

PARENTING COORDINATION AGREEMENT

This is an agreement for parenting coordination (“PC”) services under the *Arbitration Act* S. O. 1991 c. 17, and the *Family Law Act* R.S.O. 1990 c. F. 3.

Between:

&

 (“the parents”)

- and -

Riverdale Mediation Ltd. (Riverdale)

1. PRINCIPLES

- 1.1 Children benefit from a meaningful relationship with both parents.
- 1.2 Parental conflict harms children’s adjustment to their parents’ separation.
- 1.3 Children should remain uninvolved in parental disputes.
- 1.4 Parenting coordination is a child-focused dispute resolution process designed to:
 - (a) help parents settle parenting disputes in a timely manner, and
 - (b) facilitate the management and implementation of their separation agreement, minutes of settlement, court order or arbitration award (the “parenting plan”).
- 1.5 The parties agree that, should this process proceed using online technology and not in-person, they will comply with any Terms of Conditions for Online Family Dispute Resolution posted to the Riverdale Mediation website.

2. APPOINTMENT OF PARENTING COORDINATOR (PC)

- 2.1 _____ is appointed as PC in accordance with the attached

parenting plan. It takes effect when it has been signed by both parents and witnessed, and each parent's certificate of independent legal advice and the PC's certificate are signed. All signatures may be made electronically and in counterparts.

- 2.2 The parents have made inquiries and satisfied themselves that the PC has the qualifications and experience to perform the PC role.
- 2.3 The PC does not provide, legal, counselling or therapy services. Any comments or suggestions made by the PC while fulfilling their responsibilities under this contract shall not be construed as counselling, therapeutic or legal advice.
- 2.4 The PC is appointed for a term of _____ months, expiring _____ (“the expiry date”). The parents and the PC shall provide written notice to one another at least 30 days before the expiry date whether they intend to renew the Agreement. Consent of both parents is required to renew this agreement along with updated screening for suitability and legal advice.
- 2.5 Neither parent may unilaterally revoke the PC appointment. The parents may jointly revoke the PC appointment in writing.
- 2.6 The PC may resign if they determine, in their discretion, that doing so is in the best interests of the children, or if they are unable to serve out their term. They need not provide notice of or reasons for their resignation, which shall be made in writing.

3. WAIVER OF RIGHTS IN COURT

- 3.1 The parents waive their rights to further litigate the issues that are within the jurisdiction of the PC, as more fully detailed in this agreement.

4. DEFINITIONS

- 4.1 “*Arbitration Act*” means the *Arbitration Act, 1991, S. O., 1991, c. 17, as am. S. O. 2006, c. 1, s. 1; 2006, c. 19, Sched. C, s. 1(1)*;
- 4.2 “*Child, Youth and Family Services Act*” means *Child, Youth and Family Services Act R.S.O. 1990, c. C. 11*
- 4.3 “*Children’s Law Reform Act*” means the *Children’s Law Reform Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. C. 12*;

- 4.4 “*Divorce Act*” means the *Divorce Act*, R. S. C. 1985 (2nd Supp.), c. 3, as amended;
- 4.5 “*Family Law Act*” means the *Family Law Act*, R.S.O. 1990, c. F. 3, as am. S. O. 2006, c. 1, s. 5; 2006, c. 19, Sched. B, s. 9, Sched. C, s. 1(1), (2), (4);

5. JURISDICTION AND COMMUNICATIONS

- 5.1 The PC has jurisdiction:
- (a) to interpret, manage and implement the relevant paragraphs of the parents’ parenting plan, court order, arbitration award or separation agreement dated _____ as set out more particularly in paragraph 7 herein, and
 - (b) to award costs as set out more particularly in paragraph 16 (Costs).
- 5.2 Any written communications made between the PC and the parents under this agreement may be made by e-mail.
- 5.3 The parents have read and agree to abide by the [Terms of Online Family Dispute Resolution](#) as are set out on the Riverdale Mediation website as they may be amended from time to time, to the extent that some or all of their PC process is conducted using online or other technology.

6. OVERVIEW: ROLE OF THE PC

- 6.1 The PC provides a combined consensus-building (mediation) and decision-making (arbitration) dispute resolution service. The PC is not disqualified from adjudicating any issues because they have acted as a Mediator. The parents specifically waive section 35 of the *Arbitration Act*.
- 6.2 Upon the request of either parent, the PC will attempt to help the parents reach agreement on the issue in dispute in accordance with paragraph 11. If the parents are unable to agree, the PC is authorized to make a binding decision on the matter in accordance with the procedure set out in paragraph 12.
- 6.3 In fulfilling their role, both as mediator and arbitrator, the PC may, in their discretion:
- (a) meet with the parents jointly or individually, and/or with their children, with the timing, frequency and duration of meetings determined by the PC;

- (b) coach parents about communication with one another and with their children to facilitate settlement of the issues, with the goal of helping parents acquire the skills and experience to resolve future issues on their own;
- (c) recommend appropriate resources for the parents and the children;
- (d) consult with third parties who may have information that is relevant to their role, and
- (e) seek legal and other advice as needed.

7. JURISDICTION OF PC

7.1 Subject to the terms of the parenting plan, either parent may request the PC's assistance with:

- (a) difficulties related to the children's transitions between the parents, including codes of conduct and transportation;
- (b) developing effective parental communication methods and protocols;
- (c) developing effective means of disengagement in their parenting and communication where appropriate;
- (d) establishing effective ways to exchange information about the children (i.e., health, welfare, education, religion, routines, day-to-day matters, etc.)
- (e) addressing temporary changes to the usual holiday parenting time schedule, to accommodate special events and circumstances for the children and/or the parents;
- (f) resolving conflicts concerning the children's participation in recreational, enrichment or extra-curricular activities, lessons, and programs;
- (g) addressing movement of the children's clothing, equipment, toys and personal possessions between households;
- (h) addressing matters relating to the children's travel with one parent
- (i) resolving conflicts concerning day to day health care, education, and activities; and

- (j) resolving conflicts about any other parenting function, issue or decision that relates to the interpretation, management or implementation of the parents' separation agreement, court order or arbitration award.

7.2 Unless otherwise provided, the PC does **not** have jurisdiction over:

- (a) requests for a permanent change in the residential schedule that would substantially change the children's time with one parent, or impact the quantum of child support
- (b) a request by one parent to move the children's residence;
- (c) a change in the allocation of decision-making roles for the children, or
- (d) other: _____

8. PARENTS TO SIGN AUTHORIZATIONS, PROVIDE INFORMATION AND DOCUMENTS

8.1 The parents shall sign any authorization requested by the PC to gather information to fulfill their role. The parents shall provide all documents and information requested by the PC. Each parent shall provide to the other copies of all documents provided to the PC, unless otherwise directed.

9. INTERVIEWING CHILDREN

9.1 The parents understand that, under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, to which Canada is a signatory, children have the legal right to be provided with an opportunity to express their views about decisions that affect their well-being, consistent with their age, capacity and desire to participate.

9.2 The PC may recommend that the children be interviewed by them or by a third-party professional as part of the parenting coordination process to elicit the child's/children's views, experience and preferences of the child/ren as may be appropriate in each case.

9.3 The professional who interviews the child/ren will meet with them on the following basis:

- (a) the interviewer will first meet with each parent to explain the process in more detail and to agree on the time and place of the meeting/s;

- (b) the interviewer will then meet with the child/ren on terms determined by the interviewer;
- (c) the specific content of the meeting shall remain confidential between the child/ren and the interviewer;
- (d) the interviewer will meet with both parents and the PC to share the overall impressions and concerns of the children;
- (e) the information shared during this meeting will be used to help the parents reach informed decisions that are in the best interests of their children;
- (f) if the PC is required to make a decision and the information from the interviewer is relevant and necessary for that purpose, the PC will so advise the parents, will request a written report from the interviewer, will share that with the parents, and will sign a fair and equitable process for that report and possibly the oral evidence of the interviewer to be considered as evidence in the hearing;
- (g) the interviewer and/or the PC is required to disclose to a Children's Aid Society any disclosures from the child/ren that reasonably lead the interviewer/PC in good faith to believe that a child is in need of protection, and to disclose to the police or other appropriate third party any information that reasonably leads the interviewer/PC in good faith to believe that there is an actual or potential threat to human life or safety; and
- (h) the interviewer/PC is not a compellable witness in any court or other proceeding other than that the interviewer is a possible witness in an arbitration conducted pursuant to this Agreement.

10. CONFIDENTIALITY

10.1 This is "closed" Parenting Coordination. All proceedings under this Agreement are private, confidential and without prejudice unless otherwise stated in this Agreement, including the intake/screening meeting that preceded the signing of this Agreement, all individual and joint meetings that take place during the course of this Agreement, and all notes and records thereof. Intake forms, and notes, and records of the PC, including those that relate to the screening/intake meetings, shall not be produced in a proceeding for judicial review, on an appeal, or for any other purpose.

10.2 The parents, their counsel, the PC, and any third-party participants, interns or

observers, shall not disclose any information about the parenting coordination process, including screening for power imbalances and family violence, to anyone, except as required by law or otherwise in accordance with this Agreement. The parents shall not in these or any other proceedings subpoena or otherwise require the PC, or intern to testify or to produce any records, reports, or notes prepared by anyone in connection with any part of the PC process.

- 10.3 The PC may, in their discretion, communicate privately with each parent prior to and during the parenting coordination process, notwithstanding that they may act as their arbitrator. The parents waive any claim that such meetings violate their rights of fairness, equal treatment, or due process under the Arbitration Act. Such meetings are not necessarily confidential as between the parents. If a parent wishes the PC to receive information in confidence, they must say so at the time and the PC must agree. Otherwise, all information shared by a parent during a private meeting may, at the PC's discretion, be shared with the other parent.
- 10.4 The PC may disclose information obtained from the children with the children's consent or otherwise in their discretion. Any information obtained from any counsellor, therapist, teacher, caregiver or confidant of the children may be disclosed in the discretion of the PC. The PC may further share information among anyone with whom the PC consults under paragraph 11.1.2.
- 10.5 The PC's notes and file, including their notes from the intake and screening processes and the intake forms completed by the parents, and file prepared before, during and after the PC process, remain the personal property of the PC, whether or not they may be considered to be part of the "record" of the arbitration.
- 10.6 Notwithstanding the foregoing, the PC may have a duty to disclose otherwise confidential information including:
 - (a) to report a child in need of protection pursuant to s. 125 of the Child Youth and Family Services Act and;
 - (b) where they believe upon reasonable grounds that there is an imminent risk to an identifiable person or group of death or serious bodily or psychological harm, disclosing such confidential information that is required in the circumstances to prevent such death or harm.

PARENTING COORDINATION STAGES

11 MEDIATION (CONSENSUS-BUILDING) PHASE

11.1 The Process

11.1.1 Either parent may request the assistance of the PC to resolve an issue. The timing, frequency, location and format of meetings shall be determined by the PC. Meetings may be conducted by telephone, online, e-mail, in writing or in person.

11.1.2 The PC may consult, meet with, and/or obtain information from third parties including the parents' lawyers (together or separately), family members, third party caregivers, school personnel, therapists and health care professionals.

11.1.3 All mediation meetings are without prejudice settlement negotiations. Subject to **12.4** herein, (evidence from or about the children) disclosures made during mediation are inadmissible in the arbitration and in any future litigation or arbitration unless both parents agree otherwise in writing. No recordings shall be made of the mediation discussions.

11.2 Documenting agreements reached

11.2.1 If an agreement is reached, the PC shall confirm the terms of the agreement in a non-binding Memorandum of Understanding. If a formal or amending agreement is required, it shall be prepared by the parents' lawyers. The parents shall not sign a binding settlement agreement with the PC.

12. ARBITRATION (DECISION-MAKING) PHASE

12.1 The Process

12.1.1 The PC may make decisions to resolve an issue if:

- (a) the parents cannot agree on the matter,
- (b) one parent chooses not to participate in mediation; or
- (c) time constraints make it impossible to reach an agreement.

- 12.1.2 The PC shall advise the parents in writing that they are now engaged in Arbitration. The format of the “hearing” will be determined by the PC after hearing the parents’ submissions and considering all the circumstances. The hearing may be conducted in person, by telephone, e-mail, online, in writing or other means. If either party requests an oral hearing, the PC will conduct one either in person or online, in the PC’s discretion.
- 12.1.3 Any challenge to the PC’s jurisdiction shall be determined by the PC after considering the submissions of each parent.
- 12.1.4 The PC shall provide both parents with notice of the time, place and procedure for the hearing. All procedures will be determined by the PC depending on the circumstances. If a parent fails to participate, comply with timelines, provide evidence or submissions, or respond to the other’s evidence or submissions, the PC may proceed in the absence of that parent or their input.
- 12.1.5 Subject to ongoing screening obligation, all oral and written communication during the arbitration shall occur in the presence of or with notice to both parents. No recording shall be made of the arbitration hearing.
- 12.1.6 The parents are advised to seek legal advice before and to involve a lawyer throughout the arbitration.
- 12.2 Reporter
- 12.2.1 If a parent wishes to have a reporter for the hearing, they shall retain and pay the reporter. The parents may jointly retain a reporter. Otherwise, the parents do not wish to have a reporter and they waive their right to have a transcript of the proceedings. If the PC in their discretion wishes to have a reporter, they may direct the parents to pay such costs as the PC deems appropriate.
- 12.3 Evidence and Argument
- 12.3.1 Each parent will have reasonable opportunity, as circumstances permit, to provide evidence of the facts supporting their case, and to make submissions (argument) to the PC. Each parent will have reasonable opportunity, as circumstances permit, to hear the other’s evidence and submissions and respond to them.
- 12.3.2 The PC may, with the consent of both parents, rely as evidence on information or documents obtained during the mediation phase. In such circumstance, the parents shall provide a jointly written statement of facts for this purpose, or shall consent to such statement prepared by the PC.

12.4 Evidence of the views and preferences of the children

12.4.1 The PC shall ensure that the views and preferences of the children are heard in an age and circumstance-appropriate way. The PC may rely on information obtained from or about the children during the mediation phase. In such circumstance the PC will summarize, in their discretion and respecting the confidentiality of any child-confidant relationship, the views and preferences of the children as they were conveyed to them during the mediation, and provide each parent with a copy prior to the hearing.

13. APPLICABLE LAW

13.1 The arbitration shall be conducted in accordance with: (*choose either (i) or (ii)*)

- (i) the law of Ontario, and the law of Canada as it applies in Ontario, or
- (ii) the law of _____ (name other Canadian jurisdiction)
and the law of Canada as it applies in that jurisdiction

13.2 Issues related to the children shall be determined in accordance with the provisions of the Children's Law Reform Act, the Family Law Act, the Child Youth and Family Services Act and the Divorce Act, or the equivalent legislation of another Canadian jurisdiction, as may be applicable.

14. EXPERT EVIDENCE

14.1 The PC may determine the necessity of retaining professionals to provide expert opinions on any issue and shall direct the parents accordingly.

14.2 The PC may obtain independent legal advice to assist in the determination of legal issues. The parents shall be provided with copies any legal opinions obtained.

14.3 The cost of all such experts shall be paid equally by the parents, subject to reapportionment by the PC.

14.4 The PC may, in their discretion and at their own cost, consult with other professionals for procedural advice.

15. PC'S AWARD (DECISION)

- 15.1 The PC will make the award after receiving the evidence of each parent and any other witnesses, including any evidence that they have considered about the views and preferences of the children, and submissions of each parent.
- 15.2 The PC will provide the award in writing. They may in their discretion first inform the parents of the award orally. The PC need not, in their discretion, provide written reasons for awards and the parents specifically waive s. 38 of the Arbitration Act.

16. COSTS

- 16.1 The PC may make a costs award after requesting submissions from each parent. Costs awards may include the cost of a hearing as well as a re-allocation of PC or expert fees, and reimbursement for costs incurred in relation to a breach of the parenting plan or failure to comply with a PC decision.

17. TERMINATION OF THE PC PROCESS

- 17.1 The PC process terminates on the earliest of (a) its expiry date, (b) the date that a parent dies, (c) the date that the PC resigns, dies or is removed by the court or (d) the date on which both parents notify the PC in writing that they wish to terminate the PC's mandate.
- 17.2 In the case of (c), if the parents are unable to agree on a replacement, a court of competent jurisdiction shall appoint a replacement PC on either parents' application.

18. APPEAL RIGHTS

- 18.1 Any award may be appealed as follows: *(choose either (i) or (ii))*

- (i) A parent may appeal the Award in accordance with subsection 45(1) of the *Arbitration Act, 1991*; or
- (ii) A parent may appeal the Award on: *(choose one or more of the following)*
- A question of law,

- A question of fact,
- A question of mixed fact and law.

19. AWARDS ARE BINDING

- 19.1 Subject to rights to appeal or apply to set aside an award under sections 45 and 46 (respectively) of the Arbitration Act, and subject to any other applicable provisions of the Arbitration Act and the Family Law Act, all awards of the PC shall be binding upon the parents. Any temporary, interim or final award may be incorporated into a consent order of the Ontario Superior Court of Justice. Either parent may apply for the enforcement of any award under section 59.8(5) (a) of the Family Law Act.
- 19.2 Upon the request of either parent, the PC shall issue an award incorporating the terms of any agreement reached by the parents.

20. FEES

- 20.1 The PC's fees are set out in the attached Fee Schedule. This rate will change from time to time. The parents agree to pay any such annual increase in hourly rates whether or not they receive specific notice of the increase.
- 20.2 Parents shall pay the PC's fees, including deposits, in equal amounts, or one may pay the full fee. The PC will not collect fees from parents in any other ratio. The parents are jointly and severally responsible for full payment of all of the PC's fees.
- 20.3 The parties will provide initial and refreshed deposit/s in accordance with instructions from the PC.
- 20.4 Fees shall be charged for all work performed pursuant to this agreement, including telephone calls, emails, correspondence, meetings with parents and third parties, travel time, document review, and drafting and review of memoranda or arbitrated decisions. All disbursements shall be charged including long-distance telephone charges, parking, other travel expenses, photocopying, courier charges, postage, and taxes. A minimum fee (0.1 hour or 6 minutes) may be charged for each telephone and e-mail contact.
- 20.5 Cancellation fees are payable in accordance with the Fee Schedule attached.

- 20.6 If a parent fails to pay to the PC their share of the fees, disbursements or deposit, the PC may accept payment of the defaulting parent's share from the other parent and exercise their discretion regarding costs to require the defaulting parent to reimburse the paying parent.
- 20.7 The PC may postpone the service for non-payment of fees. The PC may, at their option, extend the term of this contract set out in paragraph 2.4 by an equivalent amount of time as the period of default.
- 20.8 The PC is empowered to order interim fees and disbursements of the arbitration, including their deposit, fees and/or disbursements, following a request for submissions from both parents.
- 20.9 The PC may withhold their award until all outstanding fees, disbursements, or deposits have been paid.

21. WAIVER OF LIABILITY

- 21.1 The parents waive any claim or right of action against the PC or Riverdale Mediation Ltd. arising out of this contract.

22. SEVERABILITY OF TERMS

- 22.1 Each of the terms of this agreement are severable from the others and will survive the invalidity or unenforceability of any other term of this agreement.

23. DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCEDURE

- 23.1 If a parent has concerns about any aspect of the PC's function, or loses confidence in the neutrality of the PC, they shall request a meeting before taking steps to challenge the appointment or initiate any other form of complaint.
- 23.2 If the meeting does not satisfy the parent's concerns, s. 13 of the Arbitration Act applies. The PC shall continue to act as PC until they resign or are removed by court order.
- 23.3 Should the PC participate in a motion seeking their removal, they may seek reimbursement for their time and expenses in so doing, including legal costs.

24. INDEPENDENT LEGAL ADVICE AND PARENTS' CERTIFICATE

24.1 Each of the parents confirms that they have received independent advice and has signed the attached certificate of independent legal advice.

24.2 Each parent certifies that they:

- (a) Understand their rights and obligations under this agreement and the nature and consequences of this agreement;
- (b) represents that they are not under any undue influence or duress; and
- (c) acknowledges that they are signing this agreement voluntarily.

_____	_____
Date	Parent
_____	_____
Date	Lawyer
_____	_____
Date	Parent
_____	_____
Date	Lawyer
_____	_____
Date	Parenting Coordinator on behalf of Riverdale Mediation Ltd.



LAWYER'S CERTIFICATE OF INDEPENDENT LEGAL ADVICE

I, _____, have explained to my client the meaning of the attached Parenting Coordination Agreement (the "Agreement") and have given him or her independent legal advice prior to the signing of the Agreement.

I have explained to my client that the Agreement is a domestic contract within the meaning of the Family Law Act, and the various circumstances under which the Agreement may be set aside. In my opinion, my client understands the nature and consequences of this Agreement. I am satisfied that my client is not signing this Agreement as a result of any duress or undue influence. I am satisfied that my client is fully able to participate in the Parenting Coordination Process and is doing so voluntarily.

Date

Lawyer's signature

I, _____, confirm that I have received independent legal advice and have attached to this agreement a copy of the certificate of independent legal advice that was provided to me under subsection 59.6(2) of the Family Law Act.

Date

Lawyer's signature

LAWYER'S CERTIFICATE OF INDEPENDENT LEGAL ADVICE

I, _____, have explained to my client the meaning of the attached Parenting Coordination Agreement (the "Agreement") and have given him or her independent legal advice prior to the signing of the Agreement.

I have explained to my client that the Agreement is a domestic contract within the meaning of the Family Law Act, and the various circumstances under which the Agreement may be set aside. In my opinion, my client understands the nature and consequences of this Agreement. I am satisfied that my client is not signing this Agreement as a result of any duress or undue influence. I am satisfied that my client is fully able to participate in the Parenting Coordination Process and is doing so voluntarily.

Date

Lawyer's signature

I, _____, confirm that I have received independent legal advice and have attached to this agreement a copy of the certificate of independent legal advice that was provided to me under subsection 59.6(2) of the Family Law Act.

Date

Parenting Coordinator's signature
on behalf of Riverdale Mediation Ltd.

PARENTING COORDINATOR'S CERTIFICATE

I, _____ confirm the following matters:

- (a) I shall treat the parents equally and fairly in the Arbitration, as subsection 19(1) of the Act requires.
- (b) I have received the appropriate training approved by the Attorney General.
- (c) The parents were separately screened by me for power imbalances and domestic violence and I have considered the results of the screening and shall do so throughout the Arbitration, if I conduct one.

Date

Witness

Parenting Coordinator's signature
on behalf of Riverdale Mediation Ltd.