

IN THE FAMILY JUSTICE COURTS OF THE REPUBLIC OF SINGAPORE

REGISTRAR'S CIRCULAR NO. 6 OF 2020

**COURT HEARINGS CONDUCTED THROUGH
TELEPHONE AND VIDEO CONFERENCING**

Following the issuance of Registrar's Circular No. 4 of 2020, in order to safeguard the health and safety of court users and court staff, most Court hearings in the Family Justice Courts ("FJC") continue to be conducted by way of remote hearing through video conferencing and telephone conferencing. For avoidance of doubt, the reference to "Court hearings" includes case conferences as well.

Timeframe for Submission of Contact Details and Documents

2 To facilitate the efficient conduct of Court hearings, counsel or the party attending any remote hearing **must** submit their contact details, if required to do so by the Court, **at least 3 clear working days** in advance of the hearing. Counsel or the party attending a hearing through telephone conferencing must provide the Court with their **mobile phone number or direct office line**.

3 All documents / relevant requests / updates which are required to be electronically filed, or which any party wishes to draw the Court's attention to, **must also** be filed **at least 3 clear working days** in advance of the hearing. Any update submitted or document filed after the said deadline will **not** be considered by the Court.

Observing Court Rules of Etiquette for Remote Hearings

4 All counsel and parties attending remote hearings are to proceed as if they are appearing before the Judge or Registrar in person and must comply with all Court rules of etiquette as prescribed in the relevant Practice Directions. This includes: greeting the Court, introducing the parties, according due respect by not speaking to a third party and paying full attention to the proceedings when the court is in session, as well as maintaining civility and formalities at all times, save that there is no need to rise and bow at the start or conclusion of proceedings.

Proceedings are heard in-camera

5 Counsel and parties are further reminded that pursuant to section 10(1) of the Family Justice Act (No. 27 of 2014) (“FJA”), proceedings in the FJC are, with limited exceptions, heard in camera and the content of such proceedings are private and confidential. In particular:

- (a) to preserve the confidentiality of proceedings, counsel and parties are to ensure that hearings conducted through video conferencing and telephone conferencing are done in a room or private area, preferably enclosed, and not in a public area;
- (b) the identities of all persons present at or listening in to any remote hearing are to be disclosed to the Judge or Registrar at the start of the hearing and where appropriate, permission is to be obtained for their attendance at the hearing;
- (c) any unauthorised audio or visual recording of hearings and case conferences is strictly prohibited and in appropriate cases, the Court may require an undertaking that no such recording will be made; and
- (d) attention is drawn to sections 10(3) and 10(4) of the FJA. Any unauthorised communication of the details of FJC proceedings to a third party may constitute an offence under section 10(5) of the FJA.

Breach may constitute Contempt of Court

6 It is emphasised that any breach of the guidelines above may constitute contempt of court with consequences of fine and/or imprisonment.

Dated this 20th day of October 2020.



KENNETH YAP YEW CHOH
REGISTRAR
FAMILY JUSTICE COURTS