

Information for parents

Neutral ground offers a safe, enjoyable place for parents and children who live apart to spend time together. It is neutral, friendly and confidential. It is not intended as a permanent arrangement but a way to help you to go on and make your own arrangements for contact.

There will be other families in the room having contact. There are trained volunteers supported by a coordinator at the centre who will help to ensure that the contact time is as positive as possible for the children. Volunteers are not there to take sides or give advice. The volunteers do not know your personal details.

If you wish to make your own application please complete the attachment marked "Self-referral" on the Referral page.

Neutral Ground invites all parents and children to a pre-contact visit at the centre. The purpose of this is to give everyone a chance to ask any questions and to become familiar with the centre ahead of contact taking place.

Arrival at the centre

- Everyone on the premises is booked-in at arrival and booked out when they leave
- The children having contact and the person escorting them have their own entrance by the library
- The person having contact has a separate entrance via the main gate. • We have limited space therefore please do not bring other adults or children with you unless this has been discussed with the coordinator before contact.
- It is important for everyone to be punctual. If you are unable to keep your appointment or you will be late please let your former partner know either directly or via a solicitor. • Please also inform us by leaving a message on our answer phone. We are not responsible for informing your former partner.

Waiting room

- We have a small waiting room for resident parents/carers if needed
- Resident parents/carers should remain in the waiting room at all times and not enter the rest of the centre. If any assistance is required a member of Neutral Ground can be easily contacted using the bell provided.
- The exit doors are alarmed and should only be opened by a member of Neutral Ground.

At the Centre

The lounge, coffee bar and garden areas are for the contact parent and the children. We provide toys, games, books and craft activities. There is a large garden area with bikes, a sandpit and other activities for children to enjoy. There is also a quiet lounge with a selection of board games, dvds and books. Parents are also welcome to bring their own toys and activities to the centre to play with their child. The café offers a range of hot and cold drinks and snacks at reasonable cost.

At the end of each visit please inform staff the date of your next planned visit.

Please note the following expectations:-

- Contact will not take place if you appear to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs
- No smoking inside the building or garden area.
- Children will remain on premises unless both the parents and the co ordinator have made an agreement for the child to be taken out
- Children are not allowed in the kitchen area
- Parents are responsible for the safety and supervision of their children at all times. • Please be careful with hot drinks.
- The parent having contact is responsible for tidying up after their child e.g. food, toys etc.
- If your contact finishes at 4pm please help staff to pack away toys/equipment. • We will not tolerate offensive language or behaviour
- Please do not use contact time to question your child about your former partner.

No charge is made for using this centre.

The following policies are available on request; - Child Protection Policy, Confidentiality Policy, Health & Safety Policy, Complaints Procedure, Equal Opportunity & Diversity Policy, Domestic violence Policy & Volunteer Policy. They are also published in our Annual Report.