

NORTH CAROLINA
PITT COUNTY
3rd JUDICIAL DISTRICT

FILED
IN THE GENERAL COURT OF JUSTICE
DISTRICT COURT DIVISION

2020 MAY 21 12:43

PITT CO., C.S.C.

BY _____

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER
FOR SOCIAL SERVICES MATTERS

Having reviewed the Orders of the Chief Justice of the Supreme court of North Carolina declaring and determining that conditions resulting from the public health threat posed by COVID-19 exist in all counties of this State and having also received information indicating that there are a substantial number of matters to be addressed in the Juvenile A/N/D Court of Pitt County, the undersigned judicial official enters the following Administrative Order:

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.

THEREFORE, it is hereby Ordered that the Pitt County Juvenile A/N/D Court shall resume hearing cases in all child welfare matters scheduled to be heard in Juvenile Court in June 2020 with the following restrictions.

Those cases that are not contested and do not require an in-person hearing may be resolved by consent order of the parties and subsequent signature of the Court that may be signed in or 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 June 2020.

If the hearing is contested, an in-person hearing may be held provided that the District Court Judge consents to hearing the matter in person and all social distancing guidelines are followed. In-Person hearings will only be allowed if the hearing conforms to the allotted time granted by the District Court Judge, if applicable. Time limits may be set for all parties by the presiding judge to ensure everyone has an opportunity to be heard.

During any in-person hearings, only the parties, the parties' attorneys, the DSS staff, and the GAL staff will be allowed the court room. Any witnesses to be called shall remain outside of the courtroom until called and then shall leave the courtroom after testifying.

All parent attorneys, the DSS attorney, and the GAL representative shall confer as to each case on the court docket by telephone or other appropriate means at least three (3) days before the scheduled court date. Parent attorneys, the DSS attorney, and the GAL representative shall make their best efforts to contact their respective clients to determine whether they will be present at the hearing and/or they agree with the recommendations of DSS and/or the GAL.

If an in-person hearing is not feasible or a party is not available, a WebEx hearing may be held if consented to by all parties.

WebEx hearings and in-person hearings shall only be held once notice and service requirements are met or waived.

There will certainly be issues that arise that were not contemplated by this order. Any such issue will be resolved by the presiding district court judge.


Persons attending court shall comply with such protocols as are set by Pitt County and enforced by the Pitt County Sheriff. This includes limiting the numbers of people in attendance in the courtroom, as determined by the COVID-19 Courthouse coordinator, which may make the scheduled case subject to change.

Represented parties should consult with their attorneys prior to coming to court to determine if their hearing will take place as scheduled. Parties should arrive 30 minutes before their scheduled hearing at the courthouse checkpoint and advise security personnel the type of case and the courtroom in which they are noticed. All parties must keep their attorney of the Clerk's office aware of any changes to their current contact information.

Persons who have reason to believe that they have COVID-19 will not be permitted to enter the courtroom. They should contact their attorney prior to their court date to request a WebEx hearing. If they are not represented, they shall contact the Clerk's office.

Appropriate courtroom attire is expected by attorneys and parties. Protective masks may be required in the courtroom pursuant to future COVID-19 orders.

This the 21 day of May 2020.



G. Galen Braddy
Chief District Court Judge