A drawing of a face

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Dear client,

Emma and I are pleased to be able to continue offering in person meetings which were suspended during 2020 owing the pandemic. We review our guidance regularly and update it when there are changes to the legal requirements concerning COVID. Online meetings via Zoom have worked well as a way of continuing to offer family mediation to clients during the challenging pandemic conditions but we have always been conscious that some of you would prefer to meet in person. It has always been our intention to offer physical meetings wherever needed and possible. But we have been mindful of only offering meetings where they could be offered with the least risk possible to both you and your family, and me and my family, and Emma and her family. Meetings online via Zoom will continue to take place and it will always be your choice whether you meet in person or online.

Your in person meeting will be the same safe space to find resolutions, tailored to you and your family, that it has always been, but there are a few changes that are designed to keep us all as safe as we can be. I ask you to read, and be clear about, the following important information.

1. **There is no way to offer physical meetings completely risk free.** Meeting in person does represent a small risk of infection with COVID-19 to all of us and it’s important that you are aware of that. The guidance is designed to minimise that risk.
2. **If you have any of the following symptoms (even if you do not believe they are because of COVID-19), then you need to contact us to re-arrange your appointment**. We will not be levying cancellation charges for any appointment cancelled or re-arranged at short notice due to any party having symptoms of COVID-19. It may be possible to move your appointment online, or we can re-schedule the in person meeting as soon as we are able to. Those symptoms are:

* **a high temperature** – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature)
* **a new, continuous cough** – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)
* **a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste** – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal

**Please be assured that in the event of Emma or I having any of these symptoms we will contact you to offer you an online or later appointment providing we are well enough to do so, and able to still offer this. If you should develop the symptoms set out above within 14 days of your appointment then please ensure you let us know. We will let all clients know if we develop any of the above symptoms within 14 days of an appointment or if we become aware that someone who attended an appointment in the 14 days before you developed symptoms.**

1. When you arrive at the Atrium please let the receptionist know that you have arrived and she will let either myself or Emma know. We will try to maintain a reasonable distance from you in showing you to the office for both of our protections. If it is an initial meeting Emma or I will come and collect you at the time of your appointment, if it is a joint meeting Emma or I will collect you both either when both of you are present, or at your allotted appointment time (if this is later). If you wish to wait in separate areas then please let us know prior to the appointment.
2. Once in the office you will find hand sanitiser for your use. There will be a space for each of you on the table with your own hand sanitiser, paper, pen and tissues. Please take any paper you use with you (otherwise it will be disposed of). The pens will all be cleaned prior to your arrival. If you open the individual packet of tissues then please take them away with you. If they are unopened then they will be left sealed and the outside of the packet will be cleaned.
3. There will be clear screens on the table between us. We hope that they will not be intrusive but will provide a layer of additional protection for us all.
4. In order to offer mediation in a more COVID secure way LKW Family Mediation moved offices to a bigger space on the ground floor in 2020. The ground floor means that we have a window that will remain open during our meeting to allow for a greater flow of air. Because of its location away from the outside seating and café, there should not be people outside the office. But if this is something that concerns you, please speak to us prior to the meeting. You may wish to bring an extra layer in case it is cold in the office because of the open window. We will also not be offering tea, coffee or water but please feel free to bring your own drinks with you such as a water bottle or hot drink.
5. You are not required to wear a face mask to come to the meeting and we shall not be wearing a face mask. If you would feel more comfortable wearing a mask then please feel free to wear one. If you would prefer either Emma or I to wear a face mask then please discuss this with us prior to the meeting.
6. The following groups of people are considered to be at high risk from coronavirus and accordingly if you are in this category, or you live with, or look after someone, in this category, we would strongly suggest that you continue to mediate online.

* have had an organ transplant
* are having chemotherapy or antibody treatment for cancer, including immunotherapy
* are having an intense course of radiotherapy (radical radiotherapy) for lung cancer
* are having targeted cancer treatments that can affect the immune system (such as protein kinase inhibitors or PARP inhibitors)
* have blood or bone marrow cancer (such as leukaemia, lymphoma or myeloma)
* have had a bone marrow or stem cell transplant in the past 6 months, or are still taking immunosuppressant medicine
* have been told by a doctor they have a severe lung condition (such as cystic fibrosis, severe asthma or severe COPD)
* have a condition that means they have a very high risk of getting infections (such as SCID or sickle cell)
* are taking medicine that makes them much more likely to get infections (such as high doses of steroids or immunosuppressant medicine)
* have a serious heart condition and are pregnant

1. People in the following group are considered to be at a greater (but not high) risk from coronavirus. Accordingly if you are in this category, or you live with, or care for someone in any of these categories, then we would again invite you to consider whether it would be better to continue to mediate online.

* are 70 or older
* have a lung condition that's not severe (such as asthma, COPD, emphysema or bronchitis)
* have heart disease (such as heart failure)
* have diabetes
* have chronic kidney disease
* have liver disease (such as hepatitis)
* have a condition affecting the brain or nerves (such as Parkinson's disease, motor neurone disease, multiple sclerosis or cerebral palsy)
* have a condition that means they have a high risk of getting infections
* are taking medicine that can affect the immune system (such as low doses of steroids)
* are very obese (a BMI of 40 or above)
* are pregnant

1. We will ensure that all surfaces and particularly contact points are properly cleaned after each meeting. In order to do this we will only be offering a certain number of in person meetings in each week. There may therefore be a longer wait time for an in person meeting.

**Louisa Whitney and Emma Ingham – March 2022**