

Christmas planner for separated parents

For two homes. Fill it in together, or each fill one in and compare.

Parent A

Parent B

1. Day by day over the Christmas holidays

Write A or B for where the children sleep each night. Use the handover column for the time, the place and who drives.

DATE	NIGHT WITH	HANDOVER (TIME, PLACE, WHO DRIVES)	PLANS AND NOTES
Fri 18 Dec			
Sat 19 Dec			
Sun 20 Dec			
Mon 21 Dec			
Tue 22 Dec			
Wed 23 Dec			
Thu 24 Dec Christmas Eve			
Fri 25 Dec Christmas Day			
Sat 26 Dec Boxing Day			
Sun 27 Dec			
Mon 28 Dec			
Tue 29 Dec			
Wed 30 Dec			
Thu 31 Dec New Year's Eve			
Fri 1 Jan New Year's Day			
Sat 2 Jan			
Sun 3 Jan			

School holiday dates vary by council. These rows run from Friday 18 December 2026 to Sunday 3 January 2027. Check your school's dates and cross out or add days.

2. Pick a way to share Christmas

These are the usual ways families split it. Tick the one you’re trying this year. If a plan or court order already covers Christmas, follow that.

☐ **Alternate years**

The children spend the whole of Christmas with one parent this year and with the other next year.

☐ **Split the day**

Christmas Eve and the morning with one home, then the afternoon and Boxing Day with the other. Works best when the two homes are close.

☐ **Split the break in half**

One parent has the first half of the holidays, including Christmas; the other has the second half, including New Year. Swap each year.

☐ **Two Christmases**

Each home keeps its own day, for example 25th in one and a second Christmas on another date, the same every year.

Who has what, year by year

Writing down next year now saves the same conversation next autumn.

DAY	2026	2027
Christmas Eve		
Christmas Day		
Boxing Day		
New Year’s Eve		
New Year’s Day		
Other days:		

Agree it early. The sooner it’s settled, the sooner the children know where they’ll be, and the sooner travel and time off work can be booked.

Parent A, date

Parent B, date

Signing this is just a way to show you both agreed. It isn’t a legal agreement.

3. Things to agree before December

Tick each one off once you've both agreed it, and jot down what you decided.

☐ **Presents**

Who buys what, any presents from both of you, and where big presents live afterwards.

☐ **Budget**

Rough budget each, so presents feel even.

☐ **Travel and handovers**

Times, places and who drives, with extra time for traffic and weather.

☐ **Grandparents and other family**

Who they'll see in each home, and on which days.

☐ **School nativity, carol service or Christmas fair**

Dates, and whether you'll both go.

☐ **Calls on the day**

A set time for the children to call or video call the other parent.

☐ **Food and bedtimes**

Anything you both want kept the same across the two homes.

☐ **Telling the children**

When you'll tell them the plan, and whether you'll tell them together.

☐ **If plans change**

What happens if someone is ill or travel is cancelled.

☐ **Time on your own**

If you'll be without the children on the day, what you'll do and who you'll see.

Notes

Finding it hard? Family Lives: 0808 800 2222 (free; Monday to Friday 9am to 9pm, weekends 10am to 3pm).