

Navigating the festive season for separated parents

As the last days and weeks of 2024 fly by, we take this opportunity to provide some simple but important tips for the holiday season.

For many separated parents, this will be their first Christmas being separated from their partner and from the family unit being together. For parents going through a separation, they will need to navigate arrangements for Christmas Day where they will either be splitting the time with their child/ren and in some situations may not see their children at all on that day.

For other parties, they may be contemplating separation and the stress, hustle and bustle of Christmas may be the tipping point in their relationship that leads to separation.

The **Andersons Family Law team** provides a family 'road map' to their clients to provide them with all the advice they need and a pathway forwards to help them navigate through what is one of the most difficult times in their lives.

Below we share 5 tips to recently separated couples to help survive the festive season.

Obtain legal advice

It is very important to get advice from a lawyer specialising in family law as soon as possible after separation. As explained above, the Andersons Family Law team provides a family ‘road map’ for their clients. We do this in our first 90 minute appointment where we take the time to get to know our clients, understand what is important to them and provide tailored advice to their situation.

Often, it is much simpler if you obtain advice straight away and the steps you take are taken carefully and based on that advice. Otherwise, it can be much more complicated if mistakes are made at that critical time after separation and before advice is received. Our first tip is therefore, to get expert legal advice as soon as possible.

Reach out for help

Separation can be incredibly stressful and confusing. It is important to remember you are not alone. It is important that you obtain all the support that you need to help you through these difficult times. Whilst Andersons can provide you with the specialist legal advice you need to navigate through the legal process, it is also important that you have emotional support.

This could be in the form of family and friends who are there for your support. Otherwise, contacting your general practitioner is a key step to obtaining professional support and they can refer you to appropriate professionals such as a counsellor or psychologist.

Don’t discuss separation in front of your children

It is common for emotions to run high during a separation. This can lead to arguments about financial arrangements and also arrangements about the children. It is important to remember that arguing in front of the children is likely to have a detrimental effect upon them and they should be spared as much as possible from the separation.

It can be incredibly difficult to bite your tongue, but our strongest advice is to take any steps you can to ensure that those discussions (or even arguments) happen outside of children’s each shot. You would be surprised exactly how much they pick up on.

Beware social media

We live in an age of social media where many people are regularly posting on social media platforms. Whilst you might be outraged about what you partner has done and want to share this to your online community for support, you should be very careful about posting such things on social media.

Once it is posted, this generally can't be undone. Invariably, what you post will be sent to your ex-partner in one form or the other. It can also end up being seen by unintended people including family and your children. Social media posts often become weaponised in family law court proceedings and you don't want to harm your case with posts made in the heat of the moment.

Budget carefully

The family finances are always at a stretch after a separation. This can be exacerbated when you come into the Christmas period with all the extra expenses. Each parent may want to buy presents for the children and not be outdone by the other. It is important to have a careful understanding of your monthly budget and be aware of upcoming payments and ensure that your income and resources can meet the same.

Overall, avoid making any rash decisions without first obtaining competent legal advice from an experienced family lawyer.

How can Andersons help?

Our experienced **Family Law team** at Andersons is here to help you. We offer a 90 minute initial meeting to develop a "Family Road Map" tailored to your personal situation.

All your concerns and questions will be addressed in this appointment and your lawyer will explain the process and outline a plan for next steps. All for a set fee.

If you require Family Law advice over the Christmas period, please do not hesitate to contact us on 8238 6666 or email enquiry@andersons.com.au.