

PARENTHING WEEKLY

The bill nobody counts

September has two costs for two-home families. Only one of them shows up in the survey.

3 August to 7 August 2026 | parenthing.ie

Two homes, one timetable, and a child in the middle

The back-to-school story this year is told in euros, and fairly so. Devices, uniforms, the voluntary contribution, all of it lands in one heavy month. For separated families there is a second cost that no survey adds up: the work of running one school timetable across two houses.

When the plan is not shared, the child ends up carrying it. Which house on which night, whose turn for the collection, the note that only reached one home. A young child should not be the messenger between two kitchens, and in September, quietly, a lot of them are.

EUR 447

the average a secondary-school
parent paid for a digital device this
year

Barnardos, Back to School Survey 2026. The device gets
measured. The second home does not.

THIS WEEK'S TIP

One shared plan, sorted in August

Agree the term now, not in the first week back.

Who does which drop-off and pick-up, which nights are whose, and the changeover that lands closest to day one.

Then make sure the school has both parents on file, so the newsletter, the sick-day call and the parent-teacher slot reach you both. Your child walks in already understood, instead of carrying the message in for you.



A child should arrive at the gate carried by the plan, not carrying it.

The calm you sort in August is the calm they feel in September.

The cheapest thing you will do for the new term

Ireland is building the formal supports for this: parenting plans, mediation, and a national survey on how schools can steady children through family change. The everyday version costs nothing but a quiet conversation before term.

One shared plan both parents can see keeps September off your child's shoulders.

Get started at parenting.ie

SOURCES

Barnardos, Back to School Survey 2026, barnardos.ie

One Family, The Separation Network and WHAT WORKS, national survey on schools and family change, onefamily.ie

Family Justice Strategy, parenting plans and mediation, mccarthy.ie

