

VIRGINIA:

**IN THE JUVENILE AND DOMESTIC RELATIONS COURT FOR THE
CITY OF ALEXANDRIA**

**COVID-19 EMERGENCY ORDER REGARDING CHILDREN IN THE JUVENILE AND
DOMESTIC RELATIONS FIRST FLOOR COURTHOUSE SPACE**

The Alexandria Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court (JDR) is operating under Emergency Declarations from the Supreme Court of Virginia due to the COVID-19 Emergency pandemic.

The Supreme Court, in its June 1, 2020 Fifth Extension, in paragraph 3) states: “the courts should continue to conduct as much business as possible by means other than in-person proceedings. In all civil and criminal matters, courts are encouraged to continue and even increase the use of video conference, teleconferencing, email or other means that do not involve in-person contact. These methods are preferred over in-person court proceedings.”

In addition the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Virginia has charged the courts with the responsibility to take reasonable steps to minimize the risk of the spread of COVID-19. The courts’ paramount concern is the safety of the public.

JDR Court has resumed civil hearings, both in-person and via telephone. All court users have had access to participate by telephone. This method has worked well, and is the preference for many court users. Participation via telephone shall continue to be liberally granted.

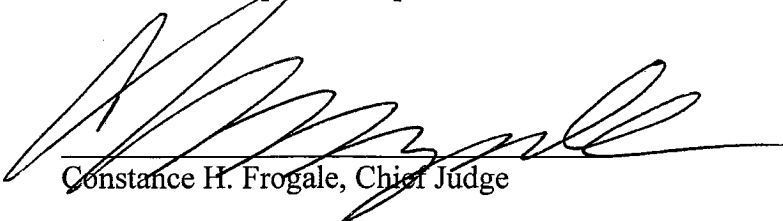
Because the Northern Virginia area is a COVID-19 “hot spot,” and because the Supreme Court of Virginia has charged the courts to protect the safety of the public, this Court, **with the exception stated herein**, has determined that in all civil custody, visitation, child support, and child abuse and neglect proceedings, no minor children (under 18 years old) will be permitted in the JDR Court space on the first floor of the courthouse until the Emergency Orders are lifted. This prohibition shall not apply to criminal cases, adult and next friend protective order cases, or cases where there is a statutory requirement that a minor child be present in person.

The exception shall be that any parent or guardian with a minor child who is unable to come to the court may participate via phone. Further if anyone can show good cause why it is both necessary and safe for a minor child to be present in court, then the Court will consider any request on a case by case basis. This measure is necessary to reduce the risks of any minor child’s exposure to Covid-19, and to keep all individuals safe, as mandated.

Accordingly, IT IS ORDERED that:

While the Emergency Orders remain in place, in all civil custody, visitation, child support, and child abuse and neglect proceedings, no minor children (under 18 years) will be permitted in the JDR Court space on the first floor of the courthouse. This is subject to the express exception that the court will grant free leave for the parent, guardian and/or the child to participate via telephone. Anyone may request that a child be present in person in the JDR court space if they can show that it is necessary and safe for the child to be present. Any such requests must be made through the clerk’s office. This prohibition shall not apply to criminal cases, adult and next friend protective order cases, or cases where there is a statutory requirement that a minor child be present in person.

Dated: June 16, 2020


Constance H. Frogale, Chief Judge