

PARENTHING WEEKLY

Built for the worst week

Everything is being designed for a courtroom. Term starts in a fortnight.

10 August to 14 August 2026 | parenthing.ie

Two true things, pulling apart

On 19 January the Minister for Justice launched Ireland's first Child Maintenance Guidelines, for parents who want to agree things directly rather than through the courts. The same day, he set out the Family Courts Act plan: first family courts January 2027, full rollout from January 2029.

So the State is saying two things at once. Agree it between yourselves. And also, we are rebuilding the courtroom, and it will take until 2029.

The software has picked a side. All the movement this year has been one way: certified records, court-ready documentation, family law firm partnerships. Everything built for the worst week, almost nothing for the ordinary one.

2029

The year Ireland's family court reform is due to be fully in place.

Primary schools reopen in a fortnight. Both of those are true at once.

THIS WEEK'S TIP

The quiet job to do this week

Ring the school office and check both parents are on the roll book. One contact, one email, one phone number is the default, and nobody changes it unless a parent asks.

Then agree the list before either of you buys anything. Books, shoes, the jacket, the voluntary contribution. Agreeing what is on it is what stops the September row about who paid for what.

A national survey this summer by One Family, The Separation Network and WHAT WORKS asked parents and teachers how primary schools should support children through family change. The guidelines it produces will matter. They will not be ready for the last week of August either.



**A child does not experience
the system. They
experience the Tuesday.**

Whatever gets built by 2029, week one
still has to work this month.

Where we stand

The record you keep for a judge and the record that makes a Tuesday work are not the same object, and they pull in opposite directions. Build it to prove, and both parents start reading every entry as a move in a case. Build it to be checked, and it settles the argument before it starts.

Some families genuinely need the first kind, and we would never pretend otherwise. But most separated families in Ireland will never sit in a family court. They will do the school run, the handover and the packing list, week after week, for years. That is the part nobody is building for, and it is the part a childhood is actually made of.

More at parenting.ie

● **parenting.ie**

SOURCES

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