

Nesting Checklist

Children stay. Parents rotate. Print, tick, review.

Nesting (sometimes called *birdnesting*) keeps the children in one home — their bed, their school bag, their friends round the corner — while the adults absorb the upheaval of moving in and out. This checklist is the working agreement between you both. Sign it, date it, review it.

Belongings — the home stays the children's space

- Children's bedrooms are not touched. Their toys, books and posters stay where they are.
- Off-duty parent's clothes, toiletries and laptop live in a sealed bag or at the second base — not in shared cupboards or the bathroom.
- Shared spaces (kitchen, living room) are kept tidy to an agreed standard.
- A small locked drawer or box for each parent's private papers and medication.
- No new partner's belongings in the home — ever.

New partners — boundary set by the primary caregiver

- No new partner stays overnight in the children's home.
- No new partner is introduced to the children inside the nesting home.
- If a new partner is met, it is on neutral ground, after the primary caregiver has been told.
- New partner is introduced as a friend — not as a parent figure.
- The other biological parent is told before the children are told.

Handover routine — every swap, the same way

- Handover happens at the door, not over dinner.
- Same day and time each week (e.g. Sunday 6pm).
- A handover notebook on the kitchen counter — school notes, medication, mood, friends, anything kind.
- No discussion of the relationship at handover. Adult business goes through email.
- If a handover is missed, a make-up is offered in writing within 24 hours.

House rules — same in both shifts

- Same bedtime on school nights.
- Same screen-time limits.
- Same rules on sleepovers, parties and going out alone.
- Same approach to faith practice, prayer times, fasts and festivals.
- Same approach to homework, devices at the dinner table, and bedtime stories.

Money and bills — written down, not assumed

- Mortgage / rent on the nesting home — who pays, when.
- Utilities, council tax, internet — who pays, when.
- Food shop — one shared kitty or alternating weeks.
- Children's costs (uniform, school trips, clubs) — split or alternating.

- Off-duty parent's second base — paid by that parent only.

Communication between the parents

- All non-urgent messages by email or co-parenting app (e.g. OurFamilyWizard, 2houses).
- Children are never the messengers.
- A weekly 20-minute call or message thread to plan the week ahead.
- Disagreements pause for 24 hours before reply.
- If language gets unkind, the conversation ends and goes to mediation.

Safety — what to do if conflict rises

- If a parent feels unsafe, nesting pauses immediately and the other parent leaves.
- Any abusive behaviour ends nesting permanently — call 999 if in danger.
- Scotland Domestic Abuse Helpline 0800 027 1234 is saved on both phones.
- A trusted third party (mediator, faith leader, family member) knows about the arrangement.
- The children know one safe adult outside the home they can call.

Review dates — nesting is not forever by default

- First review: 4 weeks in.
- Second review: 3 months in.
- Third review: 6 months in.
- Annual review thereafter, with the children's input if old enough.
- Honest exit clause: either parent can call a mediated review at any point.

Parent A signature:	_____	Date:	_____
Parent B signature:	_____	Date:	_____
Next review date:	_____	Mediator (if any):	_____

AEMWG CIC offers this as guidance only. It is not legal advice. For binding arrangements, speak with a family solicitor or accredited mediator. See the Graduated Families page on aemwg.org for resources.