

**FAMILY LAW (GUARDIANSHIP OF MINORS,  
DOMICILE AND MAINTENANCE) ACT**

**CHAPTER 46:08**

**Act**

**15 of 1981**

Amended by

20 of 1985

\*14 of 1988

104 of 1994

28 of 1995

66 of 2000

\*15 of 2018

140/2019

\*26 of 2020

(\*See Notes on page 2)

**Current Authorised Pages**

<i>Pages (inclusive)</i>	<i>Authorised b O.</i>
1-74	..

### Index of Subsidiary Legislation

	<i>Page</i>
Maintenance Rules (LN 89/1983)    ...    ...    ...    ...    ...	42

#### **Note on Act No. 14 of 1988**

For an order under section 13(2), 13(5), 13(6)(a), 13(6)(b), 14(1)(b), and 15(b), *see* paragraph 3 of Schedule 1 to the Attachment of Earnings (Amendment) Act, 1988 (Act No. 14 of 1988).

#### **Note on section 13 Orders for Custody and Maintenance**

For an order for custody and maintenance on the application of a parent under section 13 of the Act *see* Order 86 of the Rules of the Supreme Court (1975) which is inserted as an Appendix to this Act.

#### **Note on Act No. 15 of 2018**

Amendments made to this Act by Act No. 15 of 2018 took effect on 31st December 2018 by LN 191/2018.

#### **Note on Act No. 26 of 2020**

Amendments made to this Act by Act No. 26 of 2020 took effect on 22nd December 2020 by LN 410/2020.

**CHAPTER 46:08**

**FAMILY LAW (GUARDIANSHIP OF MINORS,  
DOMICILE AND MAINTENANCE) ACT**

ARRANGEMENT OF SECTIONS

**SECTION**

1. Short title.
2. Interpretation.

**GENERAL PRINCIPLES**

3. Principles on which questions relating to custody, upbringing, etc., of minors are to be decided.
4. Equality of parental rights.
5. Change of name of minor.
6. Guardianship of minors.

**APPOINTMENT, REMOVAL AND  
POWERS OF GUARDIAN**

7. Rights of surviving parent as to guardianship.
8. Rights of father and mother to appoint testamentary guardians.
9. Power of Court to appoint guardian for minor having no parent, etc.
10. Power of High Court to remove or replace guardian.
11. Disputes between joint guardians.
12. Powers of guardians.

**ORDERS FOR CUSTODY, ACCESS AND MAINTENANCE**

13. Orders for custody and maintenance on application of parent or stranger.
14. Orders for custody and maintenance where person is guardian to exclusion of surviving parent.
15. Orders for custody and maintenance where joint guardians disagree.
16. Order for maintenance of persons between the ages of 18 and 21.
17. Duration of orders for maintenance.
18. Further provisions relating to orders for custody.
19. Matters to which Court is to have regard in making orders for maintenance.

ARRANGEMENT OF SECTIONS—*Continued*

**SECTION**

20. Provisions relating to lump sums.
21. Variation of orders for periodical payments.

**PATERNITY ORDERS**

22. Application for paternity order in Magistrate's Court.
23. Evidence with respect to finding of paternity.

**MATRIMONIAL PROCEEDINGS IN  
MAGISTRATE'S COURT**

**POWER OF COURT TO MAKE ORDERS FOR FINANCIAL  
PROVISION FOR PARTIES TO A MARRIAGE**

24. Grounds of application.
25. Powers of Court to make orders for financial provision and matters to which Court is to have regard in exercising such powers.  
Court may vary or discharge order.

**ENFORCEMENT**

26. Enforcement of orders for payment of money.
27. If payment of maintenance one month in arrear distress may issue.
28. *(Repealed by Act No. 28 of 1995).*
29. Neglect and desertion of minor.
30. Misapplying moneys or ill-treating a minor.
31. Power of High Court to refuse production of minor.
32. Power of High Court to order repayment by parent of costs of bringing up minor.
33. High Court in making order to have regard to conduct of parent.
34. High Court may order minor though not delivered to parent, to be brought up in such religion as he has a right to require.
35. Wards of Court.

**DOMICILE**

36. Domicile before commencement of this Act and after.
37. Abolition of wife's dependent domicile.

**SECTION**

38. Domicile of minors.
39. Acquisition of independent domicile.
40. Domicile of dependence to continue until acquisition of new domicile.
41. How new domicile acquired.
42. Domicile of origin not to revive.
43. Standard of proof of domicile.

**JURISDICTION, PROCEDURE, APPEALS AND  
REMOVAL OF PROCEEDINGS**

44. Courts having jurisdiction under this Act.
45. Procedure.
46. Removal of proceedings.
47. Appeals.

**MISCELLANEOUS**

48. Interim maintenance.
49. Form of warrant in Schedule.
50. Savings for powers of the High Court.
51. Rules.
52. Transitional.

**SCHEDULE**—Warrant of Apprehension for Disobedience of Order.

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**CHAPTER 46:08**

**FAMILY LAW (GUARDIANSHIP OF MINORS,  
DOMICILE AND MAINTENANCE) ACT**

15 of 1981. **An Act to define and regulate the authority of parents as guardians of their minor children, whether or not born in wedlock, their power to appoint guardians, and the powers of Courts in relation to the guardianship, custody and maintenance of minors and related matters.**

Commencement.  
34/1983.

[1ST MARCH 1983]

Short title.

**1.** This Act may be cited as the Family Law (Guardianship of Minors, Domicile and Maintenance) Act.

Interpretation.  
[20 of 1985  
15 of 2018].

**2.** (1) In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires—  
“actual custody” in relation to a minor, means the actual possession of his person, whether or not that possession is shared with one or more persons;

“Court” means the Court as provided for in section 44;

“custody” means the right to possession and care of a minor;

“Custodial Trust Bank Account” means an account which is a public account for the purposes of section 116 of the Constitution and is held under the name of the Judiciary of Trinidad and Tobago at a Financial Intermediary in Trinidad and Tobago for the purpose of receiving and paying out moneys pursuant to a maintenance order;

“custodian of a minor” means a person who is appointed to have custody of the minor by a Court of competent jurisdiction, and custodianship shall be construed accordingly;

Ch. 79:09.

“Financial Intermediary” means a financial institution as defined by section 2 of the Financial Institutions Act or such other institution that may be approved by the Treasury;

“guardianship” means guardianship of the person of a minor and includes the rights of control and custody of the minor, the right to make decisions relating to the care and upbringing

of the minor and the right to exercise all powers conferred by law upon the parent or guardian of a minor, and “guardian” means a person with guardianship;

“High Court” means the High Court of Justice or a Judge thereof;

“legal custody” means, as respects a minor, so much of the parental rights and duties as relate to the person of the minor (including the place and manner in which his time is spent);

“Magistracy Registrar and Clerk of the Court” means a person holding the office of Magistracy Registrar and Clerk of the Court listed in the Second Schedule of the Judicial and Legal Service Act; Ch. 6:01.

“Magistrate’s Court” means a Magistrate’s Court within the meaning of the Summary Courts Act; Ch. 4:20.

“maintenance” includes education;

“minor” means a person under the age of eighteen years;

“minor child of the family” or “minor child of his family” in relation to the parties to a marriage or to unmarried persons means—

(a) a minor child of both of those parties; and

(b) any other minor child who has been treated by both of those parties as a minor child of their family;

“paternity order” means an order of the Court declaring a man to be the father of a minor whether born or unborn;

“person” includes any school or institution;

“post office” has the meaning assigned to it under section 3 of the Trinidad and Tobago Postal Corporation Act; Ch. 47:02.

“Registrar” has the meaning assigned to it under section 2 of the Supreme Court of Judicature Act; Ch. 4:01.

“stranger” means a person who, being neither the mother nor father of a minor, has in the opinion of the Court a sufficient interest in the minor;

“Trinidad and Tobago Postal Corporation” has the meaning assigned to it under section 3 of the Trinidad and Tobago Postal Corporation Act; Ch. 47:02.

“upbringing” includes education.

(2) In this Act, until the contrary is proved, a man is presumed to be the father of a minor if—

- (a) at the time of the conception or birth of the minor, or between those times, he is married to the child’s mother;
- Ch. 44:01. (b) he is registered as the father of the minor under the Births and Deaths Registration Act;
- Ch. 46:07. (c) he is named as the father of the minor in a paternity order made under section 10 of the Status of Children Act;
- (d) he is named as the father of the minor in a paternity order made by a Magistrate’s Court under section 22; or
- (e) he has been declared to be the father of the minor by an order made in any country outside Trinidad and Tobago being an order to which subsection (4) of section 8 of the Status of Children Act applies,

but the making of any such order as is referred to in paragraphs (c), (d) and (e) shall terminate any presumption under paragraphs (a) and (b).

(3) While a person not having legal custody of a minor has actual custody of the minor he shall have the like duties in relation to the minor as a custodian would have by virtue of his legal custody.

### GENERAL PRINCIPLES

#### 3. Where in any proceedings before any Court—

- (a) the legal custody or upbringing of a minor; or
- (b) the administration of any property belonging to or held in trust for a minor, or the application of the income thereof,

is in question, the Court, in deciding that question, shall regard the welfare of the minor as the first and paramount consideration,

Principles on which questions relating to custody, upbringing, etc., of minors are to be decided.

and shall not take into consideration whether, from any other point of view, the claim of the father or any right at common law possessed by the father in respect of such custody, upbringing, administration or application, is superior to that of the mother or the claim of the mother is superior to that of the father.

4. (1) In relation to the custody or upbringing of a minor, and in relation to the administration of any property belonging to or held in trust for a minor or the application of income of any such property, a mother shall have the same rights and authority as the law allows to a father, and the rights and authority of mother and father shall be equal and be exercisable by either without the other.

Equality of  
parental rights.

(2) An agreement for a man or woman to give up in whole or in part, in relation to any child of his or hers, the rights and authority referred to in subsection (1) shall be unenforceable.

(3) Where a minor's father and mother disagree on any question affecting his welfare, either of them may apply to the Court for its direction, and subject to subsection (4), the Court may make such order regarding the matters in difference as it may think proper.

(4) Subsection (3) shall not authorise the Court to make any order regarding the custody of a minor or the right of access to him of his father or mother.

(5) An order under subsection (3) may be varied or discharged by a subsequent order made on the application of either parent or, after the death of either parent, on the application of any guardian under this Act, or (before or after the death of either parent) on the application of any other person having the custody of the minor.

(6) Sections 44 and 45 shall apply for the purposes of subsections (3) to (5) as if they were contained in section 13.

(7) Nothing in this section shall affect the operation of any written law requiring the consent of both parents in a matter affecting a minor.

Change of name  
of minor.  
[20 of 1985].

**5.** (1) Subject to subsections (2) and (3), the father or mother of a minor or a stranger may apply to the High Court to change a given name or the surname of that minor.

- (2) Where an application is made under subsection (1)—
- (a) by the mother or father, the consent of the other parent must first be obtained; or
  - (b) by the stranger, the consent of both parents must first be obtained.

(3) Notwithstanding subsection (2), the Court may, on an application made under subsection (1), dispense with the consent of the father or of the mother in the case where the mother or father is dead or cannot be found or, in any other case, as it sees fit.

Guardianship of  
minors.

**6.** (1) Unless the High Court otherwise orders the following are joint guardians of a minor:

- (a) the mother of the minor;
- (b) the father of the minor.

(2) Subject to the provisions of this Act, the mother of a minor born out of wedlock shall be the sole guardian of the minor unless and until the paternity of the minor has been registered pursuant to the Births and Deaths Registration Act or established by any of the modes specified in section 8 or 10 of the Status of Children Act.

Ch. 44:01.

Ch. 46:07.

#### APPOINTMENT, REMOVAL AND POWERS OF GUARDIAN

Rights of  
surviving parent  
as to  
guardianship.  
Ch. 45:51.

**7.** On the death of a parent of a minor the surviving parent shall, subject to the provisions of this Act, and to section 48(4) of the Matrimonial Proceedings and Property Act, be guardian of the minor either alone or jointly with any guardian appointed by the deceased parent; and—

- (a) where no guardian has been appointed by the deceased parent; or
- (b) in the event of the death or refusal to act of the guardian or guardians appointed by the deceased parent,

the High Court may, if it thinks fit, appoint a guardian to act jointly with the surviving parent.

**8.** (1) The father or the mother of a minor may by Deed or Will appoint any person to be guardian of the minor after his or her death.

Rights of father and mother to appoint testamentary guardians.

(2) If the father of a minor who was born out of wedlock desires to appoint a testamentary guardian of such minor under subsection (1) it shall not be necessary for such father first to obtain a custody order with respect to the minor.

(3) Any guardian appointed under subsection (1) shall act jointly with the mother or father, as the case may be, of the minor so long as the mother or father remains alive unless the mother or father objects to his so acting.

(4) If the mother or father so objects, or if the guardian so appointed considers that the mother or father is unfit to have the custody of the minor, the guardian may apply to the High Court, and the High Court may either—

- (a) refuse to make any order (in which case the mother or father shall remain sole guardian); or
- (b) make an order that the guardian so appointed—
  - (i) shall act jointly with the mother or father; or
  - (ii) shall be the sole guardian of the minor.

(5) Where guardians are appointed by both parents the guardians so appointed shall, after the death of the surviving parent, act jointly.

(6) If under section 7 a guardian has been appointed by the Court to act jointly with the surviving parent, he shall continue to act as guardian after the death of the surviving parent; but if the surviving parent has appointed a guardian, the guardian appointed by the High Court shall act jointly with the guardian appointed by the surviving parent.

**9.** Where a minor has no parent, no guardian of the person, and no other person having parental rights with respect to him, the High Court, on application of any person, may, if it thinks fit, appoint the applicant to be the guardian of the minor.

Power of Court to appoint guardian for minor having no parent, etc.

Power of High Court to remove or replace guardian.

**10.** The High Court at any time may, in its discretion, on being satisfied that it is for the welfare of the minor, remove from his office any testamentary guardian or any guardian appointed or acting by virtue of this Act, and may also, if it considers it to be for the welfare of the minor, appoint another guardian in place of the guardian so removed.

Disputes between joint guardians.

**11.** Where two or more persons act as joint guardians of a minor and they are unable to agree on any question affecting the welfare of the minor, any of them may apply to the High Court for its direction, and the High Court may make such order regarding the matters in difference as it may think proper.

Powers of guardians.

**12.** (1) Subject to subsection (2), a guardian under this Act, besides being guardian of the person of the minor, shall have all rights, powers, and duties of a guardian of the minor's estate, including in particular the right to receive and recover in his own name for the benefit of the minor property of whatever description and wherever situated which the minor is entitled to receive or recover.

(2) Nothing in subsection (1) shall restrict or affect the powers of the High Court to appoint a person to be, or to act as, the guardian of a minor's estate either generally or for a particular purpose.

#### ORDERS FOR CUSTODY, ACCESS AND MAINTENANCE

Orders for custody and maintenance on application of parent or stranger. [20 of 1985].

**\*13.** (1) The Court may on the application of the father or mother of a minor (who may apply without next friend) or of a stranger make such order regarding—

- (a) the legal custody of the minor; and
- (b) the right of access to the minor of the applicant or of any other person,

as the Court thinks fit having regard to the welfare of the minor and to the conduct and wishes of the mother or father or of the stranger.

\*See Note on page 2.

(2) Where the Court makes an order under subsection (1) giving the legal custody of the minor to any person (whether or not one of the parents), the Court may make a further order requiring payment to that person by the parent or either of the parents excluded from having that custody of such periodical sum towards the maintenance of the minor in accordance with section 19.

(3) An order may be made under subsection (1) or (2) notwithstanding that the parents of the minor are then residing together, but—

(a) no such order shall be enforceable and no liability thereunder shall accrue, while they are residing together; and

(b) any such order shall cease to have effect if for a period of six months after it is made they continue to reside together,

provided that, unless the Court in making the order directs otherwise, paragraphs (a) and (b) of this subsection shall not apply to any provision of the order giving the legal custody of the minor to a person other than one of the parents or with respect to a minor of whom legal custody is so given.

(4) An order under subsection (1) or (2) may be varied or discharged by a subsequent order made on the application of either parent or after the death of either parent on the application of any guardian under this Act, or (before or after the death of either parent) on the application of any other person having the custody of the minor by virtue of an order under subsection (1).

(5) Notwithstanding subsection (2) the Court may without determination of any issue relating to custody or right of access to the minor make a maintenance order under this section in accordance with section 19 provided that no maintenance order shall be made under this Act against any person as the father of a minor who is not presumed to be the father within the

meaning of any of the classes referred to in subsection (2) of section 2 unless—

(a) before or at the time of making the maintenance order—

(i) in the case of proceedings in the High Court a paternity order has been made declaring such person to be the father under section 10 of the Status of Children Act; or

(ii) in the case of proceedings in a Magistrate's Court a paternity order has been made declaring such person to be the father under section 22; or

(b) such person has in the proceedings before the Court admitted that he is the father of the minor.

(6) The power of the Court to make a maintenance order under this section shall include power to make any one or more of the following orders:

(a) an order against the father of a minor for the maintenance of the minor;

(b) an order against the mother of a minor for the maintenance of the minor;

(c) an order for the payment of expenses incidental to the birth of the minor;

(d) an order for the payment of the funeral expenses of the minor if the minor died before the order was made;

(e) an order for the payment of costs incurred in obtaining the order.

(7) An application for maintenance of a minor may be made by the mother of a minor though not a single woman at the date of the birth of the minor and whether or not she is a single woman at the time of the application.

(8) The guardian or custodian of a minor in respect of whom no maintenance order has been made on the application of

its mother or father under this Act shall have the same right to apply for maintenance for the minor as is conferred by this section upon a mother or father of a minor.

(9) Subject to section 16(2) all moneys payable under any maintenance order in respect of a minor under this section shall be due and payable to the mother or father of the minor unless a custodian has been appointed in which case all such moneys shall be due and payable to the custodian.

(10) When the surviving parent of a minor (whose paternity has not been admitted or established) dies, or becomes mentally ill within the meaning of the Mental Health Act, or is in prison, or is abroad, or about to go abroad, a Magistrate's Court may from time to time appoint some person who is willing to have custody of the minor to be custodian of the minor. Ch. 28:02.

(11) A custodian shall have power to make application for the recovery of all payments in arrear or becoming due under a maintenance order in the same manner as the mother or father or guardian might have done.

(12) Upon any order or appointment or revocation being made under this section by a Magistrate's Court such Magistrate's Court may also order the minor to be delivered by any person to the person appointed to have custody.

(13) A Magistrate's Court may also on the application of the father of a minor born out of wedlock make an order that the custody of such minor be committed to the father.

(14) If a minor in respect of whose maintenance an order subsists or is sought, is wrongfully taken out of the custody of the mother, father or custodian of the minor, a Magistrate may on the application of the mother, father or custodian make an order that the custody of the minor be committed to the mother, father or custodian.

(15) Any person who contravenes any order made under subsection (14) is liable, on summary conviction, to a fine of one thousand dollars or to imprisonment for three months.

(16) Where, in proceedings in the High Court or in a Magistrate's Court, it is found or admitted that a man is the father of a minor and an order in his favour for custody or access or against him for maintenance is made a reference to such finding or admission shall appear on the face of the order if either party to the application so requests.

(17) Nothing in this section shall apply in respect of minors who are Wards of Court.

Orders for custody and maintenance where person is guardian to exclusion of surviving parent.

**14.** (1) Where the High Court makes an order under section 8(4) that a person shall be the sole guardian of a minor to the exclusion of his mother or father, the High Court may—

(a) make such order regarding—

- (i) the legal custody of the minor; and
- (ii) the right of access to the minor of his mother or father,

as the Court thinks fit having regard to the welfare of the minor; and

(b) make a further order requiring the mother or the father to pay to the guardian a periodical sum towards the maintenance of the minor in accordance with section 19.

(2) The powers conferred by subsection (1) may be exercised at any time and include power to vary or discharge any order previously made under those powers.

Orders for custody and maintenance where joint guardians disagree.

**15.** The powers of the High Court under section 11 shall, where one of the joint guardians is the mother or the father of the minor, include power—

(a) to make such order regarding—

- (i) the legal custody of the minor; and
- (ii) the right of access to the minor of his mother or father, or of any person who has treated the minor as a minor child of his family,

as the Court thinks fit having regard to the welfare of the minor;

- (b) to make an order requiring the mother or the father to pay a periodical sum towards the maintenance of the minor in accordance with section 19;
- (c) to vary or discharge any order previously made under that section.

16. (1) An order under section 13, 14 or 15 for the payment of sums towards the maintenance of a minor may require such sums to continue to be paid in respect of any period after the date on which he ceases to be a minor but not extending beyond the date on which he attains the age of twenty-one if it appears to the Court that—

Order for maintenance of persons between the ages of 18 and 21. [20 of 1985 66 of 2000].

- (a) the minor is, or will be receiving instruction at an educational establishment or undergoing training for a trade, profession or vocation, whether or not he is also, or will also be, in gainful employment; or
- (b) there are special circumstances which justify the making of such order.

(2) Any such order may provide that any sum which is payable thereunder for the benefit of a person after he has ceased to be a minor shall be paid to that person himself.

(3) Where a person has ceased to be a minor but has not attained the age of twenty-one the Court may, on the application of either parent of that person or of that person himself, make an order requiring either parent to pay—

- (a) to the other parent;
- (b) to anyone else for the benefit of that person; or
- (c) to that person himself,

in respect of any period not extending beyond the date when he attains the said age, such periodical sum towards his maintenance as the Court thinks reasonable having regard to the means of the person on whom the requirement is imposed.

(4) *(Repealed by Act No. 66 of 2000).*

(5) An order under subsection (3) may be varied or discharged by a subsequent order on the application of any person by or to whom payments were required to be made under the previous order.

Duration of  
orders for  
maintenance.

**17.** (1) Subject to section 16 a maintenance order in respect of a minor shall not, except for the purpose of recovering money previously due under the order, be of any force or validity after the minor has attained the age of eighteen years or has died; and payments under such order shall not be required to be made in respect of any period after the minor has attained the age of sixteen years unless the order contains a direction that payments to be made under it are to continue until the minor attains the age of eighteen years.

Ch. 45:51.

(2) Where pursuant to Part II or III of the Matrimonial Proceedings and Property Act, the High Court makes an order with respect to the maintenance or custody of a minor any maintenance order in respect of the same minor made by a Magistrate's Court under this Act or the corresponding provisions of any written law repealed by this Act, shall cease to have effect.

Further  
provisions  
relating to  
orders for  
custody.

**18.** (1) An order shall not be made under section 13(1), 14(1)(a) or 15(a) giving the legal custody of a minor to more than one person; but where the Court makes an order under one of those sections giving the legal custody of a minor to any person, it may order that a parent of the minor who is not given the legal custody of the minor shall retain all or such as the Court may specify of the parental rights and duties comprised in legal custody (other than the right to the actual custody of the minor) and shall have those rights and duties jointly with the person who is given the legal custody of the minor.

(2) Where the Court makes an order under section 13(1), 14(1)(a) or 15(a) the Court may direct that the order, or such provision thereof as the Court may specify, shall not have effect until the occurrence of an event specified by the Court or the expiration of a period so specified; and where the Court has directed that the order or any provision thereof shall not have

effect until the expiration of a specified period, the Court may, at any time before the expiration of the period, direct that the order, or that provision thereof, shall not have effect until the expiration of such further period as the Court may specify.

(3) Any order made in respect of a minor under section 13(1), 14(1)(a) or 15(a) shall cease to have effect when the minor attains the age of eighteen years.

**19.** In deciding whether to exercise its powers under section 13(2), 13(5), 14(1)(b), or 15(b) and, if so, in what manner, the Court shall have regard to all the circumstances of the case including the following matters:

Matters to which Court is to have regard in making orders for maintenance. [66 of 2000].

- (a) the income, earning capacity, property and other financial resources which each parent of the minor has or is likely to have in the foreseeable future;
- (b) the financial needs, obligations and responsibilities which each parent of the minor has or is likely to have in the foreseeable future;
- (c) the financial needs of the minor;
- (d) the income, earning capacity (if any), property and other financial resources of the minor;
- (e) any physical or mental disability of the minor;
- (f) the manner in which the minor was educated or trained and the manner in which the parents expected him to be so educated or trained;
- (g) the standard of living enjoyed by the family while the members of the family resided together.

**20.** (1) Without prejudice to the generality of section 13(2), 13(5), 14(1)(b) or 15(b), an order under any of those provisions for the payment of a lump sum may be made for the purpose of enabling any liabilities or expenses reasonably incurred in maintaining the minor before the making of the order to be met.

Provisions relating to lump sums.

(2) The amount of any lump sum required to be paid by an order made by a Magistrate's Court under section 13(2), 13(5), 14(1)(b) or 15(b) shall not exceed five thousand dollars or such

larger amount as the Minister may from time to time by Order determine for the purposes of this subsection.

Any Order made by the Minister under this subsection shall be subject to affirmative resolution by both Houses of Parliament.

(3) The power of the Court under section 13, 14 or 15 to vary or discharge an order for the making of periodical payments by a parent of a minor shall include power to make an order under the said section 13, 14 or 15, as the case may be, for the payment of a lump sum by that parent.

(4) The amount of any lump sum which a parent may be required to pay by virtue of subsection (3) shall not, in the case of an order made by a Magistrate's Court, exceed the maximum amount that may at the time of the making of the order be required to be paid under subsection (2), but a Magistrate's Court may make an order for the payment of a lump sum not exceeding that amount prescribed by subsection (2) notwithstanding that the parent was required to pay a lump sum by a previous order under this Act.

(5) An Order made under section 13, 14 or 15 for the payment of a lump sum may provide for the payment of that sum by instalments, and where the Court provides for the payment of a lump sum by instalments the Court, on an application made either by the person liable to pay or the person entitled to receive the sum, shall have power to vary that order by varying the number of instalments payable and the date on which any instalment was payable and the date on which any instalment becomes payable.

Variation of  
orders for  
periodical  
payments.

**21.** (1) In exercising its powers under section 13, 14 or 15 to vary or discharge an order for the making of periodical payments the Court shall have regard to all the circumstances of the case including any change in any of the matters to which the Court was required to have regard when making the order.

(2) The power of the Court under section 13, 14 or 15 to vary an order for the making of periodical payments shall include

power to suspend any provision thereof temporarily and to revive any provision so suspended.

(3) Where on an application under section 13, 14 or 15 for the variation or discharge of an order for the making of periodical payments the Court varies the payments required to be made under that order, the Court may provide that the payments as so varied shall be made from such date as the Court may specify, not being earlier than the date of the making of the application.

(4) An application for the variation of an Order made under section 13, 14 or 15 for the making of periodical payments to or for the benefit of a minor may, if the minor has attained the age of sixteen, be made by the minor himself.

### PATERNITY ORDERS

**22.** (1) This section applies to a father of a minor in respect of whom paternity is not presumed under section 2.

Application for paternity order in Magistrate's Court. [20 of 1985].

(2) An application for a paternity order may be made to a Magistrate's Court under this section—

- (a) by the mother of the minor;
- (b) if the mother of the minor is under the age of sixteen years by any person having custody of her;
- (c) where the child has been born, and the mother is dead or has abandoned the minor or for any reason is unable to make an application herself, by a parent of the mother, or by a guardian of the minor or, with the leave of the Court, by any other person,

provided that an application pursuant to paragraph (c) shall be made only if the applicant can satisfy the Court that it is appropriate, having regard to the welfare of the child, that the issue be tried.

(3) Such application may be made before the birth of the minor or at any time after the birth of the minor and shall be by complaint to the Magistrate for a summons to be served on the man alleged to be the father of the minor, and the Magistrate shall

thereupon issue his summons to the person alleged to be the father of the minor to appear before a Magistrate on some day to be named in the summons.

(4) After the birth of the minor and on the appearance of the person summoned under subsection (2), or on proof that the summons was duly served on the person or left at his last place of abode seven days or more before the hearing, the Magistrate's Court of the district in which the summons was issued shall hear the application and the Court shall, if it is satisfied that the defendant is the father of the minor, make a paternity order accordingly.

(5) Subject to section 45 a paternity order made under this section shall for the purposes of any application for a maintenance order under this Act or of any proceedings in respect thereof, be evidence that the person against whom it is made is the father of the minor.

(6) Where a paternity order is made pursuant to this section the Court may, if it sees fit, and having regard to all the circumstances of the case make a maintenance order in accordance with sections 13, 18 and 19.

(7) If the application for a paternity order is made before the birth of the minor or within two months after the birth of the minor any periodical sum ordered to be paid under the order may, if the Court thinks fit, be made payable from the birth of the minor.

Evidence with respect to finding of paternity.

**23.** A Magistrate's Court shall not make a finding of paternity under section 22 based upon the evidence of one witness only unless that evidence is corroborated by some other material evidence.

### MATRIMONIAL PROCEEDINGS IN MAGISTRATE'S COURT

#### POWER OF COURT TO MAKE ORDERS FOR FINANCIAL PROVISION FOR PARTIES TO A MARRIAGE

Grounds of application.

**24.** Either party to a marriage may apply to the Magistrate's Court of the district in which the cause of complaint has wholly

or partially arisen for an order under section 25 on the ground that the other party to the marriage (hereinafter referred to as “the respondent”)—

- (a) has failed to provide reasonable maintenance for the applicant; or
- (b) has failed to provide, or to make a proper contribution towards reasonable maintenance for any minor child of the family; or
- (c) has behaved in such a way that the applicant cannot reasonably be expected to live with the respondent; or
- (d) has deserted the applicant.

**25.** (1) Where an application for an order is made under this section, a Magistrate’s Court may, subject to the provisions of this Act, make any one or more of the following orders:

- (a) an order that the respondent shall make to the applicant such periodical payments, and for such term, as may be specified in the order;
- (b) an order that the respondent shall pay to the applicant such lump sum as may be so specified;
- (c) an order that the respondent shall make to the applicant for the benefit of a minor child of the family to whom the application relates, or to such minor child, such periodical payments, and for such term, as may be specified;
- (d) an order that the respondent shall pay to the applicant for the benefit of a minor child of the family to whom the application relates, or to such minor child, such lump sum as may be so specified;
- (e) an order that the applicant be no longer bound to cohabit with the respondent (which provision while in force shall have the effect in all respects of a decree of judicial separation) on the ground that the respondent has behaved in such a way that the applicant cannot reasonably be expected to live with the respondent;

Powers of Court to make orders for financial provision and matters to which Court is to have regard in exercising such powers. [20 of 1985 66 of 2000].

(f) an order that the legal custody of any minor child of the family, who is under the age of sixteen years, be committed to the applicant.

(2) Without prejudice to the generality of subsection (1)(b) or (d) an order under this section for the payment of a lump sum may be made for the purpose of enabling any liability or expenses reasonably incurred in maintaining the applicant, or any minor child of the family to whom the application relates, before the making of the order to be met.

(3) The amount of any lump sum required to be paid by an order under this section shall not exceed five thousand dollars or such larger amount as the Minister may from time to time by Order determine for the purpose of this section.

(4) Any order made by the Minister under subsection (3) shall be subject to negative resolution of the House of Representatives.

(5) Where application is made for an order under this section, the Magistrate's Court in deciding whether to exercise its powers under subsection (1)(a) or (b), and if so in what manner, shall have regard to the following matters:

- (a) the income, earning capacity, property and other financial resources which each of the parties to the marriage has or is likely to have in the foreseeable future;
- (b) the financial needs, obligations and responsibilities which each of the parties to the marriage has or is likely to have in the foreseeable future;
- (c) the standard of living enjoyed by the parties to the marriage before the occurrence of the conduct which is alleged as the grounds of the application;
- (d) the age of each party to the marriage and the duration of the marriage;
- (e) any physical or mental disability of either of the parties to the marriage;

- (f) the contribution made by each of the parties to the welfare of the family, including any contribution made by looking after the home or caring for the family;
- (g) any other matter which in the circumstances of the case the Court may consider relevant, including, so far as it is just to take it into account, the conduct of each of the parties in relation to the marriage.

(6) Where an application is made for an order under this section, a Magistrate's Court in deciding whether to exercise its powers under subsection (1)(c) or (d) and if so in what manner, shall have regard to all the circumstances of the case including the following matters:

- (a) the financial needs of the minor;
- (b) the income, earning capacity (if any), property and other financial resources of the minor;
- (c) any physical or mental disability of the minor;
- (d) the standard of living enjoyed by the family before the occurrence of the conduct which is alleged as the ground of the application;
- (e) the manner in which the minor was being educated or trained and the manner in which the parties to the marriage expected him to be so educated or trained;
- (f) the matters mentioned in relation to the parties to the marriage in subsections (5)(a) and (b).

(7) The Court in deciding whether to exercise its powers under subsection (1)(c) or (d) in favour of a minor child of the family who is not the minor child of the respondent, and if so in what manner, shall in addition to the matters mentioned in subsection (6) have regard (among the circumstances of the case)—

- (a) to whether the respondent had assumed any responsibility for the minor's maintenance and, if he did, to the extent to which, and the basis on which he assumed that responsibility and to the length of time during which he discharged that responsibility;

- (b) to whether in assuming and discharging that responsibility the respondent did so knowing that the minor was not his own child;
- (c) to the liability of any other person to maintain the minor.

(8) The term to be specified in any order made under paragraph (c) or (d) of subsection (1) shall be such term as the Court thinks fit except that the term shall not begin earlier than the date of the making of the application for the order and shall not extend beyond the death of the minor.

(8A) Where an order is made under subsection (1)(a) and the marriage of the parties affected by the order is subsequently dissolved or annulled but the order continues in force, the order shall, notwithstanding anything in it, cease to have effect on the remarriage of the party in whose favour it was made, except in relation to any arrears due under the order on the date of the remarriage.

(8B) The provisions of section 16 shall, with the exception of references to sections 13, 14 and 15, apply *mutatis mutandis* to an order made under paragraph (c) or (d) of subsection (1).

Court may vary or discharge order.

(9) A Magistrate's Court in which any order under this section has been made may on the application of either party and upon cause being shown by fresh evidence to the satisfaction of the Court, at any time after, vary or discharge any order made under this section and may upon application from time to time increase or diminish the amount of any periodical payment ordered to be made.

(10) In this section "minor" in relation to one or both of the parties to a marriage, includes a minor child of that party born out of wedlock or, as the case may be, of both parties.

#### ENFORCEMENT

Enforcement of orders for payment of money.  
Ch. 45:51.  
[15 of 2018].

**26.** (1) Any maintenance order made by the High Court under this Act may be enforced as if it were a maintenance order to which section 37 of the Matrimonial Proceedings and Property Act applies.

(2) Any person for the time being under an obligation to make periodical payments in pursuance of any order made by a Magistrate's Court under this Act shall give notice of any change of address to such person (if any) as may be specified in the order, and on failing without reasonable excuse, to give such notice is liable on summary conviction to a fine of one hundred dollars.

(3) Subject to subsection (4) for the purposes of this Act the Chief Magistrate shall for each magisterial district designate a Clerk of the Peace or an Assistant Clerk of the Peace to be Collecting Officer for the district.

(4) Notwithstanding subsection (3) the Magistracy Registrar and Clerk of the Court shall be Collecting Officers for the purposes of this Act, however, whenever it may appear to the Chief Magistrate necessary to appoint an additional Collecting Officer or Officers for any magisterial district, the Chief Magistrate may appoint such additional Collecting Officer or Officers.

(4A) Notwithstanding subsections (3) and (4), for the purposes of maintenance orders, the Collecting Officer shall be, in the case of an order made by the High Court, the Registrar of the Supreme Court.

(5) A Collecting Officer shall perform the duties set out in subsection (9).

(6) Where a Magistrate's Court makes a maintenance order under this Act the Court shall, upon application of the applicant, or of a guardian of a minor, either at the time of making the order or subsequently on an *ex parte* application to vary the same, provide in the order that all payments thereunder be made to the Collecting Officer and payments made under such order shall be made to the Collecting Officer on behalf of the persons entitled thereto.

(7) Where in a maintenance order made by a Magistrate's Court it is provided that payment be made to a Collecting Officer under the provisions of this Act, nothing in

this section shall preclude the Collecting Officer from enforcing such order in the manner hereinafter prescribed.

(8) Payment of the amount ordered may be made to the Collecting Officer in person, or by letter sent by registered post properly addressed to the Collecting Officer and posted in time to be delivered to him on or before the day appointed for payment.

(9) It shall be the duty of the Collecting Officer to receive all payments directed to be made to him under this Act and to pay out the same in accordance with the terms of the maintenance order directly to the person entitled to receive payment of the sum thereby directed to be paid or such part thereof as he receives without making any deduction therefrom except as authorised by Court order, Rules of Court or any other written law.

(10) The Collecting Officer shall pay the amount stated in the maintenance order directly to the applicant or any other person named in the order where the applicant or the person is resident in the town in which the office of the Collecting Officer is located.

(11) It shall be the duty of the Trinidad and Tobago Post to keep the duplicate order and to return the original to the Collecting Officer.

(11A) Notwithstanding subsections (10) and (10A), payments may also be—

(a) received into the Custodial Trust Bank Account, electronically; and

(b) paid out to the applicant electronically—

(i) in the case of payments out of the Custodial Trust Bank Account, by transferring the payments into an account at a Financial Intermediary or on to a pre-paid debit card issued by a person licensed under the Financial Institutions Act which pre-paid debit card the applicant has registered with the Court Executive Administrator for that purpose; or

- (ii) by directing the bank where the Custodial Trust Bank Account has been opened, to pay the moneys to the applicant on production of identification and to provide the Court Executive Administrator with proof of payment out.

(11B) Electronic records of payment out to the applicant shall suffice as proof of payments out.

(11C) A requirement under any written law for moneys to be paid to—

- (a) the Court;
- (b) the Judiciary;
- (c) a Magistrate;
- (d) the Registrar and Marshal;
- (e) the Court Executive Administrator;
- (f) a Marshal;
- (g) a Deputy Marshal;
- (h) a Second Deputy Marshal;
- (i) a Marshal Assistant;
- (j) a bailiff;
- (k) a Magistracy Registrar and Clerk of the Court;
- (l) Collecting Officer; or
- (m) Collector of Revenue,

is satisfied by those moneys being paid into a Custodial Bank Account held for that purpose.

(12) Where by a maintenance order it is provided that payment be made to the Collecting Officer, the applicant for the order shall thereupon give his or her nearest post office address to the Collecting Officer.

(13) Where by a maintenance order it is provided that payment be made to the Collecting Officer, the father or the mother or guardian or custodian of the minor, if he or she changes his or her address, shall give notice thereof to the Collecting Officer, and on failure to do so without reasonable excuse, is liable on summary conviction to a fine of one hundred dollars.

(14) The Court may order that payments be received into and paid out of the Custodial Trust Bank Account electronically.

(15) All records of maintenance orders, deposits, payments in, payments out, receipts, failures to pay and any other records associated with maintenance may be created, stored, maintained and communicated electronically.

If payment of maintenance one month in arrear distress may issue. [20 of 1985 26 of 2020].

27. (1) If, at any time after the expiration of one month from the making of a maintenance order made by a Court in respect of a minor under this Act, it appears to a Judge, Master, District Court Judge or Justice of the district in which the order was made, upon oath, that any sum to be paid in pursuance of the order has not been paid, the Judge, Master, District Court Judge or Justice may, upon application of the Collecting Officer by—

- (a) summons, cause the person under the obligation to make a payment to appear before the Court for a hearing to answer for the breach of the order to pay; or
- (b) warrant under his hand, cause the person under obligation to make payment in pursuance of the order (hereinafter in this section referred to as “the defendant”) to be brought before the Court.

(1A) Subsection (1)(a) would cease to apply on 31st March 2021 or such later date as the Attorney General may, by Order, specify.

(2) Where the defendant neglects or refuses to make payment of the sums due from him or her under the order or since any commitment for disobedience to the order as hereinafter provided together with the costs attending the warrant, apprehension and bringing up of the defendant the Magistrate may—

- (a) by warrant under his hand, direct the sum which appears to be due, together with the costs attending such warrant, to be recovered by distress and sale of the goods and chattels of the defendant; and

(b) order the defendant to be detained and kept in safe custody until return can be conveniently made to the warrant of distress, unless the defendant gives sufficient security by way of recognisance or otherwise to the satisfaction of such Magistrate for his appearance before a Magistrate on the day appointed for the return of the warrant of distress, such day not to exceed seven days from the time of the taking of the security.

(3) If upon the return of the warrant, or if by the admission of the defendant, it appears that no sufficient distress can be had then the Magistrate may, if he sees fit, by warrant under his hand, cause the defendant to be committed to prison, there to remain without bail for any term not exceeding three months, unless such sum or costs and all reasonable charges attending the distress, together with the costs and charges attending the commitment and conveying to prison and of the persons employed to convey him or her are sooner paid and satisfied.

(4) Notwithstanding the provisions of this section, on an application for the enforcement of the payment of any sum payable in pursuance of an order under this section, the Magistrate shall make enquiries in the presence of the defendant as to whether the defendant's failure to pay that sum was due either to the defendant's wilful refusal or to a culpable neglect, and if the Magistrate is of the opinion that the failure of the defendant to pay that sum was not due to his or her culpable neglect, a warrant of commitment to prison shall not be issued.

(5) Where in any proceedings for the enforcement of a maintenance order made by a Magistrate's Court under this Act the defendant is committed to prison then, unless the Magistrate otherwise directs, no arrears shall accrue under the order during the time that the defendant is in prison.

(6) Notwithstanding anything to the contrary in any written law limiting to six months the time within which summary proceedings are to be taken such limitation shall not apply to proceedings for enforcing the payment of sums under an order made under this Act.

(7) On an application for the enforcement, variation, revocation, discharge or revival of a maintenance order made by a Magistrate's Court under this Act, a Magistrate's Court may remit the payment of any sum due thereunder or of any part of any such sum.

(8) Where on application for the enforcement of the payment of a sum payable in pursuance of a maintenance order made by a Magistrate's Court under this Act no warrant of commitment to prison is issued, the application may be renewed, except so far as regards any part of the sum remitted under subsection (7) on the ground that the circumstances of the person to whom the application relates have changed.

**28. (Repealed by Act No. 28 of 1995).**

Neglect and  
desertion of  
minor.

**29.** Every father or mother of a minor who neglects to maintain the minor, being able wholly or in part to do so or who deserts the minor is liable, on summary conviction, to a fine of one thousand dollars or to imprisonment for two months.

Misapplying  
moneys or ill-  
treating a minor.

**30.** Every person having the custody of a minor under any order made under this Act who misapplies moneys paid for the support of the minor, or who withholds proper nourishment from the minor, or who in any manner ill-treats the minor is liable, on summary conviction, to a fine of one thousand dollars or to imprisonment for two months.

Power of High  
Court to refuse  
production of  
minor.

**31.** Where the parent of a minor applies to the High Court for a writ or order for the production of a minor, and the Court is of the opinion that the parent has abandoned or deserted the minor, or that the parent has otherwise so conducted himself that the Court should refuse to enforce his right to the custody of the child, or for any other good and sufficient reason, the Court may, in its discretion, decline to issue the writ or make the order.

Power of High  
Court to order  
repayment by  
parent of costs  
of bringing up  
minor.

**32.** If at the time of the application for a writ or order for the production of the minor, the minor is being brought up by another person, the High Court may, in its discretion, if it orders the

minor to be given up to the parent, further order that the parent shall pay to such person the whole of the costs properly incurred in bringing up the minor, or such portion thereof as shall seem to the Court to be just and reasonable, having regard to all the circumstances of the case.

**33.** Where a parent has—

- (a) abandoned or deserted his minor child; or
- (b) allowed his minor child to be brought up by another person at that person's expense for such a length of time and under such circumstances as to satisfy the High Court that the parent was unmindful of his parental duties,

High Court in making order to have regard to conduct of parent.

the High Court shall not make an order for the delivery of the child to the parent, unless the parent has satisfied the Court that, having regard to the welfare of the child, he or she is a fit person to have the custody of the minor.

**34.** Upon application by a parent for the production or custody of a minor, if the High Court is of the opinion that the parent ought not to have the custody of the minor, and that the minor is being brought up in a different religion to that in which the parent has a legal right to require that the minor should be brought up, the Court shall have powers to make such order as it may think fit to secure that the minor is brought up in the religion in which the parent has a legal right to require that the minor should be brought up; but nothing contained in this Act shall interfere with or affect the power of the High Court to consult the wishes of the minor in considering what order ought to be made, or diminish the right which any minor now possesses to the exercise of its own free choice.

High Court may order minor though not delivered to parent, to be brought up in such religion as he has a right to require.

**35.** (1) Subject to this section no minor shall be made a Ward of Court except by virtue of an order to that effect made by the High Court.

Wards of Court.  
[104/1994].

(2) Where application is made, for such an application in respect of a minor the minor shall become a Ward of Court on

Ch. 4:01. the making of the application, but shall cease to be a Ward of Court at the expiration of such period as may be prescribed by Rules of Court, made by the Rules Committee established by the Supreme Court of Judicature Act, unless within that period an application has been made in accordance with the application.

(3) The High Court may, either upon an application in that behalf or without such an application, order that any minor who is for the time being a Ward of Court shall cease to be a Ward of Court.

#### DOMICILE

Domicile before commencement of this Act and after.

**36.** (1) The domicile that a person had at any time before the date of commencement of this Act shall be determined as if this Act had not been enacted.

(2) The domicile that a person has at a time after the date of commencement of this Act shall be determined as if this Act had always been in force.

Abolition of wife's dependent domicile.

**37.** (1) The domicile of a married woman, shall, instead of being the same as her husband's by virtue only of marriage, be determined as if she were unmarried and by reference to the same factors as in the case of any other individual capable of having an independent domicile and (if she is a minor) as if she were of full age; and the rule of law whereby upon marriage a woman acquires her husband's domicile and is thereafter during the subsistence of the marriage incapable of having any other domicile is abolished.

(2) This section applies to the parties to every marriage, wherever, whenever and pursuant to whatever law the marriage was solemnised, and whatever the domicile of the parties at the time of the marriage.

Domicile of minors.

**38.** (1) This section shall have effect with respect to the dependent domicile of a minor at any time after the coming into force of this Act.

(2) A minor whose parents are living together has the domicile for the time being of his father.

(3) A minor whose parents are living apart shall have the domicile of the parent with whom he resides and if he resides with neither parent then of the person who for the time being has actual custody of him; and for the purposes of this section a minor who is in the care of an institution established in Trinidad and Tobago shall be deemed to be domiciled in Trinidad and Tobago.

(4) Until a minor who is a foundling has its home with one of its parents both of his parents shall for the purpose of this section, be deemed to be alive and domiciled in the country in which the minor who is a foundling was found.

(5) This section shall have effect in place of all rules of law relating to the domicile of minor children.

**39.** Subject to any rule of law relating to the domicile of insane persons, every person is capable of having an independent domicile upon attaining the age of majority or, being a minor, upon marriage.

Acquisition of independent domicile.

**40.** The domicile a person has immediately before becoming capable of having an independent domicile continues until he acquires a new domicile in accordance with section 41 whereupon the old domicile ceases.

Domicile of dependence to continue until acquisition of new domicile.

**41.** A person acquires a new domicile in a country at a particular time if immediately before that time—

How new domicile acquired.

- (a) he is not domiciled in that particular country;
- (b) he is capable of having an independent domicile;
- (c) he is in that country; and
- (d) he intends to live indefinitely in that country.

**42.** A new domicile acquired in accordance with section 41 continues until a further new domicile is acquired in accordance with that section; and the rule of law known as the revival of domicile of origin whereby a person's domicile revives upon his abandoning a domicile of choice is abolished.

Domicile of origin not to revive.

**43.** The standard of proof which, immediately before the commencement of this Act, was sufficient to show the

Standard of proof of domicile.

abandonment of a domicile of choice and the acquisition of another domicile of choice shall be sufficient to show the acquisition of a new domicile in accordance with section 41.

#### JURISDICTION, PROCEDURE, APPEALS AND REMOVAL OF PROCEEDINGS

Courts having  
jurisdiction  
under this Act.

**44.** (1) Subject to the provisions of this section, “the Court” for the purposes of this Act means—

- (a) the High Court; or
- (b) a Magistrate’s Court of the district in which the applicant or respondent or the minor to whom the matter or order relates resides.

(2) A Magistrate’s Court shall have no jurisdiction to entertain any application in respect of a minor—

- (a) where proceedings relating to or affecting the minor are pending in the High Court;
- (b) where an order of the High Court relating to the custody or guardianship of, or access to, the minor is in force;
- (c) where the minor is a Ward of Court.

(3) In any proceedings in which any question of guardianship, custody, or access arises as an ancillary matter either of the said Courts shall have jurisdiction.

(4) Where in any Court proceedings under this Act against a man (in this section referred to as “the respondent”), for maintenance he successfully rebuts a presumption of paternity based on any of the circumstances referred to in section 2(2)(a) or (b) and—

- (a) the application for maintenance is accordingly dismissed; and
- (b) the Court makes a positive finding of non-paternity in favour of the respondent,

the Court shall have the power to make a declaration of non-paternity in favour of the respondent.

**45.** Proceedings in a Magistrate's Court under this Act may be taken in the manner provided for in the Summary Courts Act and except as provided for or varied by this Act such procedure including the computation of and other matters with respect to costs shall be as near as may be according to the procedure under the Summary Courts Act, provided that at least seven days shall have elapsed between the service of a summons on a defendant and the commencement of the hearing of the matter that requires the adjudication of the Court.

Procedure.  
Ch. 4:20.

**46.** (1) Where any application has been made under this Act to a Magistrate's Court, the High Court may, at the instance of any party to the application, order the application to be removed to the High Court and there continued as if it had been properly and duly commenced in that Court on such terms as to costs as it thinks proper.

Removal of  
proceedings.

(2) Where an application is made to a Magistrate's Court under this Act, and the Magistrate's Court considers that the matter is one which would more conveniently be dealt with by the High Court, the Magistrate's Court may refuse to make an order, and in that case no appeal against such order shall be to the Court of Appeal.

**47.** (1) Subject to section 46 and section 48(2) an appeal shall be to the Court of Appeal from any judgment or order of the Court under this Act.

Appeals.

(2) An appeal under this section shall be brought before the expiration of thirty days from the order or judgment appealed against unless the Court or a Judge at the time of making the order or at any subsequent time or the Court of Appeal shall enlarge the time.

(3) A notice of appeal under this section shall not operate to stay the order or judgment appealed against, save that a Judge of the Court of Appeal may stay execution of the order appealed against on such conditions, if any, as may be appropriate.

- Ch. 4:01. (4) Save as otherwise provided in this section the provisions of the Supreme Court of Judicature Act, the Supreme Court Rules, and the Court of Appeal Rules, apply, where appropriate, to appeals under this section from an order or judgment of the High Court and the provisions of the Summary Courts Act apply, where appropriate, to appeals under this section from an order of a Magistrate's Court.
- Ch. 4:20.

#### MISCELLANEOUS

Interim  
maintenance.

**48.** (1) Where the hearing of an application for a maintenance order or for the discharge, variation, extension, or suspension of a maintenance order is adjourned for any period exceeding one week, a Magistrate's Court may, if it thinks fit having regard to all the circumstances of the case, make an order under this section.

(2) An order under this section shall direct the defendant, or, as the case may be, the applicant to pay such periodical sum as the Court thinks reasonable for the maintenance of a wife, mother or father and any minor child or children in the custody of a wife, mother or father until the final determination of the case; but the order directing the payment shall not remain in operation for more than six months from the date on which it was made.

(3) Any order under this section may be enforced, varied, extended or discharged in the same manner as if it were a final order of the Court and proceedings for the enforcement of any such order may be taken immediately after default has been made in payment of any periodical sum.

(4) Any sum of money directed to be paid to any person by any order made under this section or under section 25 shall be paid in the same manner as if it were a maintenance order made by a Magistrate's Court under section 13 and may also be enforced in the manner as payment of money is enforced under an order made under the said section.

Form of warrant  
in Schedule.

**49.** The form of warrant in the Schedule may, with such variations and additions as the circumstances of the particular

case require, be used in the cases to which it applies and where so used shall be good and sufficient in law.

**50.** Nothing in this Act shall restrict or affect the jurisdiction of the High Court to appoint or remove guardians or otherwise in respect of minors.

Savings for powers of High Court.

**51.** (1) The Rules Committee may make Rules and prescribe forms and fees for carrying into effect the provisions of this Act.

Rules. [15 of 2018].

(1A) Rules made under subsection (1) shall be subject to negative resolution of Parliament.

(2) All Rules made and forms prescribed under this section shall be published in the *Gazette* and shall come into force on such publication or at such other time as may be specified.

**52.** (1) This Act shall apply with respect to—

Transitional.

(a) all affiliation orders made under the Affiliation Act as if they were paternity orders made under this Act;

Ch. 46:05.

(b) all orders under the said Act directing the payment of any sum of money in pursuance of the said Act;

(c) all maintenance orders under the Separation and Maintenance Act as if they were maintenance orders under this Act,

Ch. 45:52.

and all maintenance orders whether made under the Affiliation Act or the Separation and Maintenance Act may be enforced, varied, discharged or suspended and any arrears due under any such order may be remitted under this Act.

(2) Any order or other thing made, done or having effect under or for the purposes of a written law repealed by this Act and in force immediately before the commencement of this Act shall be deemed to have been made or done under or for the purposes of the corresponding written law in this Act.

(3) Any application made pursuant to a written law repealed by this Act and pending immediately before the commencement of this Act shall be continued to conclusion as if the written law under which it was brought had not been repealed.

(4) So much of any document as refers expressly or by implication to any written law repealed by this Act shall, if and so far as the nature of the subject matter of the document permits, be construed as referring to this Act or the corresponding written law therein, as the case may require.

(5) Nothing in this Act shall limit or affect Part II, III, IV or V of the Infants Act.

SCHEDULE

(Section 49).

FORM 1

REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

FAMILY LAW (GUARDIANSHIP OF MINORS, DOMICILE AND  
MAINTENANCE) ACT

WARRANT OF APPREHENSION FOR  
DISOBEDIENCE OF ORDER

To all Constables,

Whereas it has been made to appear to me .....  
..... Magistrate (or Justice)  
for the County of ..... on the oath of .....  
(hereinafter called the complainant) that by an order duly made on .....  
....., 20.....  
.....  
(hereinafter called the defendant)\* was declared to be the father of a minor of  
which .....  
was the mother and was ordered to pay to .....  
.....  
or to ..... having the care of a minor or minors  
..... which  
sum (or sums) is (or are) the weekly (or monthly) payment (or payments)  
which became payable on the ..... day of .....  
20..... and that the payment (or payments) so directed to be made by the  
Order have not been made according thereto by the defendant and that there is  
now in arrear the sum of .....  
being the amount due for .....

This is therefore to command you to apprehend .....  
.....  
and bring him before a Magistrate unless the sum (or sums) and the costs and  
charges of executing this warrant amounting to the further sum of  
.....  
shall be sooner paid.

And for your so doing this shall be your sufficient warrant.

Dated this ..... day of ....., 20.....

.....  
*Magistrate (or Justice)*

\*Delete if necessary.

## SUBSIDIARY LEGISLATION

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### MAINTENANCE RULES

#### ARRANGEMENT OF RULES

#### RULE

1. Citation and commencement.
2. Interpretation.
3. Collecting Officer to notify person required to make payment.
4. Accounting records to be kept by Collecting Officer.
5. Entries.
6. Issue of receipt by Collecting Officer.
7. Payee to sign receipt.
8. Copy of order of attachment to payer of pension.
9. Application for warrant for arrears.
10. Refund of moneys lodged with Comptroller of Accounts or District Revenue Office.
11. Forms.
12. Funds may be deposited into financial institution.
13. Maintenance of records.
14. Fees.
15. Practice Directions.

#### SCHEDULE.

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## MAINTENANCE RULES

89/1983.  
\*140/2019.

*made under section 51*

1. These Rules may be cited as the Maintenance Rules, and came into operation on Thursday the 9th day of June 1983.

Citation and commencement.

2. In these Rules “deposit” means the receipt by a Collecting Officer of a sum of money due under a maintenance order for the maintenance of a minor for the purpose of its subsequent withdrawal by the person entitled thereto and the word deposited shall be construed accordingly.

Interpretation.

3. Where subsequent to the making of a maintenance order a Magistrate’s Court on the *ex parte* application of an applicant or a guardian of a minor directs that all payments becoming due under such order be made to the Collecting Officer, such officer shall send notice of such direction with particulars of the hours during which, the methods by which and the places at which, payments are to be made by—

Collecting Officer to notify person required to make payment.

- (a) registered post to the person required to make payments in accordance with the order;
- (b) electronic mail, where the person to make payments has indicated to the Court that he will accept notifications by electronic mail and has given the Court Office the email address at which he will accept notifications;
- (c) handing it to the person to make payments in the precincts of the Court after confirming the identity of the person; or
- (d) serving it personally on the person who is to make payments.

4. (1) The Collecting Officer shall keep the following accounting records, all of which may be kept in electronic format:

Accounting records to be kept by Collecting Officer. 140/2019.

- (a) a cash book to be known as “the maintenance cash book” in which he shall enter forthwith all

\*Amendments made by LN 140/2019 took effect on 5th August 2019.

amounts deposited with him and all payments made by him under the Act and such further particulars as are prescribed by these Rules;

- (b) a card to be known as “the maintenance card” which shall be an account in respect of each proceeding in which an order has been made for payment to him for the purpose of entering on the card at the end of each day all payments which have been made to or by him under the Act; each such card to be headed in the name of the proceeding, that is to say, “in the matter of *A.B. versus C.D.*” together with the date of the order and the particulars, thereof, a specimen signature of the person entitled to payment and such further particulars as are prescribed by these Rules;
- (c) a “deposit register” for the purpose of recording daily particulars of all amounts deposited with him (which amounts shall agree with the total of daily receipts as shown by the maintenance cash book) and such further particulars as are prescribed by these Rules;
- (d) such other records as the Accounting Officer of the Judiciary may require him to maintain.

(2) Amounts received in payment of maintenance shall be kept separate and apart from any other money under the control of the Judiciary and the Judiciary shall at all times ensure strict compliance with the requirements of the financial regulations and financial instructions relating to the control of public finances.

Entries.  
[140/2019].

**5.** (1) Every cash book kept by the Collecting Officer pursuant to rule 4(1)(a) shall be kept separate and distinct from any other cash book kept by the Judiciary and its pages shall be serially numbered; and each entry therein shall set out, in addition to the amount deposited appearing on its receipts side the following particulars:

- (a) the date on which the Collecting Officer received the deposit;

- (b) the number of the receipt issued to the person making the deposit;
- (c) the name of the person making the payment;
- (d) particulars relating to the deposit,

and as regards amounts paid by the Collecting Officer out of money deposited with him there shall be entered on its payments side the following particulars:

- (i) the date of payment;
- (ii) the name of the person receiving payment;
- (iii) particulars relating to the amount paid out by the Collecting Officer; and
- (iv) the number of the maintenance card on which the payment has been recorded.

(2) The entries on a maintenance card kept by the Collecting Officer pursuant to rule 4(1)(b) shall set out the following particulars:

- (a) the number of the maintenance card;
- (b) the date of the maintenance order and the name of the Magistrate by whom the order was made;
- (c) the number of the proceeding;
- (d) the name of the Magisterial District;
- (e) the amount payable under the order; and
- (f) as regards deposits—

- (i) the date of the deposit;
- (ii) the number of the official receipt issued to the person making the deposit;
- (iii) the amount of the deposit;
- (iv) the date to which settlement is made; and
- (v) the date of payment out of Court,

and sufficient details of each deposit shall be given to ensure recognition of the withdrawal of the amount and all such particulars shall be filled

in forthwith upon the payment out of every amount deposited with the Collecting Officer.

(3) There shall also be recorded on the payment side of the cash book particulars relating to every amount lodged by the Collecting Officer with the Comptroller of Accounts or a District Revenue Office, as the case may be, in accordance with rule 8.

(4) A deposit register kept by the Collecting Officer pursuant to rule 4(1)(c) shall contain columns for filling in the following particulars:

- (a) the date of the receipt of the deposit;
- (b) the number of the receipt issued in respect of the deposit;
- (c) the number of the relevant maintenance card;
- (d) the names of the parties to the proceeding;
- (e) the amount deposited;
- (f) the date of payment out to the person entitled to receive payment; and
- (g) the amount paid.

(5) Entries in the deposit register relating to deposits and the payment out of deposits shall be made daily as required from the maintenance cash book.

Issue of receipt  
by Collecting  
Officer.  
140/2019.

**6.** (1) The Collecting Officer shall issue a numbered official receipt which shall set out the name of the person by whom the payment is made, the amount paid, the date of the payment, the number and the title of the proceedings to which payment of the amount deposited relates and the date upon which or the period in respect of which the payment became due—

- (a) where the payment is made in cash to the Collecting Officer, the receipt may be issued from a book of printed triplicate receipts to every person making any deposit. The duplicate copy shall be detached from the book of printed

triplicate receipts and filed in alphabetical order and the triplicate copy retained in the receipt book; or

- (b) where the payment is made by electronic means, by the generation of an electronic receipt;
- (c) in either case, the Collecting Officer shall maintain an electronic copy of the receipt.

(2) Before the Collecting Officer issues the official receipt mentioned in subrule (1), he shall ensure that a checking officer has verified the correctness of the entries on both the receipt and on the relevant maintenance card mentioned in rules 4 and 5.

(3) Notwithstanding subrule (1), where the receipt is being generated electronically upon payment of a sum being made by electronic means, the Court shall notify payors of their duty to check all entries on statements, acknowledgements or receipts and to report promptly any apparent error or possible unauthorised transaction to the Court Office.

**7.** (1) Where pursuant to section 26(10) of the Act (as regards payment directly to the applicant for a maintenance order) the Collecting Officer makes payment direct to the applicant or to such other person as is named in a maintenance order he shall, at the time of making the payment require that person to sign a receipt for the amount so paid in a book of receipts to be kept by the Collecting Officer.

Payee to sign receipt.  
140/2019.

(2) Notwithstanding subrule (1), if a payment is received from a financial institution who is the agent of the Collecting Officer or the Judiciary by means of debit card or direct bank transfer, the recipient will not be required to sign a receipt for the amount, but the Collecting Officer shall require that a report of payment out, be provided by the financial institution.

**8.** Where an order is made by a Court under section 28 of the Act (pension or income liable to attachment) attaching any pension or income, a copy of the order certified by the

Copy of order of attachment to payer of pension.  
140/2019.

Magistracy Registrar and Clerk of the Court or the Registrar of the Supreme Court, as the case may be, shall be sent by registered post or electronic mail to the person by whom the pension or income is payable and thereafter the person shall pay the amount ordered to the Collecting Officer.

Application for  
warrant for  
arrears.  
140/2019.

**9.** Where any payment to be made to the Collecting Officer is one month in arrears, the Collecting Officer shall make an application to the Magistrate or Master for the issue of a warrant under section 27 of the Act and it shall not be necessary that notice of such application be given to the person in default.

Refund of  
moneys lodged  
with  
Comptroller of  
Accounts or  
District  
Revenue  
Office.  
140/2019.

**10.** (1) Where any money remains unclaimed for more than three years from the date of deposit, it may be refunded to the payor or to his estate.

(2) The Collecting Officer shall maintain a record of the payment vouchers under this rule.

Forms.  
Schedule.

**11.** The forms set out in the Schedule or forms to the like effect may be used in the matters to which they apply.

Funds may be  
deposited into  
financial  
institution.  
140/2019.

**12.** Nothing in these Rules shall prohibit the Collecting Officer from requiring a party to deposit funds or cause funds to be deposited into an account in a financial institution with which the Accounting Officer of the Judiciary has contracted to be the agent of the Judiciary's Collecting Officer for the purpose of receiving or paying out moneys ordered by the Court.

Maintenance of  
records.  
140/2019.

**13.** When the Collecting Officer generates, causes to be generated or keeps the cash book, maintenance card, deposit or receipt register, payment voucher under Rule 10 or any other document, electronically or in electronic format, the format of such cash book, maintenance card, deposit, or receipt register or payment voucher or any other document may be adjusted accordingly while maintaining the information required.

**14.** When the court makes an order for the payment of any transaction fee, the Collecting Officer may take such fee or cause it to be paid in accordance with the instructions of the Accounting Officer of the Judiciary for the time being in place.

Fees.  
140/2019.

**15.** (1) The Chief Justice may issue practice directions and practice guides in furtherance of the relevant legislation and these Rules.

Practice  
Directions.  
140/2019.

(2) A practice direction may be issued in any case where provision for such a direction is made by these Rules.

(3) Practice directions shall be—

(a) published by the Judiciary;

(b) published in the *Trinidad and Tobago Gazette*;  
and

(c) displayed and made available at each Court office.

(4) A practice direction takes effect from the date of publication unless the direction specifies some other date.

(5) If a person fails to comply with a practice direction or a practice guide, the Court may impose such sanctions or make such order as it deems appropriate.

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**SCHEDULE**

**FORM 1**

**REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO**

County of .....

**FAMILY LAW (GUARDIANSHIP OF MINORS,  
DOMICILE AND MAINTENANCE) ACT**

**EX PARTE APPLICATION UNDER SECTION 26(6) OF  
THE FAMILY LAW (GUARDIANSHIP OF MINORS,  
DOMICILE AND MAINTENANCE) ACT**

IN THE MAGISTRATE'S COURT

..... Magisterial District

The application .....  
.....  
of .....  
who saith that by a maintenance order made at the Magistrate's Court held at  
.....  
on the ..... day of ..... it was adjudged  
that .....

- \*(a) failed to provide reasonable maintenance for the applicant;
- \*(b) failed to provide, or to make a proper contribution towards reasonable maintenance for a minor child/ .....  
minor children of his family;
- \*(c) being the spouse of the applicant deserted the applicant;
- \*(d) is the father of a minor child/ .....  
minor children of which .....  
is the mother,

and was ordered to pay the sum of \$ ..... per week/month  
to .....

- \*(a) the maintenance of the applicant;
- \*(b) the maintenance of the applicant and minor child/minor children;

\*(c) the maintenance of a minor child/ .....  
minor children of which .....  
is the mother.

And .....  
now prays that it may be ordered that all payments becoming due under such  
order be made to the Collecting Officer for the .....  
..... Magisterial District from and after the  
..... day of ..... 20.....

Signed .....  
*Applicant*

\*Delete as appropriate.

**FORM 2**

**REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO**

County of .....

**FAMILY LAW (GUARDIANSHIP OF MINORS,  
DOMICILE AND MAINTENANCE) ACT**

**NOTICE TO PERSON LIABLE TO MAKE PERIODICAL  
PAYMENTS TO PAY TO THE COLLECTING OFFICER**

IN THE MAGISTRATE'S COURT

..... Magisterial District

To .....

TAKE NOTICE that whereas by a maintenance order made at the  
Magistrate's Court held at .....  
.....  
on the ..... day of ..... 20..... it was adjudged that

\*(a) you failed to provide reasonable maintenance for .....  
.....

LAWS OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

Family Law (Guardianship of Minors,  
Domicile and Maintenance)

52

Chap. 46:08

Maintenance Rules

[Subsidiary]

\*(b) you failed to provide, or to make a proper contribution towards reasonable maintenance for a minor child/ ..... minor children;

\*(c) you deserted your .....

\*(d) you are the father of a minor child/ ..... minor children of which ..... is the mother,

and ordered to pay to ..... or to .....

having the care of a minor child or minor children the sum of \$ ..... per week/month for

\*(a) the maintenance of your wife/husband;

\*(b) the maintenance of your wife/husband and a minor child/ minor children .....

\*(c) the benefit of a minor child/minor children .....

Now upon the application of ..... it is ordered that all payments becoming due under such order be made to the Collecting Officer for the ..... Magisterial District from and after the ..... day of ....., 20.....

Dated the ..... day of ....., 20.....

Signed .....

..... Magisterial District  
Collecting Officer

\*Delete as appropriate.



FORM 4

REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

County of .....

FAMILY LAW (GUARDIANSHIP OF MINORS,  
DOMICILE AND MAINTENANCE) ACT

MAINTENANCE CARD

No. ....

IN THE MATTER OF

.....

*versus*

.....

Order made by His Worship Mr. ....  
Magistrate of the ..... Court on .....  
..... for the payment of .....

.....  
*Specimen Signature of Payee*

DEPOSIT WITH MAGISTRATE

Date	Receipt No.	Amount \$            c.	Date to which Settlement is made	Date of payment out of Court

**FORM 5**

REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

County of .....

FAMILY LAW (GUARDIANSHIP OF MINORS, DOMICILE AND MAINTENANCE) ACT

**DEPOSIT REGISTER**

Date of Receipt	Counterfoil Receipt Number	Maintenance Card Number	Name of Complainant	Name of Defendant	Amount Deposited		Date of Payment to Complainant		Amount Paid	
					\$	c.			\$	c.

FORM 6

REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

County of .....

FAMILY LAW (GUARDIANSHIP OF MINORS,  
DOMICILE AND MAINTENANCE) ACT

FORM OF RECEIPT TO BE GIVEN  
BY COLLECTING OFFICER

IN THE MAGISTRATE'S COURT

..... Magisterial District

No. ....

.....  
.....\*

vs

Received from .....  
this ..... day of ..... 20.....  
the sum of .....  
being amount due under a maintenance order in the above matter in respect of  
..... weeks/months payments  
ending ..... day of ..... 20.....

.....  
\$  
.....

Signed .....  
Collecting Officer

..... Magisterial District

.....  
\*Insert title of proceedings.

.....

**FORM 7**

**REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO**

County of .....

**FAMILY LAW (GUARDIANSHIP OF MINORS,  
DOMICILE AND MAINTENANCE) ACT**

**FORM OF RECEIPT TO BE GIVEN TO  
THE COLLECTING OFFICER**

IN THE MAGISTRATE'S COURT

..... Magisterial District

Case No. ....

Year .....

..... vs .....

Received this ..... day of ..... 20.....  
from the Collecting Officer for the .....  
Magisterial District the sum of .....  
being amount due under a maintenance order  
in the above matter in respect of  
.....  
weeks/months payments ending .....  
..... day of ..... 20.....

\_\_\_\_\_  
\$ \_\_\_\_\_

.....  
*Signature of Payee*

.....  
*Witness*

\_\_\_\_\_  
\*Insert title of proceedings.

\_\_\_\_\_

FORM 8

REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

FAMILY LAW (GUARDIANSHIP OF MINORS,  
DOMICILE AND MAINTENANCE) ACT

DEPOSIT VOUCHER

RECEIPT NO.

HEAD: Treasury Deposits (Magistrate's Maintenance)

SUB-HEAD:

To the Comptroller of Accounts,

Please receive the sum of .....  
..... and ..... cents,  
being maintenance deposits received in the month of .....  
..... and not paid out within three  
months from the date of their receipt.

Date Received	Receipt No.	From Whom Received	Particulars	Amount

FORM 9

REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

County of .....

FAMILY LAW (GUARDIANSHIP OF MINORS,  
DOMICILE AND MAINTENANCE) ACT  
APPLICATION FOR ORDER TO ATTACH  
PENSION/INCOME

IN THE MAGISTRATE'S COURT

..... Magisterial District

The application of .....  
of .....  
made the ..... day of ..... 20.....  
to me the undersigned Magistrate for the Magisterial District states that by a  
maintenance order made at the Magistrate's Court held at  
.....  
on the ..... day of ..... 20.....  
.....  
was ordered to pay to .....  
or to .....  
having the care of a minor child/minor children the sum of .....  
..... per week/month.

AND the applicant further says that there is payable to .....  
.....  
a certain pension (income) capable of being attached namely  
\*.....

AND the applicant therefore prays that an order be made that the sum of  
†..... or such part thereof as  
the Court may order may each week be attached out of the pension (income)  
and paid to the Collecting Officer for the said Magisterial District.

Signed .....  
*Applicant*

Taken before me this ..... day of ..... 20.....  
at ..... in the ..... Magisterial District.

Signed .....  
*Magistrate*

\*Set out particulars of pension or income.

†Insert amount of weekly/monthly sum payable under the maintenance order.

FORM 10

REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

County of .....

FAMILY LAW (GUARDIANSHIP OF MINORS,  
DOMICILE AND MAINTENANCE) ACT

SUMMONS TO ATTACH PENSION OR INCOME

IN THE MAGISTRATE'S COURT

..... Magisterial District

To ..... (Garnishee)

WHEREAS application has been made to me on the .....  
day of ..... 20..... that by a maintenance order  
made at the Magistrate's Court for the Magisterial District held at .....  
on the ..... day of ..... 20..... it was adjudged that  
.....

- \*(a) failed to provide reasonable maintenance for the applicant;
- \*(b) failed to provide or to make a proper contribution towards  
reasonable maintenance for a minor child/ .....  
minor children of his family;
- \*(c) being the spouse of the applicant deserted the applicant;
- \*(d) is the father of a minor child/ .....  
minor children of which .....  
is the mother,

and was ordered to pay the sum of \$..... per week/month to  
.....

or to .....  
having the care of the minor child/ ..... minor children

and that he has made default under the order and there is now due thereunder  
the sum of ..... being the  
amount of arrears for ..... weeks/ months payments and that there  
is payable to the said ..... a certain pension/income capable  
of being attached, namely .....

These are therefore to require you to be and appear on the .....  
day of ..... 20..... at ..... o'clock  
in the forenoon in the Magistrate's Court at .....  
to show cause why an order should not be made that the sum of  
..... or such part thereof as the Court may  
order may each week/month be attached out of the pension (income) and paid  
to the Collecting Officer for the .....  
Magisterial District.

Given under my hand this ..... day of ..... 20.....  
..... at .....  
..... in the .....  
Magisterial District.

Signed .....  
*Magistrate*

\*Delete as appropriate.

**FORM 11**

**REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO**

County of .....

**FAMILY LAW (GUARDIANSHIP OF MINORS,  
DOMICILE AND MAINTENANCE) ACT**

**ORDER TO ATTACH PENSION/INCOME**

IN THE MAGISTRATE'S COURT

..... Magisterial District

WHEREAS an application has been made by .....  
.....  
of .....  
that by a maintenance order made at the .....  
Magistrate's Court held at .....  
on the ..... day of ..... 20.....  
it was adjudged that .....

- \*(a) failed to provide reasonable maintenance for the applicant;
- \*(b) failed to provide or to make a proper contribution towards  
reasonable maintenance for a minor child/ .....  
minor children of his family;

LAWS OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

Family Law (Guardianship of Minors,  
Domicile and Maintenance)

62

Chap. 46:08

Maintenance Rules

[Subsidiary]

- \*(c) being the spouse of the applicant deserted the applicant;
- \*(d) is the father of a minor child/ ..... minor children of which ..... is the mother,

and ordered to pay the sum of \$ ..... per week/month to .....  
 or to .....  
 having the care of the minor child/ ..... minor children for

- \*(a) the maintenance of the applicant;
- \*(b) the maintenance of the applicant and a minor child/ ..... minor children of the family;
- \*(c) the maintenance of a minor child/ ..... minor children of which ..... is the mother,

and that he has made default under the order and there is now due thereunder the sum of .....  
 being the amount of arrears for ..... weeks/months payments and that there is payable to .....  
 a certain pension (income) capable of being attached, namely .....

After giving .....  
 .....  
 an opportunity of being heard it is adjudged that the facts set out in the said application are true AND IT IS ORDERED that the sum of .....  
 .....  
 each week/month BE ATTACHED out of the pension (income) and paid to the Collecting Officer for the .....  
 Magisterial District.

Dated this ..... day of ..... 20.....

Signed .....  
 ..... Magisterial District

---

\*Delete as appropriate.

**FORM 12**

**REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO**

County of .....

**FAMILY LAW (GUARDIANSHIP OF MINORS,  
DOMICILE AND MAINTENANCE) ACT**

**APPLICATION FOR WARRANT OF DISTRESS**

IN THE MAGISTRATE'S COURT

..... Magisterial District

WHEREAS by a maintenance order made at the Magistrate's Court of the  
.....  
Magisterial District, held at .....  
on the ..... day of ..... 20.....  
it was adjudged that .....  
of .....

\*(a) failed to provide or to have a proper contribution towards  
reasonable maintenance for a minor child/ .....  
minor children of his family;

\*(b) is the father of a minor child/ .....  
minor children of which .....  
is the mother,

and it was ordered that .....  
pay to the Collecting Officer for the .....  
Magisterial District the sum of .....  
a week/month for the maintenance of .....  
minor child/ ..... minor children.

And whereas .....  
has made default under the order and there is now due thereunder the sum of  
.....  
being the amount of arrears for weeks/months payments ending the  
..... day of ..... 20.....

I, .....  
Collecting Officer for the Magisterial District, do hereby pray that a warrant  
may issue directing that the sum of .....  
due under such order together with the costs attending such warrant be  
recovered by distress and sale of the goods and chattels of .....

Dated the ..... day of ..... 20.....

Signed .....  
Collecting Officer

..... Magisterial District

\*Delete as appropriate.

FORM 13

REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

County of .....

FAMILY LAW (GUARDIANSHIP OF MINORS,  
DOMICILE AND MAINTENANCE) ACT

WARRANT OF DISTRESS ON APPLICATION  
OF COLLECTING OFFICER

IN THE MAGISTRATE'S COURT

..... Magisterial District

To all Constables.

WHEREAS by a maintenance order made at the Magistrate's Court for the  
Magisterial District held at .....  
on the ..... day of ..... 20.....  
it was adjudged that .....  
of .....

\*(a) failed to provide or to make a proper contribution towards  
reasonable maintenance for a minor child/ .....  
minor children of his family;

\*(b) is the father of a minor child/ .....  
minor children of which .....  
is the mother,

and ordered to pay to the Collecting Officer for the Magisterial District the  
sum of ..... per week/month  
for the maintenance of ..... and  
..... minor child/ ..... minor children.

And whereas .....  
has made default under the order and there is due thereunder the sum of  
..... being the amount of arrears for .....  
weeks/months payments ending ..... 20.....

And whereas the Collecting Officer has applied that a warrant may issue  
directing that the last-mentioned sum together with the costs attending such  
warrant be recovered by distress and sale of goods and chattels of .....

This is to command you forthwith to make distress of the goods and  
chattels of .....  
and if within the space of five days after the making of such distress the said  
sum of .....  
together with reasonable charges of taking and keeping the distress shall not  
be paid then that you do sell the goods and chattels so by you distrained and  
do pay the money arising from such sale unto the Collecting Officer that he  
may pay and apply the same as by law directed and may render the surplus, if  
any, on demand to .....

Given under my hand at .....  
in the ..... Magisterial District  
this ..... day of ..... 20.....

Signed .....

*Magistrate*

\*Delete as appropriate.

**FORM 14**

**REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO**

County of .....

**FAMILY LAW (GUARDIANSHIP OF MINORS,  
DOMICILE AND MAINTENANCE) ACT**

**WARRANT OF COMMITMENT**

IN THE MAGISTRATE'S COURT

..... Magisterial District

To all Constables and to the Keeper of ..... (Jail) Prison.

WHEREAS by a maintenance order made at the Magistrate's Court held at

.....

in the .....

Magisterial District on the ..... day of .....

20..... it was adjudged that .....

\*(a) failed to provide or to make a proper contribution towards  
reasonable maintenance for a minor child/ .....  
minor children of his family;

\*(b) is the father of a minor child/ .....  
minor children of which .....  
is the mother,

and ordered to pay to the Collecting Officer for the Magisterial District the  
sum of ..... a week/month  
for the maintenance of the minor child/children.

And whereas .....  
has made default under the order and there is due thereunder the sum of  
..... and it appears by the  
admission of ..... by the return to a warrant  
of distress that no sufficient distress can be had for the sum and costs attending  
such warrant and ..... having been  
brought before the Magistrate's Court held at ..... on the  
..... day of ..... 20....., has neglected (refused)  
without cause to make payment of the sum so due together with such costs.

This is therefore to command you to take .....  
..... and him safely to convey to the  
..... Prison, and there deliver him to the  
keeper thereof together with this warrant.

And I do hereby command you the keeper to receive .....  
..... there to be  
imprisoned for the space of .....  
from the date hereof unless the sum above-mentioned together with all costs  
and charges shall be sooner paid.

And for your so doing this shall be your sufficient warrant.

Given under my hand at .....  
in the ..... Magisterial District  
this ..... day of ..... 20.....

Signed .....

*Magistrate*

\*Delete as appropriate.

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APPENDIX

ORDER 86

**PROCEEDINGS RELATING TO MINORS,  
MATRIMONIAL STATUS AND SPOUSES**

**I. MINORS**

**Interpretation**

**1. In this Order—**

“the Act” means the Infants Act, Ch. 46:02;

“the Family Law Act” means the Family Law (Guardianship of Minors, Domicile and Maintenance) Act, Ch. 46:08.

**2. (1)** Subject to paragraph (2) an application concerning the maintenance or advancement of minors or made under the Family Law Act or under Part III of the Act shall be made to a Judge in Chambers by an originating summons intituled—

- (i) in the case of an application under the Family Law Act—

In the matter of the Minor

and

In the Matter of the Family Law  
(Guardianship of Minors,  
Domicile and Maintenance) Act,  
Ch. 46:08;

- (ii) in the case of an application under the Act—

In the matter of the Minor

and

In the matter of the Infants Act,  
Ch. 46:02.

- (2) (a) Where any proceedings (including proceedings for divorce or judicial separation) are pending in relation to the minor; or

- (b) when the minor is a ward of Court or the administration of the estate or the maintenance or advancement of the minor is under the direction of the Court,

the application shall be made by summons.

### **Power of Judge Pending Appeal**

3. Where an appeal is entered against a judgment given or order made under rule 2 the Judge by whom the judgment was given or the order was made may make such orders either *ex parte* or otherwise as he may think proper.

### **Application to make a Minor a Ward of Court**

4. (1) An application to make a minor a ward of Court must be made by originating summons.

(2) Where there is no person other than the minor who is a suitable defendant, an application may be made *ex parte* for leave to issue either an *ex parte* originating summons or an originating summons with the minor as defendant thereto; and except where such leave is granted, the minor shall not be made a defendant to an originating summons under this rule in the first instance.

(3) The date of the minor's birth shall, unless otherwise directed, be stated in the summons and the plaintiff shall—

- (a) on issuing the summons or before or at the first hearing thereof lodge in the appropriate Registry a certified copy of the entry in the Register of Births, or, as the case may be, in the Adopted Children Register relating to the minor; or
- (b) at the first hearing of the summons apply for directions as to proof of birth of the minor in some other manner.

(4) Unless the Court otherwise directs, the summons shall state the whereabouts of the minor or, as the case may be, that the plaintiff is unaware of the whereabouts.

(5) Every defendant other than the minor shall, forthwith after being served with the summons—

- (a) lodge in the appropriate Registry a notice stating the address of the defendant and the whereabouts of the minor, or as the case may be, that the defendant is unaware of his whereabouts; and
- (b) unless the Court otherwise directs, serve a copy of the notice on the plaintiff.

(6) Where any party other than the minor changes his address or becomes aware of any change in the whereabouts of the minor after the issue or, as the case may be, service of the summons, he shall, unless the Court otherwise directs, forthwith lodge notice of the change in the appropriate Registry and serve a copy of the notice on every other party.

(7) The summons shall contain a notice to the defendant informing him of the requirements of paragraphs (5) and (6).

(8) In this rule any reference to the whereabouts of a minor is a reference to the address at which and the person with whom he is living and any other information relevant to the question where he may be found.

#### **When Minor Ceases to be a Ward of Court**

Ch. 46:08.

**5.** (1) A minor who, by virtue of section 35(2) of the Family Law Act, becomes a ward of Court on the issue of a summons under rule 4 shall cease to be a ward of Court—

- (a) if an application for an appointment for the hearing of the summons is not made within the period of 21 days after the issue of the summons, at the expiration of that period;
- (b) if an application for such an appointment is made within that period, on the determination of the application made by the summons unless the Court hearing it orders that the minor be made a ward of Court.

Ch. 46:08.

(2) Nothing in paragraph (1) shall be taken as affecting the power of the Court under section 35(3) of the Family Law Act to order that any minor who is for the time being a ward of Court shall cease to be a ward of Court.

(3) If no application for an appointment for the hearing of a summons under rule 4 is made within the period 21 days after the issue of the summons, a notice stating whether the applicant intends to proceed with the application made by the summons must be left at the appropriate Registry immediately after the expiration of that period.

#### **Application under the Family Law Act**

6. Where there is pending any proceeding by reason of which a minor becomes a ward of Court, any application relating to the guardianship of minors under the Family Law Act with respect to that minor may be made by summons in that proceeding, but except in that case any such application shall be made by originating summons. Ch. 46:08.

#### **Defendants to Guardianship Summons**

7. (1) Where the minor with respect to whom an application under the Family Law Act is made is not the plaintiff, he shall not, unless the Court otherwise directs, be made a defendant to the summons or, if the application is made by ordinary summons, be served with the summons, but subject to paragraph (2) any other person appearing to be interested in, or affected by the application shall be made a defendant or be served with the summons, as the case may be, including, where the application is made under section 13 of the Family Law Act with respect to a minor who has been received into the care of a certified school within the meaning of Part III of the Children Act, that school. Ch. 46:08. Ch. 46:01.

(2) The Court may dispense with service of the summons (whether originating or ordinary) on any person and may order it to be served on any person not originally served.

#### **Guardianship Proceedings may be in Chambers**

8. Applications under the Family Law Act relating to the guardianship of minors may be disposed of in Chambers. Ch. 46:08.

#### **Applications for Paternity Orders under section 10 of the Status of Children Act (Ch. 46:07)**

9. An application for a paternity order under section 10 of the Status of Children Act, shall be made by originating summons. Ch. 46:07.

### Removal of proceedings from a Magistrate's Court

Ch. 46:08.

10. (1) An application for an order under section 46(1) of the Family Law Act for the removal of an application from a Magistrate's Court into the High Court shall be made *ex parte* by an originating summons, but the Court may direct that the summons shall be served on any person.

(2) The application may be heard by the Registrar or by an Assistant Registrar, but, if an order is made for the removal to the High Court of an application to the Magistrate's Court, that application shall be heard by a single Judge of the Court.

(3) Where an order is made under the said section 46(1), the plaintiff shall send a copy of the order to the Clerk of the Peace of the Magistrate's Court from which the proceedings are ordered to be removed.

(4) On receipt of certified copies of all entries in the books of the Magistrate's Court relating to the proceedings together with all documents filed in the proceedings the Registrar shall forthwith file the said documents and give notice to all parties that the application is proceeding in the High Court.

(5) The application so removed shall proceed in the High Court as if it had been made by originating summons.

### Application of Matrimonial Causes Rules

Ch. 45:51.

Ch. 46:08.

11. (1) Rules 68 to 71 (inclusive) of the Matrimonial Causes Rules (which relate to proceedings under section 50 of the Matrimonial Proceedings and Property Act) shall apply, with the necessary modifications, to proceedings under section 13 of the Family Law Act.

(2) Rules 41, 44 and 45 of the Matrimonial Causes Rules (which relate to the drawing up and service of orders) shall apply to proceedings under this Part of this Order as if they were proceedings under those rules.

## II. MATRIMONIAL STATUS

### Application for Declaration affecting Matrimonial Status

12. (1) Where, apart from costs, the only relief sought in any proceedings is a declaration with respect to the matrimonial status of any person, the proceedings shall be begun by petition.

- (2) The petition shall state—
- (a) the names of the parties and the residential address of each of them at the date of presentation of the petition;
  - (b) the place and date of any ceremony of marriage to which the application relates;
  - (c) whether there have been any previous proceedings between the parties with reference to the marriage or the ceremony of marriage to which the application relates or with respect to the matrimonial status of either of them and, if so, the nature of those proceedings;
  - (d) all other material facts alleged by the petitioner to justify the making of the declaration and the grounds on which he alleges that the Court has jurisdiction to make it,

and shall conclude with a prayer setting out the declaration sought and any claim for costs.

(3) Nothing in the foregoing provisions shall be construed—

- (a) as conferring any jurisdiction to make a declaration in circumstances in which the Court could not otherwise make it; or
- (b) as affecting the power of the Court to refuse to make a declaration notwithstanding that it has jurisdiction to make it.

#### **Further Proceedings on Petition under Rule 6**

**13.** Subject to rule 6, the Matrimonial Causes Rules shall apply with the necessary modifications to the petition as if it were a petition in a matrimonial cause.

### **III. SPOUSES**

#### **Provisions as to Actions in Tort**

**14.** (1) This rule applies to any action in tort brought by one of the parties to a marriage against the other during the subsistence of the marriage.

Ch. 45:50.

(2) On the first application by summons or motion in an action to which this rule applies, the Court shall consider, if necessary of its own motion, whether the power to stay the action under section 15(2) of the Married Persons Act, should or should not be exercised.

(3) Notwithstanding anything in Order 13 or Order 19 judgment in default of appearance or of defence shall not be entered in an action to which this rule applies except with the leave of the Court.

(4) An application for the grant of leave under paragraph (3) must be made by summons and the summons must, notwithstanding anything in Order 65, rule 9, be served on the defendant.

(5) If the summons is for leave to enter judgment in default of appearance, the summons shall not be issued until after the time limited for appearing.

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