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LawTalk Blog



What is a parenting order?

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Have you ever wondered what a parenting order is?

A parenting order is an order of either the [Federal Circuit Court of Australia or the Family Court of Australia](#) about the care and living arrangements of children. A parenting order can deal with:

1. who a child is to live with;
2. what time a child might spend with another person or persons;
3. the allocation or [parental responsibility](#) for a child;
4. if two or more people have parental responsibility, the sort of consultation they need to have about decisions being made about the children;
5. the communication the child is to have with another person or persons;
6. maintenance of a child;
7. the steps to be taken before an application is made to a court for variation of a parenting order;
8. the process to be used to resolve disputes about the terms or operation of an order; and
9. any aspect of the care, welfare or development of a child or parental responsibility of a child.

So as you can see, a parenting order can cover a wide range of matters to do with children.

"There are penalties for breaching a parenting order which can include fines, a bond or even imprisonment."

A parenting order can be made in favour of the parents of the child or some other person such as step-parent, [grandparent](#) or other interested person. Most commonly however, a parenting order is made in favour of the natural parents of the child.

Once a parenting order is in place the parties to that order are bound by it and must comply with its terms. There are penalties for breaching a parenting order which can include fines, a bond or even imprisonment.

Can I change a parenting order?

Once a parenting order is made they can be difficult to change. This is because the law states that before a court will change a parenting order you need to show that there has been a significant change in circumstances since the order was made.

There is no set definition of what the change in circumstances needs to be but changing your mind or the orders becoming inconvenient to you will not be enough.

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