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NORTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF FRANKLIN

FILED

IN THE GENERAL COURT OF JUSTICE
DISTRICT COURT DIVISION
Civil Division

2020 MAY 28 A 9:03

FRANKLIN CO., C.S.C.

ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDELINES REGARDING
THE EXPANSION OF FRANKLIN COUNTY IV-D CHILD SUPPORT COURT

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Acknowledging that social distancing and other safety measures will likely remain in effect at least in the short term after our Court System is allowed to expand its operations, the undersigned hereby establishes the following protocols and procedures regarding the expansion of Franklin County Child Support Court.

I. CAPACITY AND SOCIAL DISTANCING

Courtroom audience seating should be determined in accordance with social distancing guidelines requiring each seat to be at least 6 feet apart from every other seat. Socially distanced audience seating shall be marked with numbered placards placed in numerical sequence. The placards or other type of signage used for seat marking should be approved by the County Manager and should be provided by the County. Audience members shall fill the seats in order beginning with seat 1 and continuing numerically through the last numbered seat.

Social distancing requirements shall also be enforced in the areas where persons are waiting to enter the Courtrooms and Courthouses. Floor line-up markings located at least six feet away from other such markings should be placed in hallways, entrance ways and other common areas where persons stand awaiting entry to the Courtroom. Additionally, depending on the particular Courthouse and premises, markings on floors or sidewalks should be made in at least six feet intervals outside and along the sidewalk up to the point of entry of the Courthouse. The total number of line-up marks both inside and outside the Courthouse should at least equal the number of audience available seats in the Courtroom.

Additionally, and if not already existing, County Maintenance staff shall have appropriate signage made that informs the public that entry in the Courthouse and the Courtroom is prohibited to persons having any of the current symptoms of the COVID-19 virus. Said signs shall include that all persons must wear protective masks or face coverings inside the Courthouse and Courtroom if the same are available. The signs shall contain a current list of all known COVID-19 symptoms and shall be prominently placed at the public entrance to the Courthouse and the District Courtroom.

II. COURT SESSIONS/TIME PERIODS/PROCEDURES

Any Child Support session's docket shall be divided into two periods – a morning period docket and an afternoon period docket. The maximum number of cases on any period docket shall be limited to two-thirds the number of seats in the courtroom which equates to a maximum of 25 cases per period for the Franklin County District Courtroom which has 38 available seats. The recommended number of cases for any such period is not more than twenty (20).

Beginning at 9:00 a.m. and before Child Support Court begins, the Trial Judge shall remotely hold 96 hour hearings, 72 hour hearings, and 48 hour hearings via CourtCall or WebEx for jail inmates. Additionally, and during this time period, the Trial Judge shall remotely address inmates whose rights to Court Appointed Counsel and assistance of Counsel have not been addressed.

After the remote hearings have concluded and at 9:30 a.m., the Child Support session's morning period will begin. A fifteen minute break in said Period shall be taken at approximately 11:00 a.m. A lunch break will begin at 12:30 and shall last until 2:00 p.m. at which time the afternoon period will begin. The Afternoon period shall have a fifteen minute break beginning at 3:30 p.m. and the day's session shall adjourn no later than 5:00 p.m. on any Child Support Court Date.

During any court period, only parties to a case (i.e. Defendants, custodial parents/custodians/guardians) whose names appear on the docket for said period are allowed in the courtroom. No one else shall be allowed to come into the courtroom.

A court session's period dockets shall be made available to Courthouse Security as well as the clerk. The court docket shall be posted at the door of the Courthouse so that individuals will be aware of the time they are expected to be in court. No one whose case is scheduled for the afternoon session shall be allowed to wait in the courthouse or on the Courthouse premises until the line-up for the afternoon session begins. Such person shall be required to leave the courthouse premises and return for the afternoon session.

III. IV-D AGENCY AND ATTORNEY:

The IV-D Child Support Agency shall prepare a Morning Period Docket and an Afternoon Period Docket for any Session of IV-D Child Support Court in Franklin County. As soon as possible after a session's calendar is prepared, the same shall be forwarded to the appropriate Clerk so that the Clerk can disseminate said dockets to Parties and Attorneys. To that end, the Clerk shall make best efforts to obtain and maintain current emails, cell phone numbers, mailing addresses and other contact information for non-represented litigants and for litigant's Attorneys (**Exhibit 1** attached hereto is an example of a form that Clerks may use in obtaining necessary information to send dockets to Parties and Attorneys).

Morning and Afternoon Dockets shall be used by Courthouse Security to ensure only parties, litigant Attorneys, and witnesses are allowed into the Courtroom during the Time Period in which such persons' cases are set to be heard.

IV. ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS/HEARINGS

Nothing in this order excludes hearings via WebEx, or other electronic means of communication when deemed feasible or necessary to ensure the administration of justice. Persons consenting to remote hearings should file a written consent to remote hearings in their file.

V. COURTHOUSE SECURITY GUARDS (SOMETIMES NOTED AS COURTHOUSE SECURITY OR "SECURITY")

Courthouse Security is an essential part of the adequate functioning and operation of the Criminal Courts subject to these guidelines as the Officers will provide information about the Court's operation and will control the inflow and outflow of persons into the Courthouse and the Courtroom. Judges should extensively consult with Courthouse Security regarding the protocols and procedures herein set forth. In addition to their existing work duties, Security will be responsible under these guidelines for the following:

1. maintaining social distancing requirements for persons lined up to enter the Courthouse and the Courtroom;
2. measuring temperatures of persons and asking questions about symptoms exhibited by any persons seeking entry into the Courthouse and Courtroom (NOTE: taking temperature readings should occur only if Security has appropriate devices such as non-contact "gun" thermometers and Security deems it safe to do so);
3. preventing persons exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms from entering the Courthouse and Courtroom;
4. requiring persons who have protective masks or protective face coverings available to wear them at all times while in the Courthouse;
5. ensuring only parties and other essential persons enter the Courtroom during the appropriate Time Period for their cases, and, informing persons how to be seated once inside the Courtroom;
6. efficiently dispersing persons from the Courthouse when the Courtroom is full for any Time Period so as to minimize the number of persons in the Courthouse;
7. clearing the Courtroom at the end of each Time Period;

8. repeatedly relaying to the public clear instructions as to the operation of these requirements including who is allowed to be in Court during any Time Period contemplated, repeatedly explaining how persons should line-up, and directing the lining up of persons awaiting entry into the Courtroom and Courthouse.

VI. ATTORNEYS

Attorneys will be representing many litigants in Franklin County Child Support Court during the period of expanding operations. Attorneys often have to travel between several counties to meet their clients' needs. As a result, the time periods set out herein are likely to be burdensome for Attorneys needing to be in more than one place at a time. Attorneys should always try to arrange their personal schedules to be in Court in the appropriate time session as set by the session's Judge. When an Attorney cannot be in present in an assigned time period, the Attorney shall immediately notify the Clerk of that and may request that the matter be heard in a different time period. The Clerks shall promptly let the Judge know of the time conflict and together the Judge and Clerk will determine if a "new" period will be assigned for hearing. If a change of time period is possible, the Clerk shall promptly inform Courthouse Security of the period change so that Security can let the affected parties, witnesses and necessary persons into the "new" period. Upon a case being assigned a "new" Period, Security shall note the change on the "Schedule" available for public viewing. The Court shall make best efforts to ensure all parties have received proper notice of any period changes for cases.

Attorneys shall maintain close contact with clients to inform them of any change of Time Period for their cases. Opposing Counsel shall communicate regularly with each other regarding docketed cases and shall attempt to narrow issues to be decided by the Court during any necessary hearings. Time periods for Matters in which all parties are represented may be switched in the same manner as set out above. In addition, Attorneys should consider the possibility of using remote hearings outside of regularly held court sessions if, and when a Judge and Clerk can conduct such a hearing.

VII. COURTHOUSE/COURTROOM MAINTENANCE

Between the morning and the afternoon session, the Courtroom shall be vacated by every person except Courthouse Maintenance Staff. These breaks are to allow maintenance to perform cleanings of the Courtroom as deemed appropriate by the Franklin County Health Director and/or appropriate Health directives.

VIII. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS

A. All Judges, Attorneys, Clerks, Courthouse Security, Courthouse Maintenance Staff and others involved in the sessions designed by these guidelines should communicate freely and regularly, both prior to and during sessions, to help the processes outlined herein move smoothly, efficiently and safely.

B. The time frames herein for beginning and ending Time Periods within any session of Court are provided for guidance. As no two Court dates are ever the same, on the day of any session conducted pursuant to these guidelines, the trial Judge has the discretion to modify said time frames, alter periods held, decrease the number of persons allowed in the Courtroom for any Period held, and take other safety measures the Judge deems appropriate for any session.

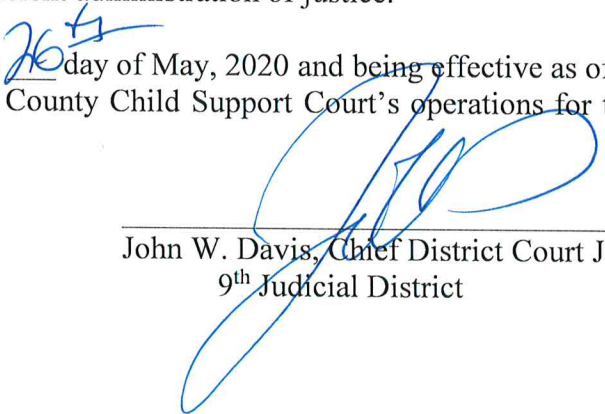
C. Any person seeking entry to the Courtroom who presents with a fever or any other symptom associated with COVID-19 shall be required to immediately leave the Courthouse premises and shall not return to the Courthouse for at least 72 hours.

D. The safety of all persons involved in the Court System is the of the upmost concern. The goal of this Order is to conduct effective and efficient Court sessions that completely dispose of as many cases as possible while maintaining the highest state of safety possible.

E. Notwithstanding anything contained herein to the contrary, as seats become available in the Courtroom during any Time Period, Courthouse security, upon request, shall allow members of the general public to enter the Courtroom and fill up to five seats; said members of the general public shall sit in numbered seats designated for the audience.

F. The undersigned reserves the right to modify the provisions herein as deemed necessary and appropriate for the safe and efficient administration of justice.

This Order being signed the 26th day of May, 2020 and being effective as of the beginning date for expansion of the Franklin County Child Support Court's operations for the 9th Judicial District.



John W. Davis, Chief District Court Judge
9th Judicial District

<p>Ninth Judicial District</p> <p>Rev. 05/2020</p>	<p>REGISTRATION OF EMAIL ADDRESS FOR SELF REPRESENTED LITIGANT OR COUNSEL FOR LITIGANT</p>	
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IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF _____ COUNTY, N.C.

Plaintiff/Petitioner

Case No. _____

Vs.

**REGISTRATION OF
EMAIL ADDRESS FOR
SELF REPRESENTED LITIGANT OR
COUNSEL FOR LITIGANT**

Defendant/Respondent

I am currently representing myself or I am representing (circle one): Plaintiff/Petitioner or Defendant/Respondent before this court in the court case above. I request any documents be served upon me electronically, by way of the email address below, except for those that require specific service as directed by statute.

I understand that emailing documents to this email address is considered to meet legal notice requirements.

If I am self-represented I am responsible for notifying the court if I retain an attorney for this case.

I am responsible to notify the court if I change my email address or other contact information.

Signature

Date: _____

Name (Print)

Street Address/P.O. Box

City/State/ZIP code

Phone

Email Address/Litigant

Email Address/Attorney

Exhibit 1

Exhibit 2

9:00a.m.-12:30p.m. Morning Period cases to be addressed

- 15 CVD 980 Dean (Thompson) vs. Dean (Gulley)
- 20 CVD 453 James vs. James (Gardner)
- 16 CVD 495 Humphries (Minshew) v. Shaw (Thompson)
- 19 CVD 334 Darnell vs. Dean (Hartsell)
- 20 CVD 114 Sumner (Bartlet) vs. Sumner(Rove)
- 20 CVD 678 Shaw(Jones) vs. Shaw
- 15 CVD 12 Journigan vs. Butler(Ashland)
- 20 CVD 1 Sawyer vs. Sawyer
- 20 CVD 2 Tanner vs. Tanner
- 20 CVD 76 Wright vs. Wright
- 20 CVD 989 James vs. Hawkins
- 20 CVD 786 Scott vs. Harris
- 19 CVD 342 Burke vs. Burke
- 20 CVD 111 Whittmore(Tully) vs. Whittmore(Peagram)
- 19 CVD 543 Dasani(Moore) vs. Dasani (Sutton)
- 20 CVD 332 Carpenter(Williams) vs. Corova
- 14 CVD 879 Roberts vs. Roberts(Thompson)
- 19 CVD 789 Horner vs. Horner