

**IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE FIFTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
IN AND FOR PALM BEACH COUNTY, FLORIDA**

JUVENILE DIVISION — DIVISION JK

**STANDING ORDER REGARDING COURT PROCEEDINGS AND
REMOTE APPEARANCE PROTOCOLS**

WHEREAS, the Court has determined that it is in the interest of justice, judicial efficiency, and the integrity of court proceedings to establish a uniform policy governing the manner in which hearings and proceedings before this Division shall be conducted; it is hereby

ORDERED AND ADJUDGED as follows:

I. IN-PERSON APPEARANCES — GENERAL REQUIREMENT

All hearings, trials, and other proceedings before Division JK shall be conducted **in person** unless otherwise authorized by this Court. Counsel of record, parties, witnesses, guardians ad litem, and all other participants are required to appear in person at the Courthouse unless a specific exception has been granted in advance by the Court in accordance with the procedures set forth herein.

The requirement of in-person appearance reflects the Court's commitment to the solemnity of judicial proceedings, particularly in matters involving children and families, and to ensuring full and meaningful participation by all parties.

II. EXCEPTIONS — REMOTE APPEARANCE BY ZOOM

The Court recognizes that special circumstances may, in limited cases, warrant authorization for remote appearance via Zoom videoconferencing. Such authorization is not presumed and shall be granted only upon the Court's case-by-case review.

A. Request Procedure

Counsel of record seeking authorization to appear remotely shall submit a written request by email to the Division's designated email address. The following requirements apply to all such requests:

- The email request must be sent to the divisional email address:
CAD-DivisionJK@pbcgov.org
- All parties of record must be included as recipients on the email at the time it is submitted to the Court.
- The request must identify the case name and number, the scheduled hearing date and time, the name of the requesting counsel or participant, and the specific circumstances warranting remote appearance.

- Requests should be submitted as far in advance of the scheduled hearing as practicable.

B. Court Discretion

Authorization is granted in the sole discretion of the Court. Submission of a request does not constitute authorization to appear remotely. Counsel and parties should plan to appear in person unless and until written authorization has been received from the Court.

III. ZOOM APPEARANCE STANDARDS AND ETIQUETTE

Participants authorized to appear by Zoom are reminded that remote appearance does not diminish the formality, gravity, or legal significance of the proceeding. This Court expects all remote participants to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the standards applicable to in-person courtroom appearances. The following minimum standards are required:

- **Audio and Video Testing:** Participants must test both audio and video equipment in advance of the hearing. Technical difficulties attributable to a failure to prepare do not constitute grounds for continuance.
- **Video Activated:** Video must remain on and clearly visible throughout the entirety of the proceeding. Participation with video disabled is not permitted unless expressly authorized by the Court.
- **Proper Identification:** All participants must display their full first and last name in their Zoom display name. Attorneys and other professionals should also include their title or role (e.g., "Jane Smith, Esq. – DCF Counsel"; "John Doe – Guardian ad Litem").
- **Professional Attire:** Participants shall dress in professional attire appropriate to a formal court proceeding.
- **Appropriate Environment:** Participants must appear from a quiet, private location free from distractions, background noise, and interruptions. The use of virtual or blurred backgrounds is discouraged; a neutral, professional background is preferred.
- **Mute Protocol:** When not actively speaking, participants shall remain on mute to minimize audio interference. Unmuting should be done promptly when recognized by the Court.
- **Undivided Attention:** Participants shall give their full and undivided attention to the proceedings. Use of mobile devices, simultaneous work on unrelated matters, or other distracting activity during the hearing is prohibited.
- **Punctuality:** Remote participants must be logged into the Zoom session and ready to proceed at least five (5) minutes prior to the scheduled hearing time.

IV. FAILURE TO COMPLY

Failure to comply with the requirements of this Order may result in the Court declining to proceed with the remote appearance, imposition of sanctions or such other relief as the Court deems appropriate. The Court reserves the right to require a participant to appear in person

notwithstanding a prior authorization for remote appearance if compliance with these standards is not maintained.

V. EFFECTIVE DATE AND APPLICABILITY

This Standing Order is effective immediately upon entry and shall apply to all proceedings pending before Division JK unless otherwise ordered by the Court in a specific case. This Order supersedes any prior orders of this Division concerning hearing appearance protocols to the extent of any conflict.

DONE AND ORDERED in Palm Beach County, Florida.



BRADLEY G. HARPER
Circuit Court Judge
Fifteenth Judicial Circuit, Division JK
Palm Beach County, Florida

Date: April 27, 2026