

**IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE THIRD JUDICIAL CIRCUIT  
ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO.: 2020- 008**

**ORDER REGARDING PARENTING PROCEDURES**

*WHEREAS*, the World Health Organization has declared the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) a pandemic, the Governor of Florida has declared that a state of emergency exists, and the Surgeon General and State Health Officer have declared a public health emergency exists, and the Florida State Courts must take steps to mitigate the effects of COVID-19 on legal proceedings and participants in those legal proceedings; and

*WHEREAS*, since March 17, 2020, the Florida Supreme Court has issued various Emergency Administrative Orders which include ordering the cancellation or postponement of all non-essential in-person hearings; and

*WHEREAS*, on April 1, 2020, Florida Governor Ron DeSantis entered Executive Order 20-91, referred to as a "Safer at Home" order, which orders all persons in Florida to limit their movements and personal interactions outside of their home to only those necessary to obtain or provide essential services or conduct essential activities; and

*WHEREAS*, it is necessary to reduce the number of "emergency" filings and hearings in family division cases until non-essential in-person hearings resume; and

*WHEREAS*, it is in the best interests of the parties and child(ren) that parents continue to perform their duties and responsibilities of co-parenting, share the additional responsibilities of parenting through this time, and that the parties comply with all existing court orders and court rules; and

*WHEREAS*, pursuant to the authority vested in me as Chief Judge of the Third Judicial Circuit of Florida, specifically, Florida Rules of Judicial Administration 2.215;

It is therefore **ORDERED**:

This Order is intended for all family law matters regarding parental responsibility and time-sharing, to be utilized and complied with immediately in all existing and newly filed Family Division cases in the Third Judicial Circuit. However, this Order shall not supersede or modify any existing injunction for protection, criminal "no contact order," or dependency order which conflicts with these provisions.

This Order shall remain in full force and effect until further order of the Court. This Order does not preclude an individual Judge from modifying or amending a previously entered order in individual cases where the Judge deems necessary. Any part of this Order not changed by a subsequent order shall remain in effect.

The Court expects all parties to continue to adhere to all final judgments, temporary orders, settlement agreements, or other orders of the Court awarding parental responsibility and/or decision making and/or time-sharing. The Governor's Executive Order 20-91 does not restrict or prohibit time-sharing. Executive Order 20-91 does not excuse parents of their obligation to comply with time sharing and other provisions in their parenting plans, which includes transportation. Should one parent be unable to exercise time sharing due to COVID 19, that parent must immediately notify the other parent, by whatever means available, so that alternative means of contact may be arranged.

Regular time-sharing as set forth in a Parenting Plan shall continue until the date the School District or Official governing the child(ren)'s school as designated in the parties' Parenting Plan, announces the last day of school at which time summer time-sharing shall begin as per the Parenting Plan. If a child's school has ended classes for the 2019-2020 school year, the summer timesharing schedule incorporated into any current Final Judgment or current Order shall begin immediately.

Exchanges that were to take place at a child(ren)'s school or daycare that is not currently open should be arranged between the parents in writing by email, text, or a parenting computer application. In the event the parents cannot agree on an alternate arrangement, a motion shall be filed with the Court to be handled in accordance with any subsequent Administrative Orders related to COVID-19 procedures.

Videoconferencing and/or phone or other electronic contact shall be honored as set forth in the parties' Parenting Plan or as agreed to by the parties.

Parents are strongly cautioned that unreasonable, hurtful, or destructive behavior that is found to have been intentional and/or malicious will be sanctioned by the Court in accordance with Chapter 61 of the Florida Statutes and the applicable rules as to contempt.

This Administrative Order is effective immediately and shall be subject to modification, addition, and extension as changing facts and circumstances may require. All previous administrative orders remain in full force and effect except where inconsistent with this Administrative Order.

**DONE** and **ORDERED** in Columbia County, Florida this <sup>4</sup>9 day of April, 2020.

  
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Mark E. Feagle, Chief Judge

*Copies to:*

All Third Circuit Judges and Judicial Assistants

Third Circuit Bar

Third Judicial Circuit Clerks