

**IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE TWENTIETH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
IN AND FOR CHARLOTTE COUNTY, FLORIDA**

STANDING TEMPORARY DOMESTIC RELATIONS ORDER

(For all cases filed on and after October 22, 2026)

THE COURT finds it is in the best interests of the parties and any minor children who are the subject of this action that this Standing Order become effective immediately and continue in effect until a final judgment has been entered by the Court. This Standing Order may be superseded or modified by other specific orders entered by the Court in this case. Therefore, upon the Court's own motion,

IT IS ORDERED AND ADJUDGED:

1. CONDUCT OF THE PARTIES DURING THE CASE. Both parties are directed to refrain from physical, verbal, or any other form of harassment of the other party, including but not limited to acts done in person, by telephone, text, and internet, at their residence or affecting the work/employment of the other party.

2. DISPOSITION OF ASSETS AND CASH. The parties shall not conceal, damage, or dispose of any asset, whether jointly or separately owned, and shall not dissipate the value of any such asset (for example, by adding a mortgage to real estate) except by written consent of the parties or a prior order of the Court. The parties shall not cancel or cause to be canceled any utilities (including telephone, electricity, water, and sewer). The parties may spend their incomes in the ordinary course of their personal and family affairs. The parties shall not conceal, hoard, or waste jointly owned funds, whether in the form of cash, bank accounts, or other liquid assets, except said funds can be spent for the necessities of life. Any party who violates this Order will be required to render an accounting and may be sanctioned for wasting a marital asset. The Court may award fewer assets to a violator of this provision to compensate the other party. Petitioner and Respondent must comply with Rule 12.285, Florida Family Law Rules of Procedure.

3. PERSONAL AND BUSINESS RECORDS. The parties shall not, directly or indirectly, conceal from the other party or destroy any family records, business records, or any records of income, debt, or other obligations.

4. INSURANCE. All insurance policies of every kind that are in effect at the time of filing the petition herein shall remain unchanged during the pendency of this case. The parties shall not terminate, allow to lapse, conceal, modify, borrow against, pledge, or otherwise encumber any such insurance policies, nor cause the foregoing to occur. The parties shall continue to pay all policy premiums in full on a timely basis except upon written consent of both parties or a prior order of the Court.

5. ADDITIONAL DEBT. The parties shall not incur additional personal debt which would bind the other party or tie up any assets, except upon the written consent of both parties or prior order of this Court. The parties are urged to refrain temporarily from using joint credit cards except for absolute necessities and only as a last resort. Abuse of credit, especially the other spouse's credit, is contrary to principles of equity and will be dealt with accordingly. Consequences may include the Court awarding the disadvantaged/harmed spouse more assets than the perpetrator of the action(s) and/or periodic support payments, including some type of alimony.

6. SANCTIONS. The Court will sanction any party who fails, without good cause shown, to comply satisfactorily with the rules pertaining to the production of financial records and other documents, or fails, without good cause, to respond to discovery requests or to attend a deposition, with an award of a minimum of \$250 in attorney's fees (or a fine of an equal amount if the party seeking compliance has no attorney).

7. VIOLATION OF THIS ORDER. Judicial enforcement, due to violation of this order, may result in sanctions against the party found to be in violation of the order.

8. APPLICATION OF THIS ORDER. This Standing Order does not supersede or modify other specific orders entered by the Court in this matter. This order shall bind the petitioner upon

the filing of this action and shall become binding on the respondent upon service of the order. This order shall remain in full force and effect until further order of the Court. Any part of this order, not changed by some later order, remains in full force and effect. This entire order will terminate once a final judgment is entered. **The Petitioner shall furnish a copy of this Order to the Respondent with initial service of process.**

9. COURT POLICIES. The policies set forth on the attached "Notice to All Parties Involved in Family Court" are incorporated herein and the parties shall comply with same.

ADDITIONAL PROVISIONS APPLICABLE TO CASES WITH CHILDREN

10. TREATMENT OF CHILDREN. The safety, financial security, and mental well-being of the children involved in this case are of paramount concern. Florida law provides that, except in certain rare circumstances, both parents will share parental responsibility for all minor children involved in this case, will share the children's time, and will participate together in making all important decisions concerning the children. Shared parental responsibility means both parents have a say in making decisions about major issues in their children's lives, such as deciding where the children will attend school, whether the children will have non-emergency medical procedures, which pediatrician will be consulted, etc. Under the principles of shared parental responsibility, neither parent has more of a say in major decisions than the other parent, and the parties are expected to put aside their feelings about each other and cooperate on all decisions involving the children.

11. CHILD SUPPORT. Because child support can be ordered retroactive to the date of filing the petition herein, this Court encourages the parents to address this matter as soon as possible with voluntary payments of child support prior to the entry of an order requiring such payments. The amount and payor of the child support should be determined by the Uniform Child Support Guidelines, Section 61.30, Florida Statutes. It is advisable that the party making payments do so via check or money order *and retain proof of payments.*

12. REQUIRED ATTENDANCE IN A PARENTING COURSE: Section 61.21, Florida Statutes, requires all parties to a dissolution of marriage proceeding with minor children or a paternity action that involves issues of parental responsibility to complete the 4-hour **Parent Education and Family Stabilization Course** prior to the entry of a final judgment. If the parties have children who have identified special needs or emotional concerns, the parties must select a Parent Education and Family Stabilization Course that is tailored to education relating to children who have special needs or emotional concerns. The Court may excuse a party from attending the parenting course for good reason. Each party to a dissolution or paternity action shall file an original certificate of completion with the Clerk of Court. A list of providers approved by the Department of Children and Family Services is available at:

<https://www.myflfamilies.com/parent-education-and-family-stabilization-course-providers-list>.

As required by Section 61.21(3)(c), Florida Statutes, the list of providers includes online course providers as well as **virtual providers. Thus, a parent is able to** complete the required course at any location.

A. Required Timeframes for Attendance.

i. Dissolution of Marriage Proceedings:

- Petitioner must complete within 45 days after filing the petition, and
- Respondent must complete within 45 days after service of the petition.

ii. Paternity Actions:

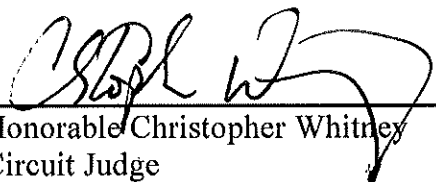
- Petitioner must complete the course within 45 days after filing the petition, and
- Respondent must complete the course within 45 days after
 - an acknowledgment of paternity by that party, OR
 - an adjudication of paternity of that party, OR
 - an order granting time-sharing to or support from that party.

B. Cost. Each party shall pay his/her respective cost of attending an approved course. The cost is determined by the agencies providing the different programs. No one shall be refused attendance because of inability to pay.

C. Non-Compliance. If either party does not attend and complete the Parent Education and Stabilization Course, the Court may enter an Order to Show Cause. At a hearing on the Order to Show Cause, the non-complying party will be required to demonstrate why he or she has not attended the Parenting Education and Family Stabilization Course. The Court may impose sanctions, such as a stay of proceedings, the striking of that party's pleadings, or any other sanction the Court finds appropriate, including a fine and/or incarceration for up to but not exceeding six months without a jury trial for indirect criminal contempt.

D. Court Privilege. The Court may, on its own motion, order the parties to attend the program at any time it deems necessary.

ORDERED at Punta Gorda, Charlotte County, Florida, on this 22 day of October, 2026.


Honorable Christopher Whitney
Circuit Judge

Attachment A: NOTICE TO ALL PARTIES INVOLVED IN FAMILY COURT

"If you are a person with a disability who needs any accommodations in order to participate in this proceeding, you are entitled, at no cost to you, to the provision of certain assistance. Please contact Jon Embury, Administrative Services Manager, whose office is located at 350 E. Marion Avenue, Punta Gorda, Florida 33950, and whose telephone number is (941) 637-2110, at least 7 days before your scheduled court appearance, or immediately upon receiving this notification if the time before the scheduled court appearance is less than 7 days; if you are hearing or voice impaired, call 711."

ATTACHMENT A
NOTICE TO ALL PARTIES INVOLVED IN FAMILY COURT

The following are the policies of the Family Law Division of the Charlotte County Circuit Court. **Read them carefully.** All parties are expected to know and obey these policies.

COURTROOM CONDUCT AND BEHAVIOR

All courtroom proceedings shall be conducted with dignity, decorum, courtesy, and civility.

BY ORDER OF THE CHIEF JUDGE:

- **Cellular telephones and pagers:** The use of cellular telephones and pagers is prohibited in the courtroom. All cellular telephones and pagers must be turned off prior to entering the courtroom. Failure to comply with this Order may result in a charge of contempt of court.
- **Dress appropriately.** Court business is very important. If the parties or attorneys are not dressed appropriately for court, such may show a lack of concern for the case or a lack of respect for the dignity and authority of the Court. Shorts, tank or halter tops, undershirts, and individuals wearing caps or hats are forbidden. The judges have the authority to ban persons not appropriately dressed from participating in the proceedings.
- **Speaking.** A court proceeding is not a free-for-all where people can say whatever they want whenever they feel like it. Parties should NOT speak unless they are directed to do so by the Judge or a lawyer and then they should speak only to the Judge or lawyer. A party NEVER speaks directly to the other spouse/party in court. Interruptions, sarcasm, insults, and unresponsive answers **will not be tolerated**. Similarly, derogatory or disrespectful verbal or nonverbal expressions will not be tolerated. Do **NOT** start arguments with or threaten anyone. The Judge has the authority to hold you in **criminal contempt and sentence you to jail**, or to expel anyone from the courtroom who hinders the orderly conduct of business.
- **Disruptive Behaviors.** While parties may be upset when they come to court, they are expected to keep their anger under control and to refrain from any offensive behavior.

CHILDREN IN COURT

It is not appropriate and, generally, is detrimental to your child(ren) to bring them to court, especially small children. Generally, the Court will not permit children of parties to testify as a witness.

- **Children as witnesses.** The Parties' minor children are rarely allowed to testify in divorce proceedings, because it is unfair to them and rarely serves any useful purpose. Unless permission has been obtained from the Judge **in advance**, a child **will not** be permitted to testify.
- **Children in the courtroom.** Parties should NOT bring their children to the courthouse at all. Parties are **strongly urged** to get sitters for children too young to behave properly in court. All children permitted inside the courtroom by specific order of the Judge, **must be**

quiet and in their seats or under an adult's control at all times. If a child disrupts the proceedings, the child must be taken out of the courtroom which could cause you to miss what is taking place.

APPEARING IN COURT WITHOUT AN ATTORNEY (PRO SE)

A pro se litigant is a party without an attorney. Such a person is not entitled to special treatment or privileges, and must follow the same laws, rules of procedure, and ethical regulations that govern practicing attorneys.

- The Court must treat a pro se party much the same way it treats a lawyer. Pro se litigants, although not expected to be as skilled and knowledgeable as lawyers, are subject to the same rules and regulations as a party who has an attorney. Judges are forbidden by law to act as lawyers for unrepresented parties. It is also unethical for Judges to give them special treatment. The Judge's Judicial Assistant is part of the office of the Circuit Court Judge and is forbidden from doing anything the Judge cannot do.
- What Judges cannot do. Neither the Judge nor the Judicial Assistant can give a pro se litigant legal advice, practice tips, or help in writing court papers. Most questions regarding what to do or how to do it CANNOT be answered and should NOT be asked. The Florida Bar offers a Lawyer Referral Service, www.floridabar.org/lawyerreferral; 800-342-8011. Additionally, an indigent pro se litigant may qualify for the services of Florida Rural Legal Services, Inc., www.frls.org, or Charlotte County Legal Aid Society, www.charlottelegalaid.org.
- Contact with Judge's office. A pro se party is authorized to contact the Judge's office by telephone or e-mail on matters related to the court's schedule and attendance in court. **There is no other authorized purpose to contact the Judge's office.** Visiting the Judge's office is prohibited.

If anyone insists upon speaking about unauthorized matters after being warned, Judicial Assistants have been instructed to hang up the telephone or to call a security guard. All requests to speak to the Judge on the telephone or to have a private conference WILL BE REFUSED. Letters written to the Judge which offer or discuss evidence in the case or attempt to influence the Judge's decisions in the case will be filed in the court file and copies distributed to all interested parties. Such communications are strictly forbidden.