

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER
FOR SOCIAL SERVICES MATTERS

Pursuant to the Chief District Court Judge's authority and duty under North Carolina General Statute 7A-146, the following Administrative Order is issued:

On 13 March 2020, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of North Carolina issued a directive closing Superior and District Court with only a few exceptions in response to the National State of Emergency caused by the Covid-19 outbreak. On 15 March 2020, this directive was revised by memorandum to court officials advising postponement or cancellation of in-person meetings and the use of remote technologies. The general intent is to limit public contact with the court system except to address emergency and safety situations.

In order to meet the safety needs of community members receiving social services and minimize disruptions to important timeframes, this Court hereby issues the following Administrative Order for the social services programs identified below for hearings that should occur in March and April 2020.

THEREFORE, for all social services cases, time frames, necessary persons in attendance, the need for recordation, or other requirements for subsequent hearings may be altered on a case-by-case basis to protect the safety of the parties and the community, safeguarding due process to the extent possible.

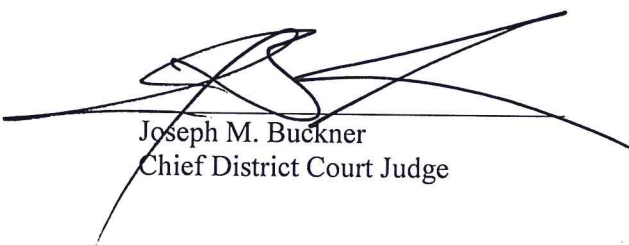
FURTHER, all child welfare matters scheduled to be heard in Juvenile Court in March or April 2020 that are not contested and do not require an in-person hearing may be resolved by consent of the parties and subsequent signature of the Court and entry out of session. Uncontested child welfare hearings needing the Court's input and those that may be resolved by counsel for the parties and the Court by phone are also hereby authorized to occur out of session as may be arranged by phone during March and April 2020. Cases that cannot be resolved by consent or stipulation shall be continued or noticed for hearing when court sessions resume.

FURTHER, all adult protective services matters meeting the criteria for *ex parte* Orders shall proceed as outlined in N.C.G.S. § 108A-106. Subsequent hearings requiring in-person hearings in March or April 2020, will be continued if they cannot be resolved either by consent or telephonically by counsel and the Court.

FURTHER, all child support matters that are able to be scheduled to be heard in March or April 2020, are not contested, and do not require an in-person hearing, may be resolved by consent of the parties through a Consent Order or Voluntary Support Agreement with subsequent signature of the Court and entry out of session.

A copy of this Administrative Order shall be valid as if it were an original and shall be served upon each party; or if represented by counsel, served upon their counsel of record by electronic means.

This the 16th day of March 2020.


Joseph M. Buckner
Chief District Court Judge