

Tips - Attending Court

www.thecustodyminefield.com



- ✔ **Do clear out your pockets or handbag before leaving home.** Courts often have metal detectors, and security staff will search your bags when you enter the building. Take in only what you need.
- ✘ **Don't be late.** Allow time for traffic jams, finding parking places, missed buses, or cancelled trains. If applying for an emergency hearing, be at the court at 9am.
- ✔ **Do dress smartly as if you are attending an interview** (Judges like to be shown respect).
- ✔ **Do take an umbrella** (it sounds obvious, but there is nothing worse than turning up in Court dripping wet. Also ensure any paperwork you take with you is in something waterproof).
- ✔ **Do take a coat or a jumper.** Some Courts can be baking hot while others can be chilly depending on the age of the Court building.
- ✔ **Do take a pad and pen into the Court.** Make notes, and if you need to say something to your solicitor (if you're represented), write it down and hand it across to them (or a note saying "I need to speak to you about this"). The Judge is usually quite observant and will point out to the solicitor that "your client wishes to speak to you" and allow you some time.
- ✔ **Do use Court delay time:** If the hearing is delayed, and you find yourself at one end of a corridor with your solicitor, with your ex-partner at the other end with theirs, don't waste this time (you're paying for it) – negotiate! See if a compromise can be reached. Set your solicitor running up and down the corridor (they're used to it).
- ✘ **Don't interrupt the Judge.**
- ✘ **Don't stare at you ex.**
- ✘ **Don't get angry – stay calm.**
- ✘ **Don't make plans for the rest of the day.** You could be tied up for hours waiting for a slot in the judge's
- ✔ **Do make contingency plans** in case you are tied up in Court for hours (make arrangements for the children to be picked up, and have enough cash on you for the parking meter).
- ✔ **Do take a drink and some food and something to read.**
- ✔ **Do turn off your mobile phone** before you walk into the Court room.