



378TH JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURT

ELLIS COUNTY, TEXAS

WILLIAM D. WALLACE

March 24, 2020

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE


Re: Coronavirus (COVID-19) Child Custody: Possession & Access

Pursuant to and in compliance with the four (4) Emergency Orders issued by the Supreme Court of Texas from March 13, 2020 through the present, the 378th Judicial District Court issues the following guidance to counsel and parties in matters pending before the 378th Judicial District Court and in matters for which the 378th Judicial District Court retains continuing exclusive jurisdiction.

To All Counsel & Parties:

1. Absent a) an agreement, b) a diagnosis of COVID-19, or c) a mandatory quarantine, child custody possession and access exchanges will continue unabated.
2. As regards a "shelter in place" order by local government, child custody possession and access exchanges shall be considered "essential business."
3. Possession and access requiring "supervised visitation" provided by a third-party service is suspended upon the declaration of a "shelter in place" order by local government until such order is lifted.
4. In the event that possession and access shall be interrupted by any event noted above in item 1 it shall be for the minimum possible interruption until the medical diagnosis of COVID-19 or mandatory quarantine condition has ended.
5. In the event that possession and access shall be interrupted by any event noted in items 1 and 3 it shall be immediately replaced with the following:
 - a. Electronic access via teleconference or videoconference, at the discretion of the non-custodial parent.
 - b. Such electronic access via teleconference or video conference shall occur on Monday, Wednesday, Friday, and Sunday at 5pm, 6pm, or 7pm, at the discretion of the non-custodial parent, with 24 hour notice to the custodial parent; as well as anytime by agreement of the parents.
 - c. Such electronic access via teleconference or video conference shall be for a minimum of 15 minutes through a maximum of 39 minutes, per child, at the discretion of the non-custodial parent.

- d. Parties are advised to respect both the attention span and minimum time assured to the non-custodial parent in accommodating the electronic access and may break the phone/video call into two or more parts to meet the minimum time assured.
6. All parties are reminded of Tex. Fam. Code §153.076 to provide significant information concerning the health, education, and welfare of the child in a timely manner.
7. Agreements regarding any matter contained in this order shall be preserved in a documented format by both parties.


William D. Wallace
Presiding Judge

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