

Press Release - for Immediate Release December 2009

Sad Tidings...

For many grandparents, Christmas is an especially joyful time of year, an opportunity to get together with family members and to enjoy indulging their grandchildren. However, it's not such a rosy picture for the grandparents that are not allowed to see their grandchildren. For these grandparents Christmas can be a sad time of year when the family conflict that's preventing them from seeing their grandchildren is heightened even more.

It's a situation that Jackie Mensah, an experienced member of the Family Law team at Bennett Griffin solicitors in Worthing is all-too-familiar with. Legally, grandparents are not automatically guaranteed any rights to see their grandchildren. In all but the most serious of circumstances, it is the parents alone that have the power to decide who can spend time with their children, even though these decisions could have a long-term negative impact. Jackie stresses that there are a number of things that grandparents can do to prevent such situations from spiralling out of control commenting, "if at all possible, grandparents that are being denied access to their grandchildren should make an effort to mend any hard feelings that exist between the adults. Parents often keep their children away from their grandparents because of unresolved conflicts. Whilst both sides may stubbornly cling to the idea that they are right, by doing so their children lose out, deprived of their grandparents' love and support." Jackie suggests that a grandparent's first step should be approach the child's mother or father to explain that their intention is not to take sides but to maintain contact with their grandchildren. "If this approach is unsuccessful," says Jackie "mediation can help. The last option is an application to Court. However, a grandparent pursuing such a course of action will have to establish that there was a meaningful and ongoing relationship with the grandchild before the conflict and that it's in the child's best interest that the relationship should continue. A grandparent may have a difficult task opposing the wishes of the parents, so strong legal guidance and representation is a must."

If you would welcome further advice on this crucial area of family law, you can contact Jackie direct on 01903 229938. An initial discussion is confidential and without charge.

Ends

Editor Information

For further information, please contact Jackie Mensah on 01903 229938. jnm@bennett-griffin.co.uk www.bennett-griffin.co.uk