

# Alexandria Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court

## **REMOTE APPEARANCE POLICY**

(Last revised July 1, 2026)

### **A. Purposes and Intent**

The Alexandria Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court recognizes that advances in technology provide meaningful opportunities to improve access to justice, reduce barriers to participation, promote efficiency, and facilitate the fair and timely resolution of matters before the Court. When used appropriately, remote appearance technology can enable litigants, attorneys, witnesses, service providers, and other participants to engage more effectively in court proceedings while reducing the burdens associated with travel, work obligations, caregiving responsibilities, transportation limitations, disability-related challenges, and other practical impediments to appearing in person.

At the same time, the Court has an independent and continuing obligation to ensure that all proceedings are conducted in accordance with the law and in a manner that protects due process, procedural fairness, the integrity of the judicial process, and public confidence in the administration of justice. The use of remote appearance technology must not compromise the Court's ability to assess credibility, maintain courtroom decorum, ensure the rights of parties, protect the confidentiality of juveniles and victims, ensure meaningful participation, or otherwise fulfill its judicial responsibilities.

Accordingly, the Court, pursuant to Va. Code §§ 8.01-4, 16.1-231, and 16.1-227, hereby adopts this Policy to establish the principles, procedures, and factors governing remote appearances. The purpose of this Policy is to provide transparency and consistency regarding when remote appearances may be permitted, the manner in which such requests will be evaluated, and the expectations applicable to participants appearing remotely.

This Policy shall be construed consistently with all applicable statutes, Rules of the Supreme Court of Virginia, and other controlling authority. To the extent any provision of this Policy conflicts with controlling law, the controlling law shall govern.

### **B. In General**

Any person required to appear in the Alexandria Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court for any matter must appear in person unless remote appearance is specifically approved in writing, in advance, by a judge. All requests for remote appearance are at the discretion of the judge. Unless explicitly stated in writing by the judge, approval for remote appearance is only for the specific court date requested. Remote appearance shall be by remote video utilizing the Court's Pexip Justice platform; however, remote appearance may be by telephone if specially requested and specifically approved by the judge.

**C. Remote Appearance by Defendants, Accused Juveniles, and Witnesses in Adult Criminal and Juvenile Delinquency Cases**

1. Defendants, accused juveniles, and all witnesses in adult criminal / juvenile delinquency cases are required to appear in person for every court date unless remote appearance for a specific court date is approved in writing and in advance by a judge.
2. All requests for remote appearance for any defendant, accused juvenile, or witness in adult criminal / juvenile delinquency cases shall be made by motion (if contested) or agreed order (if uncontested).
  - a. Opposed motions for remote appearance must be filed **at least seven days prior** to the date of the hearing at which remote appearance is requested. Absent good cause for the delay, the Court will not consider any opposed motion filed later than seven days prior to the hearing. It is the responsibility of counsel making the request to consult with the opposing party regarding their availability for a hearing on the motion prior to docketing the motion for hearing. To the greatest extent possible, requests for remote appearance in adult criminal / juvenile delinquency cases should be decided by the judge who will preside over the hearing at which remote appearance is requested.
  - b. Agreed orders requesting remote appearance must be fully endorsed by or on behalf of all parties (including any guardians ad litem in the case) and should be filed **as far in advance of the hearing as reasonably possible (and no later than 48 hours prior to the hearing)** to ensure the Clerk has sufficient time to process the request if approved by the judge. The judge will decide whether to grant the agreed order without a hearing, unless the judge determines that a hearing is necessary.
  - c. All motions and agreed orders for remote appearance shall include all information necessary for the Clerk to process the request, including: email address for the remote participant, phone number for the remote participant, and whether the remote participant requires language services. The person submitting the request is solely responsible for ensuring all necessary information is provided to the Clerk and all information provided is accurate and complete.
3. Defendants in adult criminal cases and accused juveniles in delinquency cases may be permitted, at the Court's discretion, to appear by remote video in the following circumstances:
  - a. for entry of a plea of guilty or nolo contendere and the related sentencing or disposition;
  - b. entry of a nolle prosequi or dismissal;
  - c. at a revocation proceeding pursuant to Va. Code § 19.2-306 where the defendant or accused juvenile is incarcerated;
  - d. for waiver of a preliminary hearing;

- e. at a serious offender review pursuant to Va. Code § 16.1-285.2(B1); or
  - f. for other pre-trial matters.
4. Absent extraordinary circumstances, requests for remote appearances by defendants or accused juveniles for any contested trials, contested adjudications, or contested preliminary hearings will not be considered.
5. Witnesses in adult criminal or juvenile delinquency cases may be permitted to appear and give testimony by remote video in the following circumstances:
  - a. where the witness is a person who performed an analysis or examination that resulted in a certificate of analysis, pursuant to Va. Code § 19.2-187(D);
  - b. where the witness is a court-appointed expert or evaluator who will testify at a pretrial hearing concerning the defendant's / accused juvenile's competency or mental state; or
  - c. any other witness for any other proceeding with the consent of all parties.
6. The foregoing does not apply to requests for two-way closed-circuit testimony, which shall be made by motion pursuant to Va. Code § 18.2-67.9.

#### **D. Remote Appearance by Parties and Witnesses in Civil Cases**

1. Parties and witnesses in civil cases are required to appear in person for every court date unless remote appearance for a specific court date is approved in writing and in advance by a judge. All requests for remote appearance for a party or witness in a civil case shall be made by filing the Request for Remote Appearance Form designated by the Clerk of the Court. The person submitting the request is solely responsible for ensuring all necessary information is provided to the Clerk and all information provided is accurate and complete. The Request for Remote Appearance Form should be filed **as far in advance of the hearing as reasonably possible (and no later than 48 hours prior to the hearing)** to ensure the Clerk has sufficient time to process the request if approved by the judge.
2. The person submitting the request should provide notice of the request to all other parties prior to submitting the request. Any party objecting to the request for remote appearance may, at any time, file an objection with the Clerk setting forth the basis of the objection, and the judge will decide whether to grant the request without a hearing, unless the judge determines that a hearing is necessary.
3. Parties in civil cases may request remote appearance for themselves or a witness in the following circumstances:
  - a. the party or witness is incarcerated;
  - b. the party or witness resides outside the Commonwealth of Virginia; or
  - c. there is good cause for the request and remote participation will not substantially frustrate the purpose of the hearing. Mere inconvenience does not constitute good cause.

4. The foregoing does not apply to requests for two-way closed-circuit testimony in civil cases, which shall be made by motion pursuant to Va. Code § 63.2-1521.

#### **E. Remote Appearances by Persons other than Parties and Witnesses**

Requests for persons other than a party or witness to a case (e.g. counsel, guardians ad litem, parents/guardians of juveniles, non-testifying treatment providers, Court Appointed Special Advocates, etc.) to appear by remote video for any case shall be made by filing the Request for Remote Appearance Form designated by the Clerk of the Court. The person submitting the request is solely responsible for ensuring all necessary information is provided to the Clerk and all information provided is accurate and complete. The Request for Remote Appearance Form should be filed **as far in advance of the hearing as reasonably possible (and no later than 48 hours prior to the hearing)** to ensure the Clerk has sufficient time to process the request if approved by the judge.

#### **F. Requirements Applicable to All Remote Participants**

Every person who makes a remote appearance in any case in the Alexandria Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court shall, as a condition of their remote appearance, agree to abide by the following rules (a copy of which shall be emailed to them at the same email address where the link to the remote hearing is sent, unless the participant is incarcerated):

##### **REQUIRED COURTROOM CONDUCT**

A remote hearing is an official court proceeding. You must conduct yourself as though physically present in the courtroom. You must:

- Appear from a quiet, private location free from interruptions or distractions.
- Dress appropriately for court.
- Keep your microphone muted unless speaking.
- Follow all instructions given by the judge or court staff.

##### **RECORDING AND PRIVACY**

- **No audio recording, video recording, screenshots, livestreaming, broadcasting, or photographing of the hearing is permitted.**
- No person may be present in the room with you or listening during the hearing unless: the Court has been informed in advance; and the judge expressly permits that person's presence.

**FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH THESE REQUIREMENTS MAY RESULT IN TERMINATION OF YOUR REMOTE APPEARANCE, CONTEMPT PROCEEDINGS, OR OTHER SANCTIONS ORDERED BY THE COURT, WHICH COULD INCLUDE INCARCERATION IN JAIL OR A FINE FOR CONTEMPT.**