THE PARALEGAL DESK

Family law

A printable reference pack for Hong Kong paralegals and legal executives.

CONTENTS

1. Family law
2. Family Court forms, filled in
3. Matrimonial practice

Reference edition, fees checked to 14 November 2026. Educational material only, not legal advice. Fees, time limits and practice directions change: verify against the current ordinance, practice direction or registry guidance before relying on anything in this pack for a live matter.

Family law

FAMILY LAW · PRACTICE AND PROCEDURE

If you are new to the Family Court, learn the sequence first: Form A, First Appointment, Form E, questionnaire, FDR, trial. Almost every task you are given sits somewhere on that line.

THE CAUSE ITSELF
The petition, service, setting down and the decree absolute are on the matrimonial practice page — including why six weeks, not three months, is the operative wait.

1 Where the work sits

Matrimonial and family proceedings are heard in the Family Court, which sits at District Court level, with transfer to the Court of First Instance for cases beyond its jurisdiction or where a direction requires it. Practice Direction 15.14 governs transfer, including the bundle the Court of First Instance expects on arrival.

Two consequences for a paralegal's daily work: the Family Court's own practice directions replace much of the general civil procedure, and documents are confidential — they are filed for the parties and the court, not for the public register. Check who is entitled to see a document before you send it anywhere.

2 The practice direction map

PD 15 series — what each direction does

Direction	Subject	What you use it for
PD 15.1	Divorce	Commencement and conduct of undefended and defended divorce
PD 15.2	Petition — personal service	Mode and proof of service
PD 15.4	Special procedure	The administrative (undefended) divorce list
PD 15.5	Affidavit of means	Financial evidence in the main suit
PD 15.8	Decrees and orders: agreed terms	Consent orders and the paperwork that supports them
PD 15.9	Estimates of costs — Forms H1 to H4	Costs statements in matrimonial, children and ancillary relief work
PD 15.10	Family mediation	Mediation information, certificates and referral
PD 15.11	Financial Dispute Resolution pilot scheme	The whole ancillary relief track: Forms A to G, Form E, First Appointment, FDR
PD 15.11A	Application of the FDR scheme	Which cases the scheme applies to
PD 15.12	Matrimonial and family proceedings	Applicability of the PDs; case management concepts applied from Order 25
PD 15.13	Children's Dispute Resolution	CDR pilot scheme, Form J, children's bundles and timetabling
PD 15.14	Transfer to the Court of First Instance	The First Directions Hearing Bundle, in two parts
PD 15.15	Matrimonial and family proceedings — miscellaneous	Residual procedural matters
PDSL 10.4	Case management and timetabling	Allocation between the Case Management Judge and the Allocated Judge

VERSION CONTROL
Several of these directions have been superseded multiple times — PD 15.11, 15.12 and 15.13 in particular. Always work from the version on the Judiciary's Family Court practice directions page, not from a precedent folder. A superseded form attached to an affirmation is a wasted appointment.

3 Ancillary relief: the sequence

- **Form A — notice of application for ancillary relief.** The application that starts the financial claim. It is filed in the Family Court under the main suit and fixes the First Appointment.
- **Form C — notice of the First Appointment.** Served by the applicant on the respondent once the appointment is fixed. The date is not vacated save with leave, and if it is vacated the court fixes a fresh date.
- **Form E — financial statement.** Not less than **28 days before the First Appointment**, each party files with the court and simultaneously exchanges with the other a Financial Statement in Form E, annexing only the documents necessary to explain or clarify the information in it.
- **Questionnaire.** At or before the First Appointment the parties raise written questions on the other side's Form E. Answers are exchanged on the timetable the court fixes.
- **Form D — notice of the FDR appointment.** The Financial Dispute Resolution hearing, where a judge (not the trial judge) seeks to broker a settlement with the parties present and with authority to settle.
- **Form F and Form G.** Form F gives notice of an allegation in ancillary relief proceedings, indorsed on the affidavit that names the person and served on that person, who has 8 days from service to apply to intervene. Form G is the notice to dispense with the paginated bundle, filed by the applicant not later than 21 days before the First Appointment; leave is granted or refused at that appointment.
- **Trial.** Failing settlement, the court fixes the trial, with directions for the bundle, chronologies and costs estimates.

WHY FORM E IS THE WHOLE CASE
Form E is a sworn statement of means. Every asset, liability, income source, pension, company interest and trust interest must be disclosed, with the supporting documents annexed. A vague or incomplete Form E is not a drafting problem — it is a credibility problem that follows the client into the FDR and the trial, and it can found an application to set aside an order or a costs sanction.

4 Costs estimates and children

PD 15.9 prescribes four costs forms. Getting the right one is a small, frequent test:

PD 15.9 costs forms

Form	Used for
Form H1	Defended matrimonial causes and interlocutory applications relating to the main suit, including applications under the Domestic and Cohabitation Relationships Violence Ordinance (Cap 189)
Form H2	Children proceedings, where PD 15.13 requires exchange of a Form H — lodged and served 3 clear days before each case management hearing, pre-trial review or trial
Form H3	Ancillary relief: costs up to the FDR hearing
Form H4	Ancillary relief: costs after the FDR hearing up to and including trial

Children's work has its own track under PD 15.13 — the Children's Dispute Resolution pilot scheme, with Form J, and a timetabling discipline that mirrors the ancillary relief sequence. Where a child's welfare is in issue, the court may also direct separate representation and the PDSL guidance on meeting children applies.

5 Bundles in family proceedings

The general bundle directions do not govern family work. Three rules matter.

- **Relevance, strictly applied.** PD 15.11 provides that bundles prepared for the trial of an ancillary relief application shall contain only documents that are relevant and necessary for fairly disposing of the application. In practice that means the petition, the Forms A and E (without annexures unless directed), questionnaires and answers, orders, and the handful of documents that prove the asset position — not the entire correspondence file.
- **The two-part First Directions Hearing Bundle on transfer.** Under PD 15.14, Part A contains the petition or joint application; Form A or notices of application for ancillary relief; Forms E without the attachments required by Part 7; all questionnaires and answers without attachments; pending summonses in chronological order; all orders other than extensions of time, in chronological order; the reasons for transfer; Form J if any; and any other court documents directed. Part B contains the remaining documents directed by the court.
- **Costs estimates travel with the bundle.** Form H2 or H3/H4, as applicable, is lodged and served on the 3-clear-day timetable before the relevant hearing.

The general mechanics — consecutive pagination top right, an index with page ranges, legible copies, no duplication — still apply. See the court bundles guide for the physical build.

6 Worked example: a Form E timetable

EXAMPLE — FIRST APPOINTMENT FIXED FOR 14 MAY

Facts: Form A filed 3 February. First Appointment listed 14 May. Applicant represented; respondent in person.

- **3 Feb:** Form A filed; request the appointment date; open the file note with the limitation clock and the disclosure checklist.
- **By 7 Feb:** serve Form C on the respondent, with the date and time of the First Appointment.
- **By 16 April (28 days before):** Form E filed and simultaneously exchanged. Annex only what explains the figures: three months' bank statements, the mortgage statement, the pension valuation, the company's latest accounts.
- **By 30 April:** questionnaire drafted from the other side's Form E — one question per gap, no fishing.
- **14 May:** First Appointment. Directions sought for answers, valuation of the pension, and the FDR date. Form H3 costs estimate prepared.
- **Directions:** answers exchanged; FDR fixed; Form D served; Form H3 updated before the FDR.

The common failure at this stage is annexing everything "in case" — the whole matrimonial file in a Form E bundle. It breaches the relevance test, lengthens the appointment, and invites the court to ask why the statement of means needed 600 pages.

SEE THE FORMS FILLED IN

The family forms page carries Form A, C, D, E and H2 through one ancillary relief case, field by field, with the Cap 179B filing fees and a Form E whose asset summary reconciles. The specimens on this desk are: the petition, the acknowledgement of service, the notice of application for decree absolute and the joint application; Form A, C, D, E and H1 to H4; and the family bundle.

What the Family Court charges, and when it falls due (Cap 179B, Schedule)

Step	Fee	When
Filing a petition, or a joint application	**HK$630**	On presentation, with the marriage certificate and the mediation certificate
Filing Form A — notice of application for an appointment before a judge	**HK$630**	With the petition, or later if the financial claim follows the divorce
Form 2C (joint application) entered in the special procedure list	No separate fee	On entry of the joint application
Setting down for trial — undefended cause	**HK$630**	When the cause is set down, not when the petition is filed
Setting down for trial — defended cause	**HK$1,045**	As above; the higher figure applies where the cause is defended
Transfer between the District Court and the Court of First Instance at the parties' request	**HK$1,045**	On the application to transfer
Form C, Form D, Form E, the questionnaire, Forms H1 to H4	**No separate fee**	—
Notice of appeal, and setting down an appeal	**HK$1,045** each	Within the appeal period, which is short
Registry copies: photocopy per page · certified photocopy per page	HK$4 · HK$5.5	When a copy is needed for service or for another court
Court seal on a copy document	HK$28	When the copy is to be used abroad or proved
Search of a file or document at the Registry	HK$18	Per search

Where Cap 179B does not provide for a matter that the High Court Fees Rules (Cap 4D) cover, the High Court fees apply (rule 2, proviso). A defended cause set down for trial and taken on appeal therefore costs HK$630 + HK$1,045 + HK$1,045 in court fees before anyone's time is counted.

7 Practical checklist for a new family matter

FILE-OPENING CHECKLIST

- Main suit identified: petition or joint application, and its stage
- Jurisdiction and forum checked, including any transfer issue under PD 15.14
- Form A filed and the First Appointment date diarised, with the 28-day Form E deadline calculated backwards
- Form C served on the respondent and proof of service filed
- Form E disclosure checklist opened: real property, bank accounts, investments, pensions, companies, trusts, liabilities, income
- Supporting documents gathered and limited to what explains the figures
- Mediation information given, with the PD 15.10 position recorded
- Form H1, H2, H3 or H4 identified correctly for the next hearing
- Children's issues flagged: CDR, Form J, any PDSL guidance engaged
- Confidentiality and access checked before any document leaves the file
- Bundle only for documents relevant and necessary to the application

8 Sources

- Practice Directions 15.1 to 15.15, Family Court, Judiciary of the HKSAR.
- PD 15.9 (Forms H1–H4); PD 15.11 (Forms A–G, Form E, First Appointment, FDR); PD 15.13 (Form J, CDR); PD 15.14 (First Directions Hearing Bundle).
- PDSL 10.4, Guidance Note on Case Management and Time Tabling in Children and Ancillary Relief Proceedings.
- Domestic and Cohabitation Relationships Violence Ordinance (Cap 189).

Family Court forms, filled in

FAMILY · SPECIMENS

These are specimens, not official forms. The Family Court forms are annexed to the practice directions and are revised — take the current version from the Judiciary's Family Court forms page, and copy the content, not the layout.

TWO THINGS TO KNOW BEFORE YOU START
Form E is a statement of full and frank disclosure. An incomplete Form E is not a drafting problem; it is a credibility problem that follows the client into the FDR and the trial. And Form H answers such as "to be confirmed" are expressly treated as unacceptable under PD 15.9 — they may be treated as if there were no costs application for that item at all.

1 The case used throughout

The parties

Item	Detail
Court and case number	In the Family Court, FCMC 4321/2026
Petitioner / applicant	HO Man Yee, Grace · born 1982 · secondary school teacher
Respondent	TANG Chi Hang, Vincent · born 1979 · regional sales director
Marriage	Married 12 May 2012 in Hong Kong · separated 3 September 2025
Children	TANG Hei Tung, Anson (born 2016); TANG Hei Yu, Chloe (born 2019) — living with the petitioner
Matrimonial home	Flat 8, 25th Floor, Bel Air Heights, 88 Pok Fu Lam Road, Hong Kong — joint names, subject to a mortgage
Petition	Filed 20 January 2026 on the fact of two years' separation with consent; decree nisi 14 May 2026
Ancillary relief	Form A filed 2 June 2026; First Appointment 30 July 2026; FDR 12 November 2026

How the forms chain

Form	Filed by	When	Fee
Form A — notice of application for ancillary relief	Applicant	To start the financial claim	HK$630
Form C — notice of First Appointment	Applicant serves on respondent	Once the appointment is fixed	None
Form E — financial statement	Both parties, simultaneously	Not less than 28 days before the First Appointment	None
Questionnaire — request for further information and documents	Each party, on the other	Not later than 14 days before the First Appointment	None
Form D — notice of FDR appointment	Applicant serves on respondent	Once the FDR is fixed	None
Form H1 — costs on the main suit	Each party	3 clear days before the hearing	None
Form H3 — costs to and including the FDR	Each party	Before the FDR	None
Form H4 — costs after the FDR to trial	Each party	3 clear days before each hearing after the FDR	None
Form H4 — costs after FDR to trial	Each party	Before each later milestone	None
Form H2 — costs in children proceedings	Each party	3 clear days before CMC, PTR or trial	None

2 Form A — notice of application for ancillary relief

This is the application that creates the financial claim and triggers the First Appointment. It is short, and the important part is what you ask for: the orders ticked here frame everything that follows.

Form A — Notice of Application for Ancillary Relief	Specimen · example only
Court and case number	In the Family Court, FCMC 4321/2026
Applicant	HO Man Yee, Grace
Respondent	TANG Chi Hang, Vincent
Application	The applicant applies for the following orders:
Periodical payments	For herself pending suit, and for the two children
Lump sum	A lump sum order in her favour
Property	Transfer of the respondent's interest in the matrimonial home at Flat 8, 25/F, Bel Air Heights, 88 Pok Fu Lam Road, Hong Kong
Pension	A pension sharing order in respect of the respondent's occupational scheme
Costs	Costs of the application
Signature	Signed by the applicant's solicitors, Messrs Whitfield & Co, on 2 June 2026
Service	Served on the respondent's solicitors with Form C once the First Appointment was fixed

Fee: HK$630 on filing (Cap 179B, Schedule item 2 — notice of application for an appointment before a judge) · filed in the same suit as the petition, using the FCMC number

Do not treat the tick boxes as a wish list. Each order sought commits the client to a case theory, and a claim for a transfer of the home is a very different case from a claim for a lump sum. Take instructions on the orders before the form is filed, not after the first appointment.

3 Form C — notice of First Appointment

Form C tells the respondent when to attend and, critically, when the Form E is due. It is served by the applicant; the date is not vacated save with leave, and if it is vacated the court fixes a fresh date.

Form C — Notice of a First Appointment	Specimen · example only
Court and case number	In the Family Court, FCMC 4321/2026
Applicant	HO Man Yee, Grace
Respondent	TANG Chi Hang, Vincent
Appointment	Thursday 30 July 2026 at 9:30 am, Family Court, 3rd Floor, Wanchai Law Courts Building, 12 Harbour Road, Wan Chai, Hong Kong
What the respondent must do	Attend in person or by counsel; file and serve a Form E not less than 28 days before the appointment
Form E deadline	By 2 July 2026 (28 days before 30 July)
Documents to bring	Completed Form E with annexures; any questionnaire; evidence of income and assets as set out in the form
Consequence of non-attendance	The court may proceed in the respondent's absence and make such order as it thinks fit, including as to costs
Signature and date	Signed by the applicant's solicitors · served 12 June 2026

Fee: none · served by the applicant once the appointment is fixed · confirm the 28-day Form E date on the face of the form and diarise it for both parties

4 Form D — notice of FDR appointment

The Financial Dispute Resolution hearing is where most cases settle. The judge tries to broker an agreement; the parties attend with authority to settle. It is not a trial and evidence is not heard.

Form D — Notice of a Financial Dispute Resolution Appointment Specimen · example only	
Court and case number	In the Family Court, FCMC 4321/2026
Applicant / respondent	HO Man Yee, Grace / TANG Chi Hang, Vincent
Appointment	Thursday 12 November 2026 at 10:00 am, Family Court, Wan Chai
Attendance	The parties must attend in person, with authority to settle, accompanied by their legal representatives
Documents	Form E and answers to questionnaire already filed; updated Form H3 costs estimate; a concise position statement and any offer
Nature of the hearing	A settlement conference before a judge; no oral evidence; without prejudice to the trial
If no settlement	Directions will be given for trial, including expert evidence and the trial bundle
Signature and date	Signed by the applicant's solicitors · served 20 October 2026

Fee: none · served once the FDR is fixed · the parties' authority to settle is the point of the hearing — confirm it with the client in writing beforehand

5 Form E — financial statement

This is the document that decides the case. It follows a fixed structure: general information, assets and liabilities with a summary coded A to L, income, current monthly expenses, other information, orders sought and a schedule of attachments.

Form E — Part 1: general information Specimen · example only	
Name and address	HO Man Yee, Grace · Flat 8, 25/F, Bel Air Heights, 88 Pok Fu Lam Road, Hong Kong
Date of birth / occupation	14 August 1982 · secondary school teacher
Marriage and separation	Married 12 May 2012 · separated 3 September 2025
Petition	FCMC 4321/2026 · decree nisi 14 May 2026
Children	Anson, born 2016, primary school; Chloe, born 2019, kindergarten — both living with the applicant
Arrangements	Children live with the applicant in the matrimonial home; respondent has alternate-weekend contact
Maintenance	Interim maintenance of HK$28,000 per month paid under the order of 30 July 2026

Filed and exchanged not less than 28 days before the First Appointment · no filing fee · the form is sworn evidence, so every figure must be capable of being supported

Form E — Part 2: summary of assets and liabilities

Specimen · example only

Reference codes A to L as used in Form E

Ref	Asset	Value (HK$)
A	Net value of interest in the matrimonial home (value 9,500,000 less mortgage 2,100,000)	7,400,000
B	Total net value of other landed properties	0
C	Total value of bank accounts (four accounts, three months' statements annexed)	480,000
D	Shareholding or beneficial interest in private companies (40% of Bel Air Education Limited, valued on net assets)	1,200,000
E	Other business interests	0
F	Holdings — listed stocks and unit trusts	650,000
G	Insurance policies (surrender values)	180,000
H	Debts owed to the applicant	0
I	Valuable personal items — jewellery and watch	120,000
J	Other assets	0
—	**Sub-total**	**10,030,000**
K	Pensions — accrued value of the respondent's scheme and the applicant's teacher scheme	1,850,000
—	**Total assets**	**11,880,000**
L	**Total liabilities** — credit cards HK$31,000; tax payable HK$14,000	45,000
—	**Net value**	**11,835,000**

Do not deduct the mortgage twice: A is the net value of the home, so the mortgage does not reappear in L · every figure must tie to an annexed document

Form E — Parts 3 and 4: income and monthly expenses	Specimen · example only
Basic salary	78,000
Bonus (average per month, last 12 months)	8,000
Overtime, commission, tips, allowances	0
Gross monthly income	**86,000**
Net monthly income after tax and MPF	81,500
Mortgage	18,500
Management fees	3,200
Rates and Government rent	1,100
Utilities and broadband	2,400
Food and household	9,000
Transport	3,500
Children's school fees and activities	16,000
Domestic helper	5,200
Insurance premiums	2,600
Personal and miscellaneous	2,000
Total monthly expenses	**63,500**
Monthly surplus	18,000

Expenses should reflect what is actually spent, evidenced by statements — not a budget the client would like to have · state the period each figure covers

Form E — Part 6: capital needs and Part 7: attachments	Specimen · example only
Housing — deposit and costs to rehouse the applicant and children	1,500,000
Children's education — five years' school fees	600,000
Car replacement	250,000
Clear liabilities	45,000
Total capital needs	**2,395,000**
Part 7 — documents annexed	Three months' bank statements (four accounts); mortgage statement; pension valuations; company accounts for Bel Air Education Limited; insurance surrender values; latest tax demand; payslips for 12 months
Declaration	"I believe that the facts stated in this financial statement are true and that I have made full and frank disclosure of my financial circumstances." Signed by the party, dated 2 July 2026

Annex only what explains the figures · the declaration is signed by the party, not the solicitor · a sealed-envelope exchange is available where only one party can file on time

6 The questionnaire

Form E rarely answers everything. PD 15.11 lets a party serve a questionnaire and request for particulars not later than 14 days before the First Appointment; the judge reads it before the hearing and decides at the appointment whether the answers will be ordered. It is the only chance before the FDR to be specific, so it should be narrow and it should be about the issues the judge will have to decide.

Questionnaire and request for further information — PD 15.11 Specimen · example only	
Heading	In the Family Court, FCMC 4321/2026 · between HO Man Yee, Grace (applicant) and TANG Chi Hang, Vincent (respondent)
Document	Questionnaire and request for further information and documents, served by the applicant on the respondent's solicitors
Date of service	16 July 2026 — 14 days before the First Appointment on 30 July 2026
Preamble	"The applicant requests the following further information and documents, which are relevant to the issues in this application and necessary for the purposes of the First Appointment and the financial dispute resolution hearing."
Q1 — the company	Provide the audited accounts of Bel Air Education Limited for the last three financial years, and state the dividends declared in each year and to whom they were paid.
Q2 — bank accounts	Provide 12 months' statements for every account in the respondent's sole name and for the joint account ending 4471, including the account closed in March 2026 and the destination of the balance.
Q3 — remuneration	Provide the respondent's contract of employment, his bonus letters for 2023 to 2026, and particulars of any deferred or share-based award not yet vested.
Q4 — pension	Provide a scheme statement showing the accrued value as at the date of the petition and the retirement and early-retirement terms, and state whether any lump sum has been commuted.
Q5 — the Shenzhen property	Identify the registered owner of the flat in Nanshan, provide the title documents, the purchase price and how it was funded, the outstanding mortgage, and the rental income received since 2023.
Q6 — loans	Provide the loan agreement and repayment records for the HK$800,000 said to be owed to the respondent's brother, and state when and how the money was advanced.
Q7 — withdrawals	Explain the four withdrawals totalling HK$640,000 from the joint account between October 2025 and February 2026, and state where the funds are now held.
Q8 — outgoings	Provide the respondent's current monthly outgoings, identifying the rent paid since he left the matrimonial home and by whom it is paid.
Request for documents	Documents to be provided by 4:00 pm on 13 August 2026, as may be ordered at the First Appointment.
Consequence of not answering	The applicant will apply for an order requiring an answer, with the costs of the application, and will invite the court to draw the appropriate inference from the failure to disclose.
Signature	Signed by the applicant's solicitors, Messrs Whitfield & Co, 16 July 2026

Fee: none · served not later than 14 days before the First Appointment · ask only what is relevant and necessary, because a scattergun questionnaire invites a refusal on all of it and costs you the judge's patience

Which Form H, and when it is due

Form	Covers	Filed	Fee
H1	The main suit — defended matrimonial causes and interlocutory applications relating to the main suit, including applications under the Domestic and Cohabitation Relationships Violence Ordinance (Cap 189)	3 clear days before the hearing	None
H2	Children proceedings, where PD 15.13 prescribes the exchange of a Form H	3 clear days before the case management hearing, the CDR, the pre-trial review or the trial	None
H3	Ancillary relief, from the start of the application up to and including the FDR	3 clear days before the FDR	None
H4	Ancillary relief, after the FDR and up to and including the trial	3 clear days before each hearing after the FDR	None

One form per party per milestone. A second Form H is not needed at a repeated appointment unless circumstances have changed substantially. PD 15.9 treats answers such as "to be confirmed" as unacceptable, and the court may treat the item as if no costs were being sought for it.

7 Form H1 — estimate of costs on the main suit

Form H1 is the odd one out: it is not about the money, it is about the suit and the applications inside it. Our specimen case was undefended, so this specimen is drawn on an interlocutory application within it — the summons for interim maintenance and a non-molestation injunction heard on 30 July 2026.

Form H1 — Estimate of Costs on the Main Suit	Specimen · example only
Court and case number	In the Family Court, FCMC 4321/2026
Party filing	Applicant, HO Man Yee, Grace
Hearing	Summons for interim maintenance and injunction, 30 July 2026 — filed and served 23 July 2026
Stage covered	The main suit from the filing of the petition on 20 January 2026, and the interlocutory application of 12 June 2026, up to and including the hearing on 30 July 2026
Solicitors' costs incurred — partner	18 hours at HK$4,500 = 81,000
Solicitors' costs incurred — associate	12 hours at HK$2,800 = 33,600
Solicitors' costs incurred — paralegal	4 hours at HK$1,200 = 4,800
Counsel's fees incurred	Advice on the summons, drafting the affirmation and attendance — 15,000
Disbursements incurred	Petition filing fee HK$630; affirmation and exhibits HK$420; service HK$250; travel HK$1,000 — 2,300
Sub-total incurred	**136,700**
Estimated further costs	3 hours partner; counsel's refresher; copying and travel — 22,000
Estimated total to the hearing	**158,700**
Hourly rates applied	Partner HK$4,500; associate HK$2,800; paralegal HK$1,200; counsel charged on the brief, not on time
Payments on account	HK$120,000 received; balance outstanding HK$38,700
Certification	Signed by the solicitor and by the client, confirming that the estimate and the rates have been explained

Fee: none · H1 covers the suit and the applications within it — it is not the form for the financial claim, which is H3 and then H4 · describe the hearing, because the figure is read against it

8 Form H2 — estimate of costs on children matters

PD 15.9 requires a Form H at each milestone: the case management hearing, the CDR, the FDR, the pre-trial review, and (on transfer to the Court of First Instance) the first appointment. In children proceedings the form is Form H2, and it must be lodged and served at least 3 clear days before the hearing.

Form H2 — Estimate of Costs on Children Matters	Specimen · example only
Court and case number	In the Family Court, FCMC 4321/2026
Party filing	Applicant, HO Man Yee, Grace
Hearing	Case management hearing, 30 July 2026
Costs incurred to date — solicitors	148,000
Costs incurred to date — counsel	22,000
Disbursements to date — filing fees, copies, medical report	15,000
Sub-total incurred	**185,000**
Estimated further costs — solicitors	78,000
Estimated further costs — counsel	12,000
Estimated further disbursements	5,000
Sub-total estimated	**95,000**
Total estimated costs	**280,000**
Hourly rates	Partner HK$4,500; associate HK$2,800; paralegal HK$1,200; counsel HK$3,500
Signatures	Signed by the solicitor and by the client, confirming the estimate has been explained

Fee: none · lodge and serve at least 3 clear days before the hearing · "to be confirmed" or "unknown" is unacceptable under PD 15.9 and may be treated as no costs application for that item

9 Form H3 — estimate of costs up to and including the FDR

PD 15.9 prescribes a different costs form at each stage. In ancillary relief, Form H3 covers the period from the start of the application up to and including the FDR; Form H4 takes over from the FDR to trial. The form must be lodged and served at least 3 clear days before the hearing, and the figures have to be capable of being stood behind — PD 15.9 treats vague answers as unacceptable.

Form H3 — Estimate of Costs on Ancillary Relief (start to FDR) Specimen · example only	
Court and case number	In the Family Court, FCMC 4321/2026
Party filing	Applicant, HO Man Yee, Grace
Stage covered	From the filing of Form A on 2 June 2026 up to and including the FDR on 12 November 2026
Hearing before which filed	FDR, 12 November 2026 — filed and served 6 November 2026
Solicitors' costs incurred — partner	18.5 hours at HK$4,500 = 83,250
Solicitors' costs incurred — associate	34 hours at HK$2,800 = 95,200
Solicitors' costs incurred — paralegal	12 hours at HK$1,200 = 14,400
Counsel's fees incurred	First Appointment and advice on settlement — 38,000
Disbursements incurred	Form A filing fee HK$630; valuation report HK$12,000; mediation HK$9,000; copying and courier HK$1,400 — 23,030
Sub-total incurred	**253,880**
Estimated further solicitors' costs to the FDR	16 hours partner, 10 hours associate — 100,000
Estimated further counsel's fees	FDR attendance and advice — 25,000
Estimated further disbursements	Updated valuation, copies, travel — 6,000
Estimated total to the FDR	**384,880**
Hourly rates applied	Partner HK$4,500; associate HK$2,800; paralegal HK$1,200; counsel's hourly rate HK$3,500 where charged on time
Payments on account	HK$300,000 received; balance outstanding HK$84,880
Certification	Signed by the solicitor and by the client, confirming that the estimate and the rates have been explained and that the client understands the figure may increase
Fee for filing	None

Form H3 stops at the FDR — Form H4 covers the period after it to trial · every line needs a basis: hours, rate or invoice · a figure entered as "to be confirmed" may be treated as no costs application for that item at all

10 Form H4 — estimate of costs after the FDR to trial

If the FDR does not settle the case, the costs from that point are reported on Form H4. The specimen below is the same matter after the FDR on 12 November 2026, with a three-day trial listed for June 2027.

Form H4 — Estimate of Costs on Ancillary Relief (after FDR to trial) Specimen · example only	
Court and case number	In the Family Court, FCMC 4321/2026
Party filing	Applicant, HO Man Yee, Grace
Stage covered	From the FDR on 12 November 2026 up to and including the trial listed for 8 to 10 June 2027
Hearing before which filed	Pre-trial review, 6 April 2027 — filed and served 1 April 2027
Solicitors' costs incurred since the FDR — partner	14 hours at HK$4,500 = 63,000
Solicitors' costs incurred since the FDR — associate	20 hours at HK$2,800 = 56,000
Counsel's fees incurred since the FDR	Advice on settlement and drafting the statement of issues — 42,000
Disbursements incurred since the FDR	Updated valuation HK$6,000; copying and courier HK$2,500 — 8,500
Sub-total incurred since the FDR	**169,500**
Estimated further solicitors' costs to trial	25 hours partner, 30 hours associate, 10 hours paralegal — 208,500
Estimated counsel's fees to trial	Brief fee HK$120,000 and one refresher at HK$30,000 — 150,000
Estimated further disbursements	Trial bundle, copying, travel and expert attendance — 12,000
Estimated total from the FDR to trial	**540,000**
Costs already reported on Form H3	HK$384,880 to and including the FDR — not repeated here
Hourly rates applied	Partner HK$4,500; associate HK$2,800; paralegal HK$1,200; counsel on the brief and refresher
Certification	Signed by the solicitor and by the client; the client confirms the trial estimate has been explained, including the refresher

Fee: none · H4 starts at the FDR — costs before it belong on H3, and repeating them double-counts · a fresh H4 is expected before each hearing after the FDR, not only before the trial

11 The filing fees

Matrimonial Causes (Fees) Rules (Cap 179B), Schedule

Item	Fee
Filing a petition; filing a joint application; sealing an originating application or summons; entering a joint application in the special procedure list	**HK$630** in each case
Filing a notice of application for an appointment before a judge — *this is the Form A filing fee*	**HK$630**
Setting down for trial — undefended cause	HK$630
Setting down for trial — defended cause	HK$1,045
Transfer between the District Court and the Court of First Instance on the parties' request	HK$1,045
Attendance of a public officer to produce or prove a record	HK$440
Typed copy of a document by the Registry, with certification — per page	HK$36
Additional copy — per page	HK$4
Photocopy supplied by the Registry — per page; certified photocopy — per page	HK$4 / HK$5.5
Court seal on a copy document	HK$28
Search of a file or document at the Registry	HK$18
Notice of appeal; setting down an appeal	HK$1,045 each
Form C, Form D, Form E, Forms H1 to H4 and the questionnaire	**No separate fee**

Where Cap 179B makes no provision for a matter that the High Court Fees Rules (Cap 4D) cover, the High Court fees apply (rule 2, proviso). Fees are payable at the Family Court Registry's accounts office; confirm the current figure before you tell a client what a filing will cost.

WHAT THE WHOLE SEQUENCE COSTS IN FEES

On the specimen case: HK$630 to file the petition, HK$630 to file Form A, and HK$630 to set the undefended cause down for trial — **HK$1,890** in court fees for the entire financial application. Form C, D, E and H2 add nothing. That is worth telling clients early, because the court fees are trivial next to the costs the case will generate, and the costs estimate is where the real conversation happens.

12 What goes wrong

- **Form A asks for the wrong relief.** The orders ticked frame the evidence and the settlement range. Settle them with the client before filing, and check that each one is available on the facts.
- **Form C is served late or not at all.** The respondent then has no proper notice of the Form E deadline, and the first appointment is wasted.
- **Form E is filed without annexures.** The figures are unsupported and the court will adjourn. Annex only what explains the figures — but do annex that.
- **The same liability is deducted twice.** A net-value figure for the home plus the mortgage in the liabilities column overstates the deficit. Check the arithmetic as a whole, not line by line.

- **Expenses are aspirational.** Form E asks what is spent, evidenced by statements, not what the client would like to spend after the divorce.
- **Form H2 says "to be confirmed".** PD 15.9 treats vague answers as unacceptable and may treat the item as abandoned. Give a figure and the basis for it.
- **The questionnaire is a scattergun.** Twenty questions, half of them irrelevant, get answered with a refusal and an order for costs against the party who asked. Ask what the judge will need to decide.
- **The questionnaire is served late.** PD 15.11 sets 14 days before the First Appointment; later than that and the judge has no time to read it, so it waits for a further appointment.
- **Form H3 is filed for the wrong period.** H3 ends at the FDR; costs after it belong in Form H4. Filing one document covering the whole case misstates the figure the court is being asked to rely on.
- **Nobody checks the client's authority to settle before the FDR.** The hearing exists to settle; a client who cannot agree anything wastes the appointment and costs.

13 Filing checklist

PRINT THIS

- Form A: orders sought confirmed with the client and matched to the evidence
- Form A filed with the HK$630 fee; sealed copy retained
- Form C served on the respondent; proof of service on file
- Form E deadline calculated backwards from the First Appointment (28 days)
- Form E: every Part completed, A to L summary reconciled, declaration signed by the party
- Form E: annexures limited to documents that explain the figures
- Questionnaire drafted from the issues, served not later than 14 days before the First Appointment
- Questionnaire answers diarised once ordered, and followed up rather than assumed
- Form D served once the FDR is fixed; client's authority to settle confirmed in writing
- Form H3 lodged and served 3 clear days before the FDR, stopping at the FDR
- Form H4 or H2 at later milestones, 3 clear days before
- Costs figures realistic and signed by solicitor and client
- Confidentiality checked before any document is served or filed

14 Sources

- Practice Direction 15.11 (Financial Dispute Resolution pilot scheme), Forms A to G, and paragraph 4 on the questionnaire and request for particulars; PD 15.9 (Forms H1 to H4: H1 for the main suit, H2 for children, H3 for ancillary relief to the FDR and H4 after it); PD 15.13 (children's dispute resolution).
- Matrimonial Causes (Fees) Rules (Cap 179B), Schedule; High Court Fees Rules (Cap 4D) where Cap 179B is silent.
- Judiciary, Family Court forms page; Form E financial statement and its guidance booklet.
- Law Society of Hong Kong, *Guide to Good Practice on Family Law*.

Matrimonial practice

FAMILY · MATRIMONIAL

The family law guide covers the financial side — Form A, Form E, the FDR. This page covers the cause itself: the petition, service, the decree, and enforcement of the orders that follow.

TWO NUMBERS, ONE OF THEM WRONG

Section 15(5) of the Matrimonial Causes Ordinance says a decree nisi cannot be made absolute before **three months**. The Matrimonial Causes (Decree Absolute) General Order reduces that to **six weeks** for decrees granted after 1973, unless the court fixes a shorter period in a particular case. Six weeks is therefore the operative figure — but it is a general order, not the ordinance, and a court can shorten it further.

1 Jurisdiction, ground and form

The three questions before any petition is drafted

Question	Answer	Where it comes from
Can the Hong Kong court hear it?	Either party is domiciled in Hong Kong, or habitually resident, or has a substantial connection — commonly three years' residence	Matrimonial Causes Ordinance, s 3
Is the marriage old enough?	No petition within one year of the marriage, save in exceptional circumstances or on the ground of adultery or behaviour	s 12
On what ground?	The marriage has broken down irretrievably, proved by one of five facts: adultery; behaviour; one year's separation with consent; two years' separation; five years' separation	s 11

There is one ground and five facts. The fact chosen fixes the evidence, the form of petition (Form 2 has a version for each fact), and whether the respondent's consent must be proved. A joint application uses Form 2C and needs no fact proved at all — the parties simply apply together.

2 How the cause runs

- **Petition or joint application** Form 2 with Form 2B if there are children, Form 3 notice of proceedings, Form 4 for the respondent, a statement of truth and the petitioner's certificate as to family mediation. Joint: Forms 2C and 2D. File with the original or certified copy marriage certificate and pay HK$630.
- **Service** The petitioner serves the respondent personally or by post; personal service is never effected by the petitioner in person. A signed Form 4 returned to the registry is proof of service.
- **Setting down** Apply to the registrar for directions to set the cause down. An undefended cause goes into the special procedure list for HK$630; a defended cause into the defended list for HK$1,045.
- **Registrar's certificate and decree nisi** In an undefended cause the registrar considers the papers and certifies; the decree nisi follows. If there are children, the court must be satisfied with the arrangements before the decree is made absolute.
- **Decree absolute** After six weeks, lodge Form 5 (petition) or Form 5A (joint application). The registrar searches the minutes and, if nothing is pending, makes the decree absolute and issues the certificate.
- **Ancillary relief** Runs alongside, on its own timetable — Form A, Form E, the First Appointment and the FDR. See the family forms page, and Form F and Form G below for the two notices that go with it.

3 Timeline

An uncontested petition, start to finish

Stage	Usual timing	Fee
Petition filed	Day 0	HK$630
Service on the respondent	Promptly after filing; by post or personally	—
Acknowledgement of service returned (Form 4)	Within days of service; nothing moves until it is back	—
Application to set down — special procedure list	Once service is proved	HK$630
Registrar's certificate and decree nisi	Typically 4 to 8 weeks after setting down	—
Application for decree absolute (Form 5)	**Not before 6 weeks** after the decree nisi	—
Certificate of decree absolute	Usually 1 to 2 weeks after the application	—
Whole cause, undefended	Commonly 4 to 7 months	HK$1,260 in court fees

4 The documents, filled in

Form 2 — Petition (two years' separation with consent) Specimen · example only

Court	In the Family Court, FCMC 4321/2026
Petitioner	HO Man Yee, Grace, of Flat 8, 25/F, Bel Air Heights, 88 Pok Fu Lam Road, Hong Kong
Respondent	TANG Chi Hang, Vincent, of 12A, Block 3, Greenfield Gardens, 1 Tai Hang Road, Hong Kong
Marriage	Married on 12 May 2012 at St Andrew's Church, Hong Kong · marriage certificate no. 2012/04587
Children	TANG Hei Tung, Anson, born 2016; TANG Hei Yu, Chloe, born 2019
Jurisdiction	Both parties are domiciled in Hong Kong and have been habitually resident here for more than three years
Fact relied on	The parties have lived apart for a continuous period of at least two years immediately preceding the presentation of this petition, and the respondent consents to the grant of a decree
Particulars	The parties separated on 3 September 2025 and have since lived apart; the petitioner has lived at the matrimonial home and the respondent at Greenfield Gardens. The respondent's consent is signified by his signature on the acknowledgement of service
Prayer	The petitioner prays that the marriage be dissolved; that the court make the orders sought in the accompanying Form A; and for costs
Statement of truth	Signed by the petitioner on 20 January 2026, confirming the contents are true
Mediation certificate	Petitioner's certificate as to family mediation filed with the petition
Fee	HK$630 on filing

File with the original or certified copy marriage certificate · the two-year period must be continuous and complete before filing · a petition presented within one year of the marriage needs s 12 leave

Form 4 — Acknowledgement of Service	Specimen · example only
Court and case	In the Family Court, FCMC 4321/2026
To	The Registrar, Family Court, Wanchai Law Courts Building
Petition	A petition dated 20 January 2026 has been served on me
Service	Served by post on 26 January 2026 at 12A, Block 3, Greenfield Gardens
Intention	I do not intend to defend the proceedings
Consent	I consent to a decree being granted on the fact of two years' separation
Children	I do not dispute the arrangements proposed for the children
Ancillary relief	I intend to apply for ancillary relief; a Form A will be filed separately
Signature and date	Signed by the respondent on 3 February 2026

No fee · the respondent's signature on this form is how consent is proved in a two-year separation case · service by post is good service; personal service is never effected by the petitioner personally

Form 5 — Notice of application for decree nisi to be made absolute	Specimen · example only
Court and case	In the Family Court, FCMC 4321/2026
Applicant	HO Man Yee, Grace, the petitioner
Decree nisi	Pronounced on 14 May 2026, dissolving the marriage
Notice	I apply for the decree nisi to be made absolute
Children	The court has considered the arrangements for the two children and is satisfied with them
Appeals	No appeal, application for re-hearing or rescission is pending
Date lodged	26 June 2026 — six weeks after 14 May 2026
Result	Decree made absolute 3 July 2026; certificate issued to each party
Fee	None

Lodge no earlier than six weeks after the decree nisi · Form 5A is the equivalent for a joint application · a decree will not be made absolute while the children's arrangements are unresolved

Form 2C — general form of joint application	Specimen · example only
Court and case	In the Family Court, FCMC 2088/2026 — a joint application is given its own case number on filing
First applicant	NG Ka Yiu, Dominic, of 21B, Tower 2, Island Crest, 8 First Street, Sai Ying Pun, Hong Kong
Second applicant	SO Mei Ling, of the same address until 30 June 2025, now of Flat 9, 12/F, King's Court, 33 Java Road, North Point, Hong Kong
Marriage	Married on 3 October 2014 at the Marriage Registry, City Hall, Hong Kong · certificate no. 2014/11203
Children	NG Tsz Hin, Ethan, born 2017 — a child of the family; no other children. The proposed arrangements go on the separate **Form 2D** filed with the application, not in the application itself
Jurisdiction	Both applicants are habitually resident in Hong Kong, and the marriage was celebrated here
Fact relied on	The applicants have lived apart for a continuous period of at least **one year** immediately preceding the application — the fact available to a joint application, and not available to a sole petitioner without the other's consent
Particulars	Separated on 30 June 2025; the first applicant has remained in the former matrimonial home and the second has lived at King's Court since that date; the parties have not resumed cohabitation
Form 2D filed with it	The child lives with the second applicant; the first applicant sees him each weekend and shares school holidays; both applicants ask the court to note the arrangement rather than make an order at this stage
Other financial claims	Neither applicant seeks an order for ancillary relief: the flat is to be transferred and the maintenance settled by the terms recorded in the schedule to the application
Mediation	A certificate as to family mediation from each applicant, filed with the application
Statements of truth	Signed by both applicants on 12 February 2026
Fee	**HK$630** on filing, and the application is entered in the special procedure list — no further fee for that entry

File with the marriage certificate · both applicants must sign · neither party can withdraw a joint application unilaterally: if the arrangement breaks down the application is discontinued and a sole petition is needed · the decree nisi follows in the special procedure list, and the decree absolute needs Form 5A — not Form 5, which is the petition version — no earlier than six weeks later

5 The papers that travel with the petition

A divorce is not one document. The petition or joint application is the application; the papers here are what must go with it, and what comes after the decree nisi. Missing one does not stop the cause — it stops the decree being made absolute, which is the only order that ends the marriage.

Form 2B — statement as to arrangements for the children (petition) Specimen · example only	
When it is needed	Filed with a **petition** where there is a child of the family under 18. The joint application uses Form 2D instead
Case	FCMC 2345/2027 · CHAN Wai Keung, Andy (petitioner) v LEUNG Siu Ming, Betty (respondent)
Children	CHAN Hoi Yan, aged 9 — living with the respondent at the former matrimonial home; CHAN Hoi Ching, aged 6 — living with the petitioner
Arrangements and education	Both children at the same primary school in Kowloon Tong; the elder stays at the former matrimonial home, the younger with the petitioner, ten minutes away
Contact	The children spend alternate weekends together at each parent's home, and the whole of the summer holiday is shared; handovers on Friday evening
Maintenance	HK$8,000 a month for the children, paid by the petitioner, with school fees and medical costs shared equally
What the court is being told	Not who is at fault, but who the children live with, where they go to school, and how they see the other parent. A statement that dodges these questions is returned
Fee	**No separate fee** — filed with the petition, which costs HK$630

Filed with the petition · no separate fee · the arrangements must be actual arrangements, not aspirations · the Children's Appointment (Form I) follows if the court is not satisfied

Form 2D — statement as to arrangements for the children (joint application) Specimen · example only	
When it is needed	Filed with a **joint application** (Form 2C) where there is a child of the family under 18 — the joint-application version of Form 2B
Case	FCMC 2345/2027 · the same parties, now applying jointly after the petition was replaced
The difference from Form 2B	There is no petitioner and respondent, so both parties state and sign the same arrangements. Where they do not agree on a detail, the form must say so rather than describing a compromise neither has accepted
What goes in it	Names and ages of the children; who they live with; school and childcare; contact with the other parent; maintenance and who pays it; any court order already in force about them
Signatures	Both applicants — a Form 2D signed by one party only is treated as incomplete, and the application is listed rather than accepted
Fee	**No separate fee** — filed with the joint application, HK$630

Filed with Form 2C · both parties sign · no separate fee · if the parties cannot agree the arrangements, a joint application is the wrong route: apply by petition and let the court decide

Form 3 — notice of proceedings Specimen · example only	
What it is	The document served with the petition that tells the respondent a suit has been begun, in which court, under which number, and what to do next
Case	FCMC 2345/2027 · served on LEUNG Siu Ming, Betty at the former matrimonial home on 12 May 2027
What it states	The court and the case number; the date of the petition; that the respondent must acknowledge service and state whether the suit is defended, within the time stated on the form; and where to file
What accompanies it	Copy of the petition, copy of Form 2B, and the acknowledgment of service form
If it is not served	The cause does not move. Substituted service — by advertisement or to a known address — needs the court's permission, and the application explains every attempt already made
Fee	**No separate fee**

Served with the petition and Form 2B · no separate fee · the acknowledgment of service is what starts the respondent's clock, so record the date of service

Form 5A — application for decree nisi to be made absolute (joint application) Specimen · example only	
When	Not before **6 weeks** after the decree nisi, and within 12 months of it unless the court extends time. For a joint application this is the form that asks for the decree absolute
Case	FCMC 2345/2027 · decree nisi granted 8 September 2027; application filed 20 October 2027
What it states	The date of the decree nisi; that neither party has appealed and the time for appeal has expired; that there is no pending application for ancillary relief that the court requires to be dealt with first; and that the parties have not reconciled
Children	Confirms the arrangements in Form 2D, and states any change since the decree nisi — a change of school or of residence is declared here, not left out
Signatures	Both applicants in a joint application; a sole applicant signs alone
What happens after	The court grants the decree absolute, and the marriage ends on that date. The decree absolute is the document a bank, the Land Registry or a foreign authority will ask for — not the decree nisi
Fee	**No fee**

Not before 6 weeks after decree nisi · no fee · within 12 months unless time is extended · the decree nisi does not end the marriage and must not be sent out as if it did

6 When the children are in dispute — Form I, Form J and Form K

Form 2B and Form 2D describe the arrangements. When the court is not satisfied with them — or when the acknowledgment of service shows the children are in dispute — the case moves onto the children's track under Practice Direction 15.13, and two notices arrive in sequence. **Form I** fixes the Children's Appointment; **Form K** fixes the Children's Dispute Resolution hearing. Neither of those is drafted by the parties: both are court notices, and the party's work is the service and the documents that must be filed before each date. The one document the parties do draft is **Form J**, the Children's Form — a statement of the present arrangements and the proposals, filed and exchanged 14 days before the appointment, and signed with a statement of truth.

THE CDR IS NOT PRIVILEGED — THIS IS THE TRAP

Paragraph 16 of PD 15.13 says that anything said, and any admission made, in the course of the CDR hearing *is admissible as evidence at trial*. It is the opposite of the FDR, where the discussion is confidential. A concession made at the CDR to move a negotiation along can be put to the judge who later hears the trial — and paragraph 15 allows that to be the same judge.

The children's track, from acknowledgment of service to trial

Step	What happens	When
Acknowledgment of service, Form 4 or joint application shows a children dispute	The court may direct a Children's Appointment, at the same time as the First Appointment under PD 15.11 or earlier if urgent	On filing
Form I issued	Notice of the Children's Appointment; the applicant serves it on the respondent (para 8)	Once the date is fixed
Form J and the statement of issues	Each party files at court and simultaneously exchanges the Children's Form (Form J) and a concise statement of issues	**14 days** before the CA
Chronology and list of orders sought	Needed as well where the CA is not heard together with the First Appointment	**14 days** before the CA
Form H2 costs estimate	Lodged and served by each party under PD 15.9	**3 clear days** before the CA
Children's Appointment	The judge defines the issues and directs reports, limited affirmations, separate representation, interim custody or access, mediation, or a trial date	The date in Form I
Form K served	Notice of the CDR hearing, served by the applicant on all parties concerned (para 13)	After the CA
Statement of Proposals	Each party files and exchanges a detailed statement of proposals for the children's future arrangements	**14 days** before the CDR
CDR hearing	The judge acts as conciliator; the parties attend in person. Not privileged	The date in Form K
If no settlement	Directions for trial before the same judge, with updated proposals 14 days before	After the CDR

Form I — Notice of a Children's Appointment	Specimen · example only
Heading	In the Family Court of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, FCMC 2345/2027 — CHAN Wai Keung, Andy (petitioner) and LEUNG Siu Ming, Betty (respondent)
What the notice is	Notice of a Children's Appointment issued on the court's direction, where the Form 4 acknowledgment shows the arrangements for the children are disputed
Date, time and place	14 July 2027 at 9:30 a.m., Court 12, 3/F, Wanchai Law Courts Building, 8 Queensway, Hong Kong
Heard with the First Appointment?	No — the notice says so, which is why the chronology and the list of orders and directions sought are also required 14 days before
What each party must do	File at court and simultaneously exchange, 14 days before the appointment: (i) the Children's Form, Form J; (ii) a concise statement of issues relating to the children; (iii) a brief chronology; (iv) a list of orders and directions sought
Costs estimate	Form H2 lodged and served by each party **3 clear days** before the appointment, completed under PD 15.9
Service	The **applicant** serves a copy on the respondent (para 8). Here: served on LEUNG Siu Ming, Betty at the former matrimonial home on 21 June 2027, with the receipt on the file
Attendance	Both parties attend in person unless the court otherwise directs (para 22)
What the court may do at the appointment	Direct a Social Investigation Report or an expert report; permit limited affirmations; appoint the Official Solicitor or a guardian ad litem; make interim custody or access orders; refer the parties to mediation or a parenting programme; direct a judicial interview if a child has asked to see the judge; or fix the CDR or a trial date
Fee	**None** — there is no filing fee for the notice or for the appointment
The trap	No further affirmations may be filed without leave, save one filed in support of a summons (para 7). Evidence that arrives late is evidence the court may refuse to read

14 days for Form J, the issues, and — if the appointment is not heard with the First Appointment — the chronology and the list of orders · 3 clear days for Form H2 · the applicant serves it, and service is proved · no fee

Form J — the Children's Form, filed and exchanged 14 days before the Children's Appointment Specimen · example only	
Form	Form J · Children's Form, annexed to Practice Direction 15.13
Heading	In the Family Court of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, FCMC 2345/2027 — CHAN Wai Keung, Andy (petitioner) and LEUNG Siu Ming, Betty (respondent)
Who files it	**Each party files their own.** This is the petitioner's. The respondent's Form J is a separate document, exchanged on the same day, and the two are read together at the Children's Appointment
Deadline	Filed at court and **simultaneously exchanged 14 days before the Children's Appointment** (para 9) — by **30 June 2027** for the appointment on 14 July 2027. Signed 29 June 2027
Filed with it	(i) a concise statement of issues relating to the children, two pages; (ii) a brief chronology; (iii) a list of the orders and directions sought — the last two because this appointment is **not** heard with the First Appointment (para 10)
Part 1 — the parties and the children	Petitioner: CHAN Wai Keung, Andy, HKID A123456(7), Flat 7, 9/F, Harbour View Court, 88 Java Road, North Point. Respondent: LEUNG Siu Ming, Betty, HKID B765432(1), Flat B, 18/F, Kingland Apartments, 25 King's Road, North Point. Children: CHAN Tsz Hin, Anson, born 12 March 2015, and CHAN Hoi Ying, Chloe, born 4 September 2018
Part 2 — where the children actually are	Both live with the respondent at Kingland Apartments, in the former matrimonial home. Anson sleeps in the second bedroom, Chloe shares the respondent's room. The respondent does the school run and the homework; a domestic helper, DALISAY Maria, employed since 2021, collects on Wednesdays when the respondent works late. Neither child has changed school since the separation
Part 3 — school, health and activities	Anson is in Form 1 at Rosaryhill School; Chloe is in Primary 3 at Marymount Primary School. Both are registered with Dr LAU at the North Point clinic; Chloe has mild asthma and an inhaler at school. Anson plays football on Saturday mornings at the HKFC juniors; Chloe has ballet on Tuesdays
Part 4 — the current contact	The petitioner sees the children **alternate weekends**, Saturday 10 a.m. to Sunday 6 p.m., collected and returned at Kingland Apartments; **Wednesday evening** from school pick-up to 8 p.m.; and speaks to each child by video call at 8 p.m. on the evenings they are not with him. Christmas, Lunar New Year and the summer holiday are split, with the split recorded in the chronology
Part 5 — the petitioner's proposal	Joint custody, with **care and control to the respondent**; the existing alternate-weekend and Wednesday contact continued and written into an order, with handovers at the building lobby; alternate halves of Christmas, Lunar New Year and Easter, and three weeks in the summer; school choice to be discussed before any application is made; maintenance for the children at a figure to be dealt with in the ancillary relief proceedings
Part 6 — other matters	The petitioner does not oppose a Social Investigation Report. Both parties attended a parenting programme in March 2027; the certificates are exhibited. There is no allegation of violence and no application for a non-molestation order
Statement of truth	Signed by the petitioner on 29 June 2027, declaring that the facts stated in the form are true to the best of his knowledge and belief. The form is **evidence**, and a false statement is exposure to proceedings for contempt
The statement of issues, in short	Three issues only: whether the order should be joint or sole custody; whether the Wednesday contact survives the petitioner's new shift pattern; and how the summer holiday is divided. Everything else in Form J is agreed and is recorded so that the court can see it is agreed
Fee	**None** — no filing fee for Form J or for the Children's Appointment
The trap	Form J describes what happens now, not what each parent would prefer. A form that answers every question with a proposal, and never states the present arrangement, gives the judge nothing to test the proposals against — and because the forms are exchanged simultaneously, an omission is visible to the other side before the hearing

Each party files their own · 14 days before the CA, filed and exchanged simultaneously · with the statement of issues, plus chronology and list of orders where the CA is not heard with the First Appointment · statement of truth, so it is evidence · no fee

Form K — Notice of a Children's Dispute Resolution Appointment Specimen · example only	
Heading	The same cause: FCMC 2345/2027 — CHAN Wai Keung, Andy and LEUNG Siu Ming, Betty
What the notice is	Notice of the Children's Dispute Resolution hearing, issued after the Children's Appointment has directed that the case be referred to a CDR
Date, time and place	6 October 2027 at 10:00 a.m., Court 12, 3/F, Wanchai Law Courts Building, 8 Queensway, Hong Kong — before the same judge who heard the Children's Appointment
Service	Served by the **applicant** on **all parties concerned** (para 13) — here the respondent, and the intervenor who was joined at the Children's Appointment. A Form K served on the respondent alone leaves the other party unserved and the hearing ineffective as to them
What each party must do	File and exchange a detailed **Statement of Proposals** about the children's future arrangements, not less than **14 days** before the hearing, and lodge Form H2 3 clear days before
Who attends	The parties in person. The Social Welfare Officer or anyone else attends only if the judge directed it at the Children's Appointment (para 14)
How the hearing runs	The judge acts as a conciliator, may speak to the parties directly rather than only through their lawyers, and will use the hearing to try to reach a lasting agreement
Not privileged	Anything said or admitted at the CDR is admissible in evidence at trial (para 16). The same judge may conduct both hearings and may hear the trial if no settlement is reached (para 15)
If it settles	The court makes the agreed orders at the conclusion of the hearing, or on an adjourned date
If it does not	Directions for trial before the same judge, with an updated and detailed Statement of Proposals filed and exchanged 14 days before the trial
Fee	**None**

Served by the applicant on everyone concerned, not just the respondent · Statement of Proposals 14 days before · in person · nothing said at the CDR is confidential, and the judge who hears it may hear the trial

What goes wrong with the children's documents

- **Form I is filed instead of served.** It is the court's notice; the applicant's duty is service on the respondent, and the date of service goes on the file.
- **Form J is left until the week of the appointment.** Fourteen days before, filed and exchanged simultaneously — not filed at court and left for the other side to find.
- **The chronology is omitted because the appointment is at court anyway.** It is required precisely when the Children's Appointment is *not* heard together with the First Appointment, and the Form I says which it is.
- **Form K is served on the respondent only.** "All parties concerned" includes a party joined later; the hearing cannot bind someone who was never served.
- **The CDR is treated as privileged.** It is not. A parent who concedes a school or a contact pattern to broker a deal has made evidence that can be used at trial.
- **The Statement of Proposals restates Form J.** It must be a detailed proposal — residence, school, contact schedule, holidays, maintenance, handover arrangements — filed 14 days before.
- **Nobody brings Form H2.** Three clear days before every appointment, CDR, case management hearing, pre-trial review and trial, for each party.
- **A late affirmation is filed without leave.** Paragraph 7 permits no further affirmations without the court's permission, and an unflagged affirmation is likely to be excluded.

7 The two ancillary relief notices — Form F and Form G

Both are annexed to Practice Direction 15.11 and both are filed in the same cause as the petition, which is why they are missed: neither one starts anything. **Form F** tells a named person that an allegation has been made about them in an affidavit, so that they can come in and be heard before an order touches their interests. **Form G** tells the other side that the applicant will ask to be excused the paginated bundle at the First Appointment. Neither is a summons, and neither carries a fee.

Form F — notice of allegation in proceedings for ancillary relief Specimen · example only	
Form	**Form F**, annexed to Practice Direction 15.11. The old reference was Form 20 of the Matrimonial Causes Rules, and the explanatory note to the Practice Direction reads every reference to Form 20 as a reference to Form F
Heading	In the Family Court of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, FCMC 2345/2027 — CHAN Wai Keung, Andy (petitioner) and LEUNG Siu Ming, Betty (respondent)
When it is used	Where an affidavit filed for use in the ancillary relief proceedings alleges adultery, or an improper association, with a **named person**. Rule 76 applies the requirement to an ancillary relief application; rule 92(5) applies it to an application about the custody of or access to a child
Who indorses and serves it	The party who filed the affidavit — here the petitioner. The notice is **indorsed on the affidavit**, and a copy of the affidavit, or of the part the court directs, is served with it on the named person. The court does not serve it, and the respondent does not serve it
The named person	LEUNG Kwok Fai, Michael, of Flat 3, 12/F, Skyline Tower, 39 King's Road, North Point — the respondent's business partner. He is not a party to the cause when the notice is served on him
What the notice tells him	That an allegation of improper association with him has been made in the petitioner's affidavit; that a copy of the affidavit, or the relevant part, is served with the notice; and that he may **intervene** in the proceedings by applying for directions
The 8 days	Counted **inclusive of the day of service** (r 92(5), applied to ancillary relief by r 76). Served personally on 22 June 2027, so the window closed on 29 June 2027; he applied for directions on 28 June, and his application was listed with the First Appointment
Directions at the First Appointment	PD 15.11 para 5(a)(iv): the judge at the First Appointment gives directions as to service of all relevant persons under s 6A(5) and s 17 of the Matrimonial Proceedings and Property Ordinance, and as to the issue and service of Form F — which is how a notice missed earlier is put right
What follows service	Rule 49(4) applies to a person served under rule 92(5) as it applies to a co-respondent in a defended cause, so he is heard on the allegation before any order is made that affects him
What it is not	Not an application, not a pleading and not a summons, and there is no fee. It does not make the named person a party; it gives him notice and a route into the case
The trap	An affidavit that makes the allegation without the indorsed notice, or a notice served so late that the 8 days expire after the hearing, leaves the named person unserved — and an order made over property in which he has an interest is exposed on exactly that ground
Fee	**None** — there is no filing fee for Form F

No fee · indorsed on the affidavit and served by the party who filed it, not by the court · 8 days from service, inclusive, to apply to intervene · the First Appointment can direct service where it was missed, at a cost in time

Form G — notice to dispense with paginated bundle	Specimen · example only
Form	**Form G**, annexed to Practice Direction 15.11 and made under para 4A. It is a notice of intention to *seek leave* — not the leave itself
Heading and address	In the District Court/High Court, FCMC 2345/2027 — CHAN Wai Keung, Andy (petitioner) and LEUNG Siu Ming, Betty (respondent). Addressed to the Chief Judicial Clerk, Family Court Registry, Wanchai Law Courts Building, 8 Queensway, Hong Kong — or to the Clerk of Court if the matter is in the High Court
Who files and serves it	The **Applicant** — the party who made the ancillary relief application — on the respondent. There is no equivalent notice for a respondent
Deadline	At any time after the application and **not later than 21 days before the hearing of the First Appointment** (para 4A). The First Appointment is fixed for 29 July 2027, so the last day was 8 July; the notice was filed and served on 6 July 2027
The ground	That the claim is **insubstantial and uncomplicated** and does not justify the costs involved in preparing the bundle. The form states the ground in those words; a claim that needs a business valuation, a pension report or a trust analysis will not meet it
What the bundle would have contained	The five items in para 4, due 14 days before the First Appointment — on 15 July here: the list of orders and directions sought, the questionnaire or request for particulars, the schedule of documents sought, the statement of issues with a brief chronology, and confirmation of service of the notice of the First Appointment
What the notice does	Gives notice that leave will be sought at the First Appointment. Until the court rules on it the parties **may withhold the bundle** unless the court directs otherwise — which is what the form itself tells the respondent
What happens at the First Appointment	The judge grants or refuses leave, and may direct the bundle to be produced whatever the notice says. If leave is refused, the bundle and its cost arrive late, and the refusal is a costs point against the applicant
What it is not	Not an application by summons, no fee, and no automatic dispensation — the claim is not excused the bundle until the court says so
The trap	Filing inside the 21 days, or writing to the other side to say the claim is simple, leaves para 4 in force. The notice has to be filed at court *and* served, and it has to be honest about the claim: a Form G on a case with a valuation issue is refused, and the adjournment costs more than the bundle would have
Fee	**None** — no filing fee for Form G, and no fee for the application it gives notice of

No fee · applicant only · not later than 21 days before the First Appointment, against a bundle due at 14 days · leave is granted or refused at the First Appointment · withholding the bundle without the notice is not an option

What goes wrong with the two notices

- **Form F is served on the respondent.** It goes to the *named person*, by the party who filed the affidavit, with the affidavit or the part the court directs.
- **The affidavit is filed without the indorsement.** The notice is indorsed on the affidavit itself; a covering letter saying an allegation has been made is not Form F.
- **The 8 days are counted from the wrong date.** From service, inclusive of the day of service — not from filing, and not from the First Appointment.
- **Form G is filed inside the 21 days.** Late is the same as never filed: para 4 stands and the bundle is due 14 days before the appointment.
- **Form G is treated as a dispensation.** It is a notice of intention to ask. The bundle obligation lifts only when the judge grants leave at the First Appointment.

8 Orders, and what to do when they are ignored

The usual orders and the route to enforcement

Order	Made under	If it is not paid or obeyed
Periodical payments (maintenance) for spouse or children	Matrimonial Proceedings and Property Ordinance (Cap 192)	Attachment of income order; examination of the debtor under O.49B; charging order; committal as a last resort
Lump sum order	Cap 192	Enforcement as a judgment debt; charging order over property
Transfer of property or settlement	Cap 192	Order enforced by registration of a charging order or by delivery of the instrument
Custody, care and control, access	Guardianship of Minors Ordinance (Cap 213); Cap 192	Welfare-based applications; injunction; committal only exceptionally
Injunction, exclusion from the home	Cap 192, s 3	Contempt proceedings; arrest for breach
Consent order	Filed with the court for approval	Enforceable as an order once made; a consent order cannot be varied merely because one party regrets it

Two practical points. First, a consent order is only worth what the drafting is worth: it must identify the payments, the dates, the mechanism and what happens on default, or enforcement becomes a second case. Second, a maintenance order made in Hong Kong can be registered for enforcement elsewhere, and Mainland matrimonial judgments can be recognised under the reciprocal arrangement — the procedure is set out in Practice Direction 10.5 and needs its own application.

9 Fees

Matrimonial Causes (Fees) Rules (Cap 179B)

Item	Fee
Filing a petition or a joint application	**HK$630**
Entering the cause in the special procedure list (undefended)	**HK$630**
Entering the cause in the defended list	HK$1,045
Filing Form A (notice of application for ancillary relief)	HK$630
Form 2B, Form 2D, Form 3, Form 4, Form 5 and Form 5A	No separate fee
Forms I and K — Children's Appointment and CDR notices	No fee
Photocopies and certified copies	HK$4 per page; HK$5.5 certified per page

An undefended petition therefore costs HK$1,260 in court fees before any ancillary relief. Full fee detail, including copies, search and appeal fees, is on the family forms page.

10 What goes wrong

- **The fact and the evidence do not match.** Two years' separation needs continuous separation and the respondent's consent; one year's separation needs consent too, and five years does not. Draft the particulars to the fact chosen.
- **The petition is filed inside the first year.** Section 12 bars it unless leave is obtained, and leave is not a formality.

- **Service is assumed.** Nothing is set down until service is proved, and the petitioner cannot serve personally.
- **Form 5 is lodged too early.** Six weeks from the decree nisi, not from the date of the hearing certificate.
- **The children's arrangements are left vague.** The decree will not be made absolute until the court is satisfied, which stalls the whole cause.
- **The children's track is run on the divorce timetable.** Form I and Form K carry their own 14-day and 3-clear-day documents, and the CDR is not privileged — a concession there is evidence at trial.
- **A consent order is filed without the mechanics.** No payment date, no default provision, no bank details — and enforcement becomes a fresh application.

11 Checklist

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- Jurisdiction, one-year rule and the fact relied on confirmed with the client
- Marriage certificate (original or certified copy) on file
- Form 2 or 2C, with Form 2B or 2D, Form 3, statement of truth and mediation certificate
- Filing fee paid and case number marked on every later document
- Service effected and Form 4 returned and filed
- Application to set down lodged with the HK$630 fee
- Children's arrangements documented before the decree is sought
- Form I served on the respondent and the date of service recorded
- Form J, statement of issues, chronology and list of orders filed and exchanged 14 days before the Children's Appointment
- Form K served on every party concerned, with the Statement of Proposals in 14 days before the CDR
- Form H2 lodged and served 3 clear days before each hearing on the children track
- Decree nisi date diarised, with the six-week date calculated
- Form 5 or 5A lodged after six weeks; certificate of decree absolute on file
- Consent order drafted with dates, mechanism and default provisions
- Any enforcement route identified before the arrears become historic

12 Sources

- Matrimonial Causes Ordinance (Cap 179), ss 3, 11, 12, 15(5); Matrimonial Causes (Decree Absolute) General Order (Cap 179C), para 2.
- Matrimonial Causes Rules (Cap 179A), rr 14 (service), 33 (setting down and the special procedure list), 65 (decree absolute, Form 5), 76 and 92(5) (the Form F indorsement, service on the named person and the 8 days to apply to intervene), 49(4) (the named person treated as a co-respondent).
- Practice Direction 15.11 (Financial Dispute Resolution Pilot Scheme), paras 2 (Form E at 28 days), 4 (the paginated bundle at 14 days), 4A (Form G, not later than 21 days before the First Appointment, and the insubstantial and uncomplicated ground), 5(a)(iv) (directions on service of s 6A(5) and s 17 MPPO persons and on the issue and service of Form F), 11 (the statements before the final hearing); Forms F and G as annexed, with the explanatory note, para 6, treating references to Form 20 as references to Form F.
- Matrimonial Proceedings and Property Ordinance (Cap 192); Matrimonial Causes (Fees) Rules (Cap 179B).
- Practice Direction 15.13 (Children's Dispute Resolution), paras 6 to 10 (Form I, service, 14-day filing and exchange), 12 to 14 (Form K, service on all parties concerned, Statement of Proposals,

attendance), 15 to 16 (same judge, not privileged), 22 to 23 (personal attendance, Form H2); Forms I, J and K as annexed; PD 15.9 (estimates of costs).

- Judiciary, *How to Apply for a Divorce*; *General Guide to Practice Direction 15.13*; Practice Direction 10.5 (Mainland judgments).