

POLICY AND PROCEDURE	
Subject: Separated & Divorced Parents Policy	Category: Administrative
Date Approved: February 6, 2023	Date Revised:
Author: Clinic Manager	Reviewing Body: MHC Physicians
Specific to: Patients, Parents of Patients	Next Review Date: Feb 6, 2025

DATE(S) REVISED/REVIEWED SUMMARY

Version	Date	Comments/Changes
1.0	Feb 6, 2023	Initial Policy

PURPOSE

The providers and staff of Mapleton Health Centre are dedicated to their patients and providing quality medical care to patients, including children. The focus of the staff and providers of Mapleton Health Centre is on the medical, psychological, and emotional health of patients including children – not legal issues involving divorce, separation, or custody agreements.

Children of divorced or separated parents sometimes present to Mapleton Health Centre with unique challenges. The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines regarding these unique situations to avoid misunderstandings going forward.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all patients and parents of patients of the Mapleton Health Centre.

DEFINITIONS

Court Order – a direction issued by a court or judge requiring a person to do or not do something.

Joint Custody – legal custody of a child or children that is shared by both parents after divorce or separation.

Legal Guardian or Guardianship – a judicially-created relationship between children and caretaker that is intended to be permanent and self-sustaining as evidenced by the transfer to the caretaker of the following parental rights with respect to the child: protection, education care, and control of the person, and decision-making. The term “legal guardian” means the caretaker in such relationship.

- The providers and staff of the Mapleton Health Centre will not be put in the middle of domestic issues either over the phone or in person.
- Decisions regarding appointments, vaccinations, and/or any office procedures should be made PRIOR to visiting the Mapleton Health Centre.
- The Mapleton Health Centre will assume that both parents have legal custody of the child(ren), unless an original court document to the contrary is received, and as such, each parent has equal access to their child's medical record. Without a court order, Mapleton Health Centre will not stop either parent from looking at or obtaining their child(ren)'s medical record or test results. Mapleton Health Centre cannot guarantee that copies of medical records will be free of all demographic information, such as home phone numbers and addresses.
- Mapleton Health Centre will not call the non-accompanying parent for consent prior to the office visits and treatment. It is the responsibility of both parents to communicate with each other about the patients' care, office visit dates, and any other pertinent information relevant to the patient. It is not the responsibility of the provider to communicate the visit information to each custodial parent separately. The Mapleton Health Centre staff or providers will not call the non-attending parent following the visit. Additionally, the Mapleton Health Centre will not call a parent to notify of an appointment scheduled by the other.
- If contacted, the Mapleton Health Centre will make every attempt to respond to the caller and answer questions, unless prohibited from doing so by a court order or other legalities.
- The Mapleton Health Centre will assume that any treatment and/or medication prescribed will be given as directed, as failure to do so may jeopardize a child's health. Mapleton Health Centre will not write prescriptions for separate bottles of the same medication to be used at separate homes. Doing so may result in overdosage.
- Mapleton Health Centre is here to provide medical care to patients, MHC is not in a position to provide legal advice. Child custody concerns must be directed to your attorney and proper legal channels followed.
- Should the issues that come between parents become disruptive to the Mapleton Health Centre or there is non-compliance with this policy, the Mapleton Health Centre reserves the right to discharge the family from the practice.

POLICY REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed on a biannual (every 2 years) basis to ensure its policy statements and reporting procedures remain clear, relevant, and practical for the organization. The policy will be amended as considered necessary.