Sample mEDIATION

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The Georgia Office of Dispute Resolution has put together the following information and examples to consider when drafting the mediation notice for parties and attorneys.

1. **Session Information:**

A mediation session has been scheduled for [Date], at [Time], using [online program (e.g. Zoom Pro, WebEx, Microsoft Teams, Legaler)]. Join the [online program] meeting by following this link: [insert meeting link]

1. **Specific online program platform information:**

Prior to the session, you must visit the [online program] website at [online program website] to download & install the program and establish a [type of account (i.e. free membership, personal account)] account, if necessary. If you are unfamiliar with [online program], there are several tutorials and resources available on the website for your review.

1. **Attach guidelines for online mediation:**

I am attaching a copy of the guidelines to mediate, which includes the requirements to mediate online. I ask that you review this document and return a signed copy at your earliest opportunity, before the session, if possible.

1. **Technical Requirements:**

You must have a computer (laptop or desktop preferred) with a camera and microphone. You will need to have your computer connected to a power source for the duration of the session.

You must have a strong and secure WiFi or ethernet (hard-wired) connection during the mediation session. You may not use a public WiFi connection, such as those that may be available in public spaces or at certain businesses.

1. **Document Sharing Program:**

Please have all your documents available electronically.

I use [document sharing program (e.g. Dropbox, Google docs, OneDrive)] as an online platform for storing and transmitting any documents and information relative to your online mediation process. Prior to the mediation session, you must download the software and/or apps from [document sharing program] and establish a [document sharing account type i.e. free, personal] account, if necessary, to use the program. I am asking that you agree to utilize [document sharing program] to send and receive all documents relative to your online mediation process. More information can be found at [document sharing website].

1. **Document Execution Program:**

Whenever possible, I use [document execution program (e.g. DocuSign, Formstack, Adobe)] as a platform for obtaining your signature for documents that are required during your mediation process. You agree to create any account with [document execution program], if necessary, to utilize the service. In the event that you choose not use [document execution program] for the execution of documents, or in those instances when original signatures are required, copies will be transmitted to you for printing and signature, and you will be responsible for returning the executed copies to me via mail or overnight delivery service. More information can be found at [document execution website].

1. **Payment:**

The fee for the mediation session is $[hourly/daily rate], due at the time of the mediation session. All payments will be processed electronically using [payment software website link (e.g. Venmo, PayPal, Zelle)]. If you are unable to pay electronically, please email me at [email address] so we may make alternative arrangements.

1. **Best Practices and Troubleshooting:**
   1. You must be in a safe location where you can be alone and not overheard. You agree to take all reasonable measures to ensure that you are not interrupted during the mediation session. This includes adjusting your schedule accordingly, including but not limited to arranging appropriate childcare and notifying family and friends of your unavailability.
   2. Turn off all other computer functions and close unnecessary software programs and internet tabs, especially those with notifications, to limit distractions. This will also help with the quality of the video.
   3. I suggest you log on for your session at least ten (10) minutes early in case there are any technical issues. If you have any issues with logging into the session, please call [XXX-XXX-XXXX].
   4. When you log on for the first time, you will be placed in a waiting room. This function is enabled to 1) keep all uninvited guests from entering the session; and 2) help preserve the neutrality of the mediator by limiting one-on-one conversations prior to the start of the session. You will not be able to hear or see anyone else while in the virtual waiting room. Once all parties are logged on and in the waiting room, I will admit you to the meeting. If all parties are not signed into the waiting room ten (5) minutes after the scheduled start time for your mediation session, I will admit all parties who have signed in so that a determination can be made as to how to proceed.
   5. Despite all our best efforts, there will be times when technology does not operate properly and may cause a delay in the start of a mediation session or the interruption of one. If you are unable to join a scheduled mediation session, please contact me immediately at [XXX-XXX-XXXX] to discuss how to proceed. If your connection to the meeting is interrupted, please attempt to log on again. If you are unable to log back on, please contact me at the number above. If the technology issues cannot be resolved in reasonable time, the online mediation session will be canceled and rescheduled as soon as possible.