

**JUVENILE DIVISION OF THE CIRCUIT COURT
FOR BALTIMORE CITY**

**POLICY ON ORDER, DECORUM AND CONDUCT
FOR REMOTE COURT PROCEEDINGS**

PURPOSE: When authorized and permitted pursuant to Title 21 of the Maryland Rules, and consistent with and further to the rules of court decorum established under Administrative Order No. 2020-12 of the Circuit Court for Baltimore City, the Juvenile Division of the Circuit Court for Baltimore City (the “Juvenile Division”) conducts judicial proceedings by remote electronic means to facilitate and promote access to and to advance the efficient, timely, and fair administration of justice. This Policy is adopted to assure that remote hearings are conducted in a respectful manner and in accordance with norms of proper order, decorum and conduct as are necessary and appropriate for judicial proceedings.

DEFINITIONS:

1. “Chambers staff” means the administrative assistant and law clerk of the judge or magistrate presiding over a hearing.
2. “Hearing participant” or “participant” means an attorney, party, parent of a party, witness, or BCDSS or DJS case worker whose appearance at a hearing is necessary, required, directed, permitted, or ordered.
3. “Remote hearing” means a hearing conducted by the Juvenile Division where a hearing participant or participants appear through Zoom for Government from a location or locations other than the courtroom to which a hearing is assigned.
4. “ZfG” means Zoom for Government.

POLICY:

1. Prompt Appearance.
 - a. A hearing participant to a remote hearing shall log into the hearing ZfG session not later than the time set by the hearing’s ZfG invitation, except as may be appropriate under the following circumstances and conditions:
 - i. For an attorney who is delayed due to an appearance in another court hearing, or for reason that is otherwise excusable, by sending notice by email, eQuest messaging, phone call, text, or by other appropriate means to the judge or magistrate, courtroom clerk, or chambers staff; and
 - ii. For any other hearing participant who is delayed for reason that is excusable, by notifying an attorney or the attorneys to the proceeding that the participant is delayed and explaining the reason, therefore.

- b. It is the responsibility of a hearing participant who has not received a ZfG invitation by one hour before the scheduled time for commencement of a hearing to:
 - i. If the participant is an attorney, contact chambers staff to request the link; and
 - ii. If the participant is other than an attorney, contact the attorney or attorneys assigned to represent the participant's interests at the hearing to request the invitation.

2. Remote Location of Hearing Participant.

- a. Except as may be permitted under subsections b. or c. of this section, a hearing participant shall appear at a remote hearing only from a location that:
 - i. Is within the interior of an office building, residence, or other permanent structure;
 - ii. Is in a securely closed room or isolated space within which no persons other than another hearing participant can see and hear the device that is being used to conduct the remote hearing;
 - iii. Contains no operating electronic device, such as a television, radio, speaker, telephone, or computer not being utilized to conduct the hearing's ZfG session; and
 - iv. Is otherwise free of interruptions or distractions.
- b. A hearing participant may appear at a remote hearing from an outside (out-of-doors) location when the participant can do so:
 - i. While utilizing a reliable internet signal;
 - ii. From a stationary position;
 - iii. Without compromising the confidential nature of the proceeding; and
 - iv. From a location that is otherwise free of interruptions or distractions.
- c. A hearing participant may appear at a remote hearing from an automobile only if:
 - i. The participant obtains the permission of the court to appear from an automobile either prior to or at the commencement of the hearing;
 - ii. The automobile is parked; and

- iii. No person other than another hearing participant is located within the interior of the automobile.
3. Attire of Hearing Participant. A hearing participant shall always during a remote hearing be dressed in attire that would be appropriate for the participant if the participant were to be present in-person at a hearing in a courtroom.
4. Conduct During Hearing. During a remote hearing, a hearing participant shall:
 - a. Speak only when addressed by the Court or when the procedure of the hearing requires the participant to speak without first being addresses, such as to make an evidentiary objection;
 - b. Have the participant's device microphone muted when not actively engaged in a colloquy with the Court or another participant;
 - c. Remain seated or otherwise in a stationary position, unless granted permission by the court to move; and
 - d. Not record either the audio or the video of the hearing by any means.

ADOPTED: 08/11/2023