



277<sup>TH</sup> DISTRICT COURT  
HON. STACEY MATHEWS, PRESIDING

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March 23, 2020

To: Members of the Williamson County Juvenile Bar

From: Stacey Mathews, Judge, 277<sup>th</sup> District Court

Re: Juvenile Court Operations During Public Health Emergency

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I hope that you and your family are well in these unprecedented times. Please understand that we are working together to do all we can to keep the Juvenile Justice System functioning as efficiently and effectively as possible. **At the front of my thoughts is ensuring that we do all we can to balance our commitment to the justice system with our desire to protect the health of the Juvenile Court community, including you and the youth we serve.**

Because of the public health emergency that has resulted from the COVID-19 virus, and to comply with the orders issued by various officials, including the President, the Governor, and the County Judge, **we will be holding all Juvenile Court hearings remotely through Microsoft Teams video conferencing.** Those hearings include all detention hearings and any other hearing deemed necessary by the Juvenile Court. If you are scheduled for a hearing, you will receive an email from Wanda Davidson or juvenile services staff, inviting you to join a Microsoft Teams conference. To prepare, carefully review the quick guide on using Teams that is attached to this letter.

**Prior to your hearing we are asking that you contact your youth and their family.** This can be done either through regular telephone communication or through Microsoft Teams if you prefer a visual contact. For Monday detention hearings, please call detention at (512) 943-3232 between 8:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. to speak with your youth. For Thursday detention hearings, please call anytime Tuesday/Wednesday or Thursday between 8:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. If you prefer a visual contact, please call the number above to schedule your Microsoft Teams remote visit. We respectfully ask that both defense attorneys and prosecutors consult on each case prior to the scheduled remote hearing.

On court days, you will be given a scheduled time for your hearing which will start promptly. The Juvenile Services Department will continue to work diligently to notify both the defense attorneys and the prosecutor's office of their recommendations before court.

Questions related to this process may be directed to Rebekah Castillo, who is the Court/Intake Services Administrator at Williamson County Juvenile Services. She can be reached at 512-943-3228 (w), 512-924-1456 (c), or [rcastillo@wilco.org](mailto:rcastillo@wilco.org).

### Process for Participating in a Teams Videoconference

- You will receive an email from the Court with a link to “Join Microsoft Teams Meeting.” Click on this link.
- It will bring you to a webpage where you can choose to “Download the Teams App” or “Join on the Web.” You can choose either one, but if you are on a desktop computer, “Join on the Web” is easiest. *Note: You must use Google Chrome or Microsoft Edge as your web-browser to use Teams on the web.* If you are using a mobile device, downloading the Teams App is easiest.
- It will ask you to allow Teams to use your Audio and Video from your computer (you must have a camera and a microphone), and it will ask you to type in your name and click “Join Now.”
- This will place you in the “Lobby” for the Videoconference to begin.
- The person coordinating the call will let you into the Videoconference once it begins.
- Please be advised that the call may be recorded by the Court or Court Staff for record purposes.
- Juvenile Services will provide instructions on how they will be assisting in setting up the calls and procedures for how to review paperwork with your client, while maintaining attorney/client privilege.
- If at any time during a hearing, the juvenile has a question for his/her attorney, procedures are in place to adjourn the hearing and allow for contact between the juvenile and attorney to occur without staff present.