



Family Mediation Inc



Comprehensive Family Mediation and Information Services
Putting Children First

1-888-988-AXIS (2947)

www.axisfamilymediation.com

info@axisfamilymediation.com



MODIFIED SERVICE DELIVERY SUMMARY DURING COURT CLOSURE

AXIS Family Mediation Inc. has been directed by the Ministry of the Attorney General to modify our delivery of services during the COVID-19 outbreak. Even as the courts slowly reopen, in-person court connected mediation and information services as well as the MIPs remain suspended.

We provide you this guide to our modified service provision to let you know that we are still here remotely to help in all of the jurisdictions AXIS serves throughout the Central South Judicial Region (Hamilton, Kitchener, Brantford, Simcoe, Cayuga, St. Catharines, Welland) and Guelph.



Family Mediation

Family mediation is a voluntary method of dispute resolution where a neutral third party assists parties to resolve or narrow or codify disputed family law issues. These issues may include decision-making (custody), parenting time (access), child support, spousal support, and division of property.

As a non-adversarial process, mediation allows the parties to discuss the issues in a safe environment and work towards a mutual agreement. It is appropriate for parties who can communicate their needs and concerns, listen to the needs and concerns of the other, and who are willing to work out an agreement.

Potential benefits may include saving time and money as well as reducing the conflict between the parties. If there are children of the relationship, mediation helps the parties remember that they will always be parents, and as such will still need to maintain a relationship to increase the chance that the children can cope with the many changes in their lives.

AXIS Family Mediation Inc. is the only service recognized by the Ministry of the Attorney General to provide court-connected mediation and information services to parties residing in the regions of Hamilton, Kitchener-Waterloo, Wellington, Haldimand, Norfolk, Brant and Niagara.

On-Site Mediation

When the courts are open, AXIS Family Mediation Inc. offers “on-the-spot” or “on-site” mediation, which usually results in an order immediately being made by the court on the same day. This service is offered at each of the Family Courts we serve, for parties who have a matter scheduled in court on that day and whose issues are narrow enough to be mediated within an hour or two. If not, the parties may be referred to off-site mediation. All on-site mediation is closed mediation, there is no fee for on-site mediation, and parties are seen in the order they sign-up each day (no pre-booked appointments).

While the courts are closed, those who wish to access on-site mediation will be re-routed to our Distance Mediation Program. The requirement to be on a court list the same day the mediation is conducted is temporarily waived to allow this to happen. Additionally, to afford those potential clients who would have qualified for the free on-site service (had they been in court) the same opportunity to use that free service, at this time, ALL distance mediation clients (both on and off-site) will receive not only their individual intake sessions free, but ALSO their first hour of mediation free of charge.

Referrals can be made as easily as calling or emailing an IRC, the AXIS office, or via our website.



Distance Mediation

In usual circumstances, AXIS offers traditional in-person “off-site” mediation wherein a mediator will meet with parties in the mediator’s office and conduct intake and joint sessions until a resolution is reached. During this time of social distancing, all in-person mediation has been replaced with virtual or distance mediation.

The referral process to our distance mediation program is the same as traditional off-site. Mutual consent must be given by each party in order to proceed. Once consent is given, a file will be opened and assigned to one of our distance roster mediators who mediate virtually via Zoom instead of in-person.

All aspects of traditional off-site mediation have been replicated in our distance mediation program. We canvass all aspects of appropriateness and have an enhanced screening process to take into consideration the many extra facets of technology-assisted mediation.

Each party will have an opportunity to “meet” with the mediator separately first to discuss the issues for mediation and ask any questions or canvass any concerns. This is called an intake.

The mediators shall ensure that only parties appropriate for mediation shall proceed to joint appointments. If the file proceeds, a series of joint appointments are then held and if an agreement is reached, the mediator will write a mediation report outlining all points of agreement (and any outstanding issues if there any) which can be filed with the court or made into any other form of contractually binding contract. All distance mediations are “closed.”

There are user fees for distance mediation but because we are subsidized by the Ministry of the Attorney General, they are based on a sliding scale, which is based on income and dependants. The initial off-site intake sessions are free of charge, and additionally at this time the first hour of joint mediation is also free of charge. User fees are collected for subsequent joint mediation or caucus sessions only. Fees are calculated by gross yearly income and the number of dependent children. Each party is responsible to pay her/his/their own fees. There is no retainer amount needed up front and payments for the sessions can be made on a “pay-as-you-go” basis.

If you are, have, or know of clients that could benefit from mediation at this time, or would like more information on our Distance Mediation program, please contact us! Referrals are processed as usual by contacting the IRCs at the family court by telephone or e-mail (numbers below) or through our website. Further information can be found on our website at www.axisfamilymediation.com where we have dedicated a new page specifically for Distance Mediation (under the “Services” tab).



Information and Referral Services

Information & Referral Coordinators (IRCs) provide information and direction on issues related to family court and family law (without providing legal advice). They act as the bridge between family court and all internal and external information as needed. The IRC can help determine needs and direction to the appropriate resource, agency, program or service, such as a lawyer, clinic, legal aid, court department, parenting program, treatment program, workshop, group or agency. The IRCs also facilitate all aspects of the Mandatory Information Programs.

When court is open to the public, the IRCs are part of a suite of in-person services at the Family Law Information Centres (FLICs) at the Family Courts we serve in Hamilton, Guelph, Kitchener, Simcoe, Cayuga, Brantford, St. Catharines and Welland. However, while in-person services may currently be suspended until regular court operations resume, our Information and Referral Coordinators are still available to assist remotely in almost every way they did before. A list of the IRCs and their contact information can be found below.

The IRCs have also compiled a special list of resources to assist parents during the pandemic, and we have dedicated an entire page on our website to resources for separating and divorcing parties during this crisis (“Covid-19” page under the “Resources” tab at www.axisfamilymediation.com).

Our IRCs are here for the public, lawyers, court services, the Judiciary and all family court stakeholders. Please do not hesitate to ask your local IRC for assistance.



Mandatory Information Program (MIP)

MIPs are designed to ensure that each party to a family law court case is provided with upfront information to help make informed decisions about their family law issues and steps taken to resolve family law cases. MIPs are a required step in the court process, and cases cannot proceed past the Case Conference stage without them being completed by all parties to the case.

At a MIP, parties are provided with information on the effects that ending a relationship will have on them and on their children (if applicable) as well as various options available to help cope with life changes. Basic legal information is provided as well as information on alternatives to court, and steps in the court process itself.

While in-person Mandatory Information Programs (MIPs) continue to be suspended until regular court operations resume, they are being provided on-line. We have worked in close contact with the Judiciary and court services to replicate the program virtually.

Ordinarily, in order to be permitted to complete the MIP in any other way other than in-person at the court, litigants would need permission from the Judge hearing their case. However, all

litigants in the areas AXIS serves are permitted to take the live on-line MIP instead of the in-person MIP without prior Judicial approval.

The live on-line MIPs offer the same content and structure as the in-person MIPs. They are still free, interactive and informative. The same Ministry script is used, and they are still co-presented by a lawyer and mental health professional, with an IRC facilitating. The MIPs still take approximately 2.5 hours to complete, and we will email the completion certificates to the appropriate court to be filed in the electronic court file of every litigant who completes the program. With the on-line format, MIPs are now confidential. Participants cannot see or hear each other, and no identifying information is displayed. Live on-line MIPs are also not location specific like in-person MIPs are. In other words, a litigant can take any live on-line MIP AXIS offers so long as their matter is being heard in one of our court locations.

In order to take a live on-line MIP, parties must have access to a computer, laptop, smartphone or tablet (or any device which has audio and video capabilities) AND reliable internet access. They may also need to download the Zoom software/application. Parties will not need a webcam or microphone.

Pre-registration is required by sending an email to MIP@axisfamilymediation.com . Litigants will then receive a registration link as well as a link to the program slides and resource materials. These instructions are set out in the Notice to the Public- Interim MIP Procedure During Covid 19, which will be provided at application issuance.

Contact us at MIP@axisfamilymediation.com with any questions or concerns or contact an Information and Referral Coordinator for the court the matter is being heard in.



LOCATION SPECIFIC INQUIRIES	PRIMARY IRC	E-MAIL	TELEPHONE*
HAMILTON	AMANDA REECE	amanda@axisfamilymediation.com	905-645-5252 x2516
KITCHENER	COLLEEN DAVIES	colleen@axisfamilymediation.com	519-741-3200 x3174
GUELPH	COLLEEN DAVIES	colleen@axisfamilymediation.com	519-824-4100 x218
BRANTFORD	DEREK MCGRATTAN	derek@axisfamilymediation.com	226-920-8109
SIMCOE	DEREK MCGRATTAN	derek@axisfamilymediation.com	226-931-1617
CAYUGA	DEREK MCGRATTAN	derek@axisfamilymediation.com	226-931-1617
ST. CATHARINES	CHRIS LOVE	chris@axisfamilymediation.com	905-988-6200 x475
WELLAND	CHRIS LOVE	chris@axisfamilymediation.com	905-735-0010 x299

- All staff can also be reached toll free at 1-888-988-AXIS(2947)

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