

HANCOCK COUNTY, OHIO, LOCAL DOMESTIC RELATIONS RULES
TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>RULE 2.01</u>	<u>APPLICABILITY/CITATION</u>
<u>RULE 2.02</u>	<u>COSTS</u>
<u>RULE 2.03</u>	<u>DOMESTIC RELATIONS (DR) FORMS</u>
<u>RULE 2.04</u>	<u>BIRTH DATES</u>
<u>RULE 2.05</u>	<u>PERSONAL IDENTIFYING INFORMATION</u>
<u>RULE 2.06</u>	<u>MAGISTRATES</u>
<u>RULE 2.07</u>	<u>MOTIONS</u>
<u>RULE 2.08</u>	<u>EX PARTE ORDERS</u>
<u>RULE 2.09</u>	<u>TEMPORARY STANDING ORDERS</u>
<u>RULE 2.10</u>	<u>SERVICE BY POSTING</u>
<u>RULE 2.11</u>	<u>DIVORCE HEARINGS AND PRE-TRIAL CONFERENCES</u>
<u>RULE 2.12</u>	<u>UNCONTESTED DIVORCES</u>
<u>RULE 2.13</u>	<u>DISSOLUTION OF MARRIAGE</u>
<u>RULE 2.14</u>	<u>MOTION FOR CONCILIATION</u>
<u>RULE 2.15</u>	<u>MOTION FOR REALLOCATION OF PARENTAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES (f.k.a CUSTODY/VISITATION)</u>
<u>RULE 2.16</u>	<u>POST-JUDGMENT RELIEF ACCOMPANIED BY CITATION FOR CONTEMPT</u>
<u>RULE 2.17</u>	<u>CHILD SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT AGENCY (CSEA)</u>
<u>RULE 2.18</u>	<u>CONTINUING JURISDICTION – POST-JUDGMENT RELIEF</u>
<u>RULE 2.19</u>	<u>REMOVAL FROM COUNTY AND LONG DISTANCE PARENTING TIME</u>
<u>RULE 2.20</u>	<u>JUDGMENT ENTRIES</u>

<u>RULE 2.21</u>	<u>COPIES</u>
<u>RULE 2.22</u>	<u>PARENTING CLASSES - ATTENDANCE REQUIRED.</u>
<u>RULE 2.23</u>	<u>PARENTING TIME</u>
<u>RULE 2.24</u>	<u>PSYCHOLOGICAL EVALUATIONS</u>
<u>RULE 2.25</u>	<u>MEDIATION</u>
<u>RULE 2.26</u>	<u>FAMILY FILES</u>
<u>RULE 2.27</u>	<u>GUARDIANS AD LITEM</u>
<u>RULE 2.28</u>	<u>MEDICAL SUPPORT OBLIGATIONS</u>
<u>RULE 2.29</u>	<u>ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE</u>
<u>RULE 2.30</u>	<u>PHOTOGRAPHIC, AUDIO, AND VIDEO RECORDING OF COURT PROCEEDINGS</u>
<u>RULE 2.31</u>	<u>REPORTING TO LAW ENFORCEMENT & COMPLIANCE PLAN</u>
<u>APPENDIX A</u>	PERSONAL HISTORY AND FINANCIAL AFFIDAVIT
<u>APPENDIX B</u>	DOCUMENTS TO BE DISCLOSED WITHOUT FORMAL DISCOVERY REQUESTS
<u>APPENDIX C</u>	ORDERS FOR CHILD SUPPORT OBLIGORS AND OBLIGEES
<u>APPENDIX D</u>	ORDERS FOR HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE FOR MINOR CHILD(REN) NAMED IN THE CHILD SUPPORT ORDER
<u>APPENDIX E</u>	LOCAL PARENTING SCHEDULE
<u>APPENDIX F</u>	LONG DISTANCE PARENTING SCHEDULE
<u>APPENDIX G</u>	GENERAL PARENTING TIME REGULATIONS
<u>APPENDIX H</u>	ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT OF PARENTING SCHEDULES

IN THE COMMON PLEAS COURT OF HANCOCK COUNTY, OHIO
Domestic Relations Division
Part II Domestic Relations Rules
Revised effective January 1, 2026

RULE 2.01 APPLICABILITY/CITATION

The rules that follow in this division are applicable to all domestic relations and related matters in this Court. Other local rules of this Court shall apply to domestic relations and related matters when not inconsistent with the rules of this division. Unless indicated otherwise, the term “Civil Rule,” when used in these Local Rules, refers to the Ohio Rules of Civil Procedure.

These rules shall be cited as Hancock DR Rule ____.

RULE 2.02 COSTS

A. The costs for filing matters with the Hancock County Clerk of Courts are available at the Clerk’s office and may be amended from time to time by order of the Court. Rule 1.05 of The Hancock County Civil Rules in the Common Pleas Court is adopted as governing costs in the Domestic Relations Court.

B. The Clerk shall not accept for filing any motions or complaints without a required deposit, except a motion and affidavit of a person’s inability to make the required deposit of costs, unless and until the Court grants a motion to proceed without prepayment of costs (*in forma pauperis*).

RULE 2.03 DOMESTIC RELATIONS (DR) FORMS

A. In each case in which the requested relief includes a divorce, dissolution, legal separation, allowance of spousal support, or custody and child support, the plaintiff/petitioner shall submit with the complaint/petition a statement of personal history of the parties to the action and information statements and financial forms, together with supporting documentation. See Appendix A. In domestic relations proceedings, such forms executed by defendant/respondent shall accompany any responsive pleading to the complaint. The court may deny a motion or delay hearing if appropriate documentation is not filed and served. Forms/affidavits containing personal information shall be directed to the Family File in accordance with DR Rule 2.26.

B. Where applicable, proper affidavits shall be filed with the proceeding pursuant to Ohio Revised Code section 3127.23 or its successor.

C. All DR forms shall be served upon the opposing party by the party submitting the forms. The submitting party shall also file a notice of submission with the Clerk of Courts, to be docketed on the public docket.

D. In each new action for divorce, dissolution, legal separation or for custody/child support, the plaintiff/petitioner shall also submit with the complaint/petition an “Application and Questionnaire for Child Support Services” (also known as the Job & Family Services IV-D Application). Forms are available from the Domestic Relations Court, Ohio Department of Job & Family Services, Hancock County Child Support Enforcement Agency and on the website of each of these agencies. The Court may deny a motion or delay a hearing if the appropriate form is not submitted with the complaint/petition. This form shall be submitted even if \$0 child support is requested.

E. At all hearings relating to child support, a party requesting an order or modification of support shall present documentation of earnings, other income available, insurance costs, and all requested adjustments or credits.

F. In order to promote uniformity in filing DR forms, the following rules will control:

1. Weekly figures shall be converted to monthly amounts by multiplying by 52 and dividing the result by 12. Payroll deductions shall be computed the same way and separately noted.
2. Include child and spousal support payments received in the family unit, and identify the source of the payments.
3. Adjust seasonal expenses to monthly items.
4. Counsel and parties must anticipate that all matters set forth in the DR forms will be subject to verification in contested matters.

G. Uniform Domestic Relations Forms published by the Supreme Court of Ohio and that include income, expenses, property, and health insurance information are accepted in lieu of Appendix A.

RULE 2.04 BIRTH DATES

A. All pleadings where children are involved shall include the names and birth dates of all children born to the wife during the marriage, born to the parties prior to marriage, and adopted by the parties during marriage.

B. All judgment entries establishing or modifying child support or health insurance obligations shall include the names and birth dates of all children for whom such obligations are established.

RULE 2.05 PERSONAL IDENTIFYING INFORMATION

The filing party is responsible for omitting personal identifiers from documents filed with the Clerk of Courts. The Court adopts Rules 44 through 47 of the Rules of Superintendence for the Courts of Ohio for definition and management of personal identifiers and other information and for requests to restrict access to case documents.

RULE 2.06 MAGISTRATES

A. Domestic relations and related matters may be heard by a magistrate appointed by this Court. Objections to the decision of the magistrate shall be in accordance with Civil Rule 53. Any response to objections shall be filed within fourteen (14) days of the filing of the objections. Any reply to a response to objections must be filed within seven (7) days of the filing of the response.

B. A decision of the magistrate shall be made pursuant to Civil Rule 53, unless a separation agreement, waiver, or approved order in the case provides for a waiver of decision generally following the format set forth below:

By stipulation, this decree constitutes the decision of the magistrate required by Civil Rule 53(D), and the parties hereby waive any objections to the recommendations, and waive preparation and service of a separate magistrate's decision.

C. The merits of any objections relating to factual findings, without other evidence contained in the record, will not be considered unless a transcript is filed with the court within thirty (30) days after objections are filed or within such period otherwise designated by the court upon motion for extension.

D. The party filing objections to a magistrate's decision shall specify the nature of the objections and the bases for them within the original fourteen (14) day period for objections. The time for filing objections may be extended for cause shown upon the written request of either party filed within the initial objection period. Any extension shall automatically extend any response time by the same period. All transcripts supporting the objections shall be filed with the court within thirty (30) days after the filing of objections, unless, with leave of court, an alternative method of reviewing the evidence is approved by the court within that thirty-day period. If additional objections become apparent after the transcript is prepared and filed with the court, and that party has timely filed his/her initial objections, the objecting party may seek leave of court to supplement previously filed objections.

E. It is the objecting party's or attorney's responsibility to have the transcript filed within the required thirty (30) day period. Any requests to extend the period for filing the transcript must include the following information:

1. A statement by the attorney, or party if appearing *pro se*, that the court reporter who will be preparing the transcript has been contacted and the transcript ordered, including the date the transcript was ordered; and
2. A statement by the attorney, or party if appearing *pro se*, that (i) the costs or fees required by the court reporter for the preparation of the transcript have been paid and the date payment was made, or (ii) the estimated cost has been requested but not yet received and the date the estimate was requested, **OR** a written statement from the court reporter that the transcript cannot otherwise be prepared within the necessary thirty-day period.

F. Transcripts must be prepared by a court reporter who has been certified by the Court. A list of currently certified court reporters is available from the Judicial Assistant of the Administrative Judge. The cost of preparation of the transcript is the responsibility of the requesting

party/attorney. Court reporters seeking to become certified may contact the Judicial Assistant of the Administrative Judge to arrange certification.

G. Transcripts must contain a verbatim record of the proceedings. A copy of the audio recording of the proceeding to be transcribed can be obtained using the method described by Local Rule 1.33(C).

H. Unless an oral hearing is deemed necessary by the Court, objections will be ruled upon by the Court without a hearing.

I. Attorneys are required to prepare a Judgment Entry in accordance with the Magistrate's Decision or upon the Court's Order on objections. In the Court's discretion, it may prepare the appropriate Judgment Entry.

J. All Judgment Entries for cases being handled by the Magistrate must first be reviewed by the Magistrate before being submitted to the Judge. The submitting party or attorney shall include a signature line for the Magistrate in addition to the signature line for the Judge.

RULE 2.07 MOTIONS

A. All motions, except those governed by Civil Rule 75, shall have attached or be accompanied by a memorandum with citations to applicable authorities in support of the motion.

B. Motions for continuance shall specify the reason for the request. If the reason is a conflict with another hearing, the moving party shall attach a copy of the assignment notice or order to the motion. If the opposing party is represented by an attorney, the motion for continuance shall recite any contact with that attorney and whether that attorney consents or objects to the continuance.

RULE 2.08 EX PARTE ORDERS

A. Unless an emergency exists, as determined by the Court, based upon supporting affidavits pursuant to Civil Rule 75, no ex parte orders will issue, except reciprocal, mutual restraining orders following the language in Rule 2.09, below, for which no affidavits are necessary.

B. Requests for temporary orders shall be set for hearing within forty-five (45) days of filing. A continuance may be granted to either party for good cause shown.

C. Notice of hearing on temporary orders shall be served with the pleadings pursuant to Civil Rules.

D. No party shall be ordered removed from the marital residence without a hearing, unless an emergency situation exists as determined by the Court. At the hearing, no Order will issue unless there is evidence that the party requesting the Order, or the minor children of the party requesting the Order, are in imminent danger of physical harm, or the children's health and welfare are at risk.

E. After filing a Complaint for Divorce and prior to any temporary Order being issued, except for parenting time periods, neither party shall relocate the minor child(ren) from the child's home, school district, or the jurisdiction of Court. The purpose of this rule is to limit the disruption to the children's home and school environment.

RULE 2.09 TEMPORARY STANDING ORDERS

A. All parties to original domestic relations actions in the Hancock County Common Pleas Court may be subject to reciprocal, mutual restraining orders from the date service of summons is completed. This order shall be strictly complied with under penalty of contempt of Court. Use of the following language is suggested:

1. Each party is enjoined and restrained from doing, attempting to do, or threatening to do any act of injuring, maltreating, belittling, molesting, or harassing the adverse party, their attorney, family members, employer, or any of the child(ren) of the parties.
2. Each party is enjoined and restrained from selling, encumbering, contracting to sell, removing from the jurisdiction of this Court, or otherwise disposing of any of the property belonging to either of the parties, except in the ordinary course of business or unless authorized in writing by the Court.
3. Each party is enjoined and restrained from changing or altering in any way, including, but not limited to, the named beneficiaries, covered persons or extent of coverage or benefits, of any life or health insurance policies, employee benefits plans or similar items or assets of a contractual nature, existing at the time of the filing of these proceedings, unless authorized in writing by the Court.
4. Each party is enjoined from removing any child(ren) who is/are subject to the jurisdiction of the Court in this matter from the jurisdiction of the Court without first obtaining consent, in writing, from the other party or the Court.

B. The following language shall appear on each restraining order issued by this Court. Attorneys are responsible for seeing that this language is incorporated into all existing orders. Any incident reports received by the Court will be forwarded to the attorneys for the parties or to the parties if unrepresented by attorneys.

This is a self-executing order and any law enforcement officer is ordered to enforce the same by using whatever means are necessary to maintain the peace.

Any law enforcement officer observing an apparent violation of this order shall forward a copy of the complete incident report to the Judge or Magistrate assigned to the case in Common Pleas Court.

C. In every original divorce or legal separation, the parties shall, not less than forty-five (45) days prior to the final pretrial conference in contested matters, whether requested through formal discovery, exchange all information and documents contained in Appendix B of these Rules.

RULE 2.10 SERVICE BY POSTING

Pursuant to Civil Rule 4.4(A)(2) of the Ohio Rules of Civil Procedure, service by posting when the defendant's residence is unknown shall be at the following places:

- Hancock County Courthouse
- City of Findlay Municipal Building
- Hancock County Job and Family Services
- Hancock County Domestic Relations Court

The Hancock County Clerk of Courts shall do the posting and note on the docket where and when notice was posted.

RULE 2.11 DIVORCE HEARINGS AND PRE-TRIAL CONFERENCES

A. No contested divorces shall be set for hearing on the merits until such matter has been set for pre-trial conference unless waived by the Court.

B. Any requests for psychological evaluations, the appointment of a Guardian Ad Litem (GAL), conciliation, or mediation shall be made no later than the time of the first scheduled pre-trial conference, unless leave to file the request is granted by the Court.

C. A final pre-trial conference will be scheduled within thirty (30) days prior to the date set for final hearing.

D. The Domestic Relations Division must receive the parenting class certificate (see section 2.22) for any party requesting to be named residential parent on or before the date of the final pre-trial conference.

E. All parties shall exchange all exhibits and have stipulations filed prior to trial.

F. Each party shall file and serve a pretrial memorandum, with a courtesy copy to the Judge or Magistrate assigned to hear the case, no later than seven (7) days prior to the date set for trial. The memorandum shall outline the issues before the Court, the party's position on the issues, and the bases for those positions. The Court may grant leave to file the pretrial memorandum within this time period if request is made, in writing, prior to the date the memorandum is due. Failure to timely file a pretrial memorandum may result in sanctions as the Court deems appropriate. If a party or the parties fail to submit proper evidence relating to the value of assets, the Court may continue the trial until such evidence is presented or appoint its own appraiser(s) and assess the costs and expenses to the parties.

RULE 2.12 UNCONTESTED DIVORCES

Pursuant to Civil Rule 75(M), other credible evidence must corroborate grounds for divorce. The Court will permit a party to corroborate the grounds of the opposing party, absent evidence of fraud, connivance, coercion or other improper means. The good character of the party seeking an uncontested divorce should be assumed; therefore, it is not necessary to put on evidence of good character in an uncontested divorce.

RULE 2.13 DISSOLUTION OF MARRIAGE

A. Petitions for dissolution of marriage that are not accompanied by a separation agreement, as required by law, are subject to dismissal. A petition for dissolution of marriage shall also contain a waiver of service pursuant to Civil Rule 4(D), or instructions to the Clerk for the service of summons.

B. The Final Hearing on a petition for dissolution with children will not be completed until both parties have submitted a certificate of completion of a parenting class (see section 2.22) or equivalent class.

C. The Court may dismiss upon its own motion any Petitions for Dissolution of Marriage that have not been heard or converted to a divorce action within ninety (90) days of the date of filing.

RULE 2.14 MOTION FOR CONCILIATION

A. Any party moving for conciliation pursuant to Ohio Revised Code section 3105.091, shall set forth the name of the conciliator and shall generally describe the conciliation procedures requested. In addition, the movant shall guarantee the costs of such conciliation procedure. Motions for conciliation shall be made no later than the first pretrial conference for the case, unless leave is granted in writing by the Court to file the request at a later date.

B. If a motion for conciliation requests a conciliation procedure lasting more than ninety (90) days, the motion shall be set for oral hearing at the earliest possible time in order to determine the propriety of the request.

RULE 2.15 MOTION FOR REALLOCATION OF PARENTAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

A. No motion for reallocation of parental rights and responsibilities shall be heard by the Court until a pretrial conference is conducted on the motion, unless waived by the Court. Any requests for a guardian ad litem (GAL), psychological evaluations, or mediation should be made within fourteen (14) days of the first pretrial conference, unless otherwise permitted by the Court, and all appropriate cost deposits should be posted at the time of the filing of the request.

B. The above provision shall not apply if the motion to reallocate parental rights and responsibilities is a joint motion made by all interested parties.

RULE 2.16 POST-JUDGMENT RELIEF ACCOMPANIED BY CITATION FOR CONTEMPT

A. Contempt actions are controlled by Chapter 2705 of the Ohio Revised Code, thus any motion requesting a citation in contempt shall:

1. Specifically state the basis for the contempt citation, including the alleged contemnor's conduct and the order alleged to have been violated.
2. Contain notice of hearing, which after filing shall be submitted to the Judicial Assistant for scheduling.
3. Include the following language:

FAILURE TO APPEAR MAY RESULT IN THE ISSUANCE OF AN ORDER OF ARREST AND IN THE ISSUANCE OF AN ORDER FOR THE PAYMENT OF SUPPORT BY WITHHOLDING AN AMOUNT FROM YOUR PERSONAL EARNINGS OR BY WITHHOLDING OR DEDUCTION AN AMOUNT FROM SOME OTHER ASSET YOU MAY OWN.

YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO COUNSEL AND IF YOU BELIEVE YOU ARE INDIGENT YOU MAY APPLY FOR COURT APPOINTED COUNSEL WITHIN THREE (3) BUSINESS DAYS AFTER YOUR RECEIPT OF THIS SUMMONS.

THE COURT MAY REFUSE TO GRANT A CONTINUANCE AT THE TIME OF THE HEARING FOR THE PURPOSE OF YOUR OBTAINING COUNSEL, IF YOU FAIL TO MAKE A GOOD FAITH EFFORT TO RETAIN COUNSEL PRIOR TO THE HEARING.

IF YOU ARE FOUND GUILTY OF CONTEMPT, THE COURT MAY IMPOSE A FINE, A DEFINITE TERM OF IMPRISONMENT OF NOT MORE THAN 180 DAYS IN JAIL, OR BOTH, AND THE ASSESSMENT OF COURT COSTS.

B. Notice of such motion and of the hearing thereon shall be served upon the subject party pursuant to the rules of service of summons contained in Civil Rule 4 through Civil Rule 4.6, incl., and the responsibility for initiating such service shall be on the person filing the motion.

C. Motions to show cause shall be heard within thirty (30) days of their filing, or as soon thereafter as the Court's docket will permit. One continuance may be granted to either party for good cause shown.

D. Any finding in contempt on the part of a party will include an assessment of costs and may include an award of reasonable attorney's fees and costs. Unless proper evidence is presented justifying a higher fee awarded, the Court will not award attorney's fees in excess of \$250.00.

RULE 2.17 CHILD SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT AGENCY (CSEA)

A. The parties or counsel are responsible for serving copies of any Orders establishing or modifying child support or health insurance obligations upon the Hancock County Child Support Enforcement Agency (CSEA).

B. When an objection to an administrative decision by the CSEA is filed with the Clerk of Courts, the CSEA shall be notified and shall provide to the Court the administrative records relating to the administrative action. A CSEA representative is not required by the Court to appear at the hearing. It is the parties' responsibility to have a CSEA representative available for hearing if they desire to inquire of that representative at hearing.

RULE 2.18 CONTINUING JURISDICTION - POST JUDGMENT RELIEF

A. Post-decree motions shall contain a description of the part of the original order sought to be changed, the change requested, and a complete statement of the movant's reasons and/or basis for change, as well as a citation to pertinent Ohio Revised Code Sections. Failure to supply this information may result in the motion being dismissed.

B. All motions to invoke the continuing jurisdiction of the Court in all domestic relations and related matters shall be made by written motion filed in the original action. The motions shall be accompanied by instructions to the Clerk for service of notice on all parties as set forth in Civil Rule 4 through 4.6, inclusive.

C. Service and notice shall be made to all parties individually. Notice to an attorney is not proper service on a party. Courtesy copies to opposing counsel are appropriate if the party has reason to believe that prior counsel is still representing the other party.

D. In all motions for modification of support, the modification shall be effective as of the date of the filing of the request for the modification, unless otherwise directed by the Court or required by statute. All modifications or terminations of child support based on the emancipation of a child shall be effective on the date of such occurrence.

RULE 2.19 REMOVAL FROM COUNTY AND LONG DISTANCE PARENTING TIME

A. If any legal custodian and residential parent of a minor child or children subject to the jurisdiction of the Court intends to move more than 150 miles from the child(ren)'s residence, then such party shall file a written notice of relocation at least 30 days in advance of such removal and serve said notice of relocation upon the other parent. A period of less than 30 days may be appropriate in emergency situations.

B. If any legal custodian and residential parent of a minor child or children subject to the jurisdiction of the Court moves more than 150 miles from the child(ren)'s residence then, if the Court determines it to be in the best interest of the child(ren), Appendix F to these Domestic Rules shall become the Order of the Court.

C. If a written notice of relocation is filed and served as required herein, and no objection or request for hearing is filed within 30 days of the filing of the notice of relocation and served on the party filing the notice of relocation, then Appendix F Standard Order shall become the order of the Court.

RULE 2.20 JUDGMENT ENTRIES

A. All judgment entries in this Court in domestic relations and related matters shall include approval by signature of both parties and/or their attorneys and a recommendation and approval of such judgment entry by the magistrate. Such judgment entry shall also recite the waiver of the decision by the magistrate, when appropriate. Judgment entries prepared from a Court decision or upon an agreement placed on the record may omit the signature of represented parties.

B. All orders for child support, and for spousal support when payable through the Child Support Enforcement Agency (CSEA) in accordance with Ohio Revised Code section 3121.441, shall include an additional order that two (2%) percent of such ordered amount be paid as processing fee and shall recite that such payments are to be made through the Child Support Enforcement Agency (CSEA). All orders for child support and/or for spousal support that are to be administered by the CSEA shall include the parties' current addresses in the caption of the case document. All such orders must state the child support in a monthly amount, regardless of the frequency of the payments to be made.

C. All judgment entries that establish or modify child support shall include all mandatory statutory notices and requirements. The language in the "Child Support Orders for Obligor and Obligees," found at Appendix C of these Rules, shall be incorporated into all such support orders. All judgment entries that include child support must have a child support worksheet attached and shall specifically state the reason for any deviations from the support calculation.

D. Temporary child support and spousal support arrearages shall be preserved unless they are specifically waived or modified in the final judgment entry.

E. All judgment entries that include an incorporation of a separation agreement in the entry shall have attached to such judgment entry a copy of the separation agreement or other document that is incorporated.

F. All judgment entries shall dispose of all matters involved in the proceedings, including costs, interest and attorneys' fees.

G. The following language is required in all orders pertaining to the allocation of parental rights and responsibilities:

1. The residential parent will, in spite of any differences with the other parent, discuss with that parent matters pertaining to the children's welfare, health and education, knowing full well that the general welfare of the children is of paramount importance.
2. Each of the parents shall encourage the children to respect, honor and love the other parent, and neither parent shall use the children to solve differences between themselves.
3. The residential parent shall:

- a. Take any necessary action with the school authorities of the schools in which the children are enrolled to:
 - (1) List the other party as a parent of the child(ren).
 - (2) Authorize the school to release to the other parent any and all information concerning the child(ren).
 - (3) Make sure that the other parent receives copies of any notices regarding the child(ren).
 - b. Promptly transmit to the other parent any information received concerning parent-teacher meetings, school club meetings, school programs, athletic schedules, and any other school or extracurricular activities in which the child(ren) may be engaged or interested.
 - c. Promptly after receipt of same, furnish to the other parent a copy of the child(ren)'s grade report cards and copies of any other reports concerning the child(ren)'s status or progress; alternatively, to provide all information necessary for the other parent to have access to the information directly from the school through electronic or other means.
 - d. Promptly inform the other parent of any illness of the child(ren) that shall require medical attention.
4. Further, open and free communication between the child(ren) and the other parent shall be encouraged and neither parent shall do anything to impede or restrict communications between the child(ren) and the other parent. A parent may place reasonable limits on communication from or with the other parent to promote the child(ren)'s activities, health, and welfare, and to avoid interference with the parent's scheduled time with the child(ren).
 5. Each parent shall refrain from criticizing the other parent in the presence of the child(ren).
 6. Neither of the parents shall attempt to modify the religious practices of the child(ren) without first having consulted each other and, in the event of disagreement, the Court.

H. In all matters involving children, the requisite order regarding health insurance coverage shall be a part of the final Order of Divorce or Dissolution. See Appendix D.

I. Counsel for the party in whose favor a judgment is rendered, or who is directed to do so by the Court, shall, within ten (10) days thereafter, unless further time be given by the Court, prepare and submit a judgment entry to opposing counsel who shall approve or reject same within ten (10) days after its receipt. All objections to such proposed judgment entry shall be in writing and may be

answered in writing. If an agreement of the parties is placed on the record, the Court will approve a Judgment Entry that contains the agreement even if a party or attorney fails to approve the Judgment Entry. Failure to timely submit a judgment entry may result in sanctions being imposed by the Court, including but not limited to the dismissal of the pending matter or an award of attorney fees related to the preparation of the judgment entry by opposing counsel. A party may submit a proposed judgment entry with a motion to journalize that entry if the other party has failed to timely prepare or review a judgment entry setting forth any action that was placed on the record.

RULE 2.21 COPIES

In any proceeding in which child support is ordered or modified, or in which spousal support will be payable through the HCCSEA, the Clerk of Courts shall direct a copy to the HCCSEA. Attorneys and parties desiring copies may print copies from the Official Record once the pleading has been entered onto the docket by the Clerk of Courts. If any attorney or party desires a copy of a Judgment Entry mailed to them, they must supply a self-addressed envelope with sufficient postage and pay any copy fee imposed by the Clerk of Courts.

An additional copy of all continuance requests, briefs and any replies or responses to them, memoranda and other similar documents which request action by the Court, together with a proposed entry, should be provided to the Judge or Magistrate to whom the matter is assigned immediately following the filing of the documents with the Clerk of Courts.

RULE 2.22 PARENTING CLASSES - ATTENDANCE REQUIRED.

- A. All parties involved in new or re-opened cases filed in the Hancock County Common Pleas Court involving the allocation of parental rights and responsibilities, or shared parenting, are required to complete an online parenting class. Online parenting class options are available on the Hancock County Common Pleas Court website, Domestic Relations division under “Parenting Education”. The available classes consist of one (1) session and aim at helping parents and children deal with the children’s reactions to divorce.
 - 1. Parties with minor children who are in kindergarten through the commencement of 11th grade shall have their children complete an age-appropriate class for children of divorce.
 - 2. The children are only required to attend one class.
 - 3. New cases require the basic level class. Re-opened cases require an advanced level class to address “high conflict” case resolution.
- B. All parties with post-decree motions filed in the Hancock County Common Pleas Court which seek the modification of an allocation of parental rights and responsibilities, shared parenting, or parenting time, are required to complete a parenting class.
- C. From time to time, the Court will approve parenting and children’s classes and will designate classes to be attended. A list of approved classes will be available at the Domestic Relations Division. From time to time, the list will be updated and posted on the Common Pleas Court website.

- D. The parties shall each file a certificate of attendance with the Clerk of Courts. The party that facilitated the children's attendance shall file the children's certificate of attendance with the Clerk of Courts.
- E. In new cases, final hearing will not be completed until the Domestic Relations Division receives the certificates of attendance of the parties to a dissolution, or of the plaintiff in a divorce or custody proceeding.
- F. In post-decree cases seeking modification of prior orders, final hearing will not be completed until the Domestic Relations Division receives the certificate(s) of attendance of the party or parties seeking modification of the prior orders.
- G. A party's parental rights or parenting time may not be enforced by the Court until that party complies with the parenting class requirements.
- H. Each party shall be responsible for payment of the cost of their own participation in the parenting class. In the event of indigency, disability, or lack of computer access, a party may request special accommodation from the Court.

RULE 2.23 PARENTING TIME

Absent a stipulation of the parties, Appendix E or F, as supplemented with Appendix G, of these Local Rules will be the standard parenting time order of the Court, unless the Court determines that such order would not be in the best interests of the child(ren). In each case in which Appendix E or F is the order of the Court, there shall be, attached to the entry in which the order occurs, a certification (Appendix H) that each party has been provided with a complete copy of the applicable parenting time appendix. The certification shall be signed by counsel for the party, if any, and by the party acknowledging receipt of the Appendix. Appendices E and F should not be attached to an entry, without prior approval of the Court. The judgment entry shall include language that acknowledges the parties' receipt of the applicable Appendix and/or the separate Appendix H.

RULE 2.24 PSYCHOLOGICAL EVALUATIONS

- A. If any party wishes to have any minor child(ren) who are involved in a dispute as to the allocation for parental rights and responsibilities evaluated by a psychologist or psychiatrist for the purpose of testimony at a Court hearing he/she must obtain the consent of the Court prior to such evaluation.
- B. In no event will an expert be permitted to testify regarding such an evaluation if the above procedure is not followed.
- C. The Court may order psychological evaluations of the entire family at any time during a contested matter, upon the request of any party or upon the Court's own motion. The Motion for psychological evaluations should include a recommendation as to who will perform the evaluation. The reports from the psychological evaluations will be made available to counsel for the parties, and the GAL if one has been appointed, unless good cause is found which would justify restriction of access to said evaluations, and the parties will have the opportunity to depose or subpoena the evaluator for hearing. By requesting the evaluation, the party or parties consent(s) to the Court

considering the Court ordered psychological reports, even if the evaluator is not called upon to testify.

D. Unless otherwise agreed by the parties or ordered by the court, the costs associated with a psychological evaluation will be assessed against the party requesting the evaluation. If the Court, upon its own motion, orders psychological evaluations, the costs associated with a psychological evaluation, unless otherwise ordered, will be assessed equally against the parties.

RULE 2.25 MEDIATION

A. The Court adopts Rule 1.12 of The Hancock County Civil Rules in the Common Pleas Court" (Hancock Civ. R.), as supplemented in this Rule, to effect mediation in the Domestic Relations Division of the Court.

B. In cases where violence or fear of violence is alleged, suspected, or present, and in addition to any other requirements set forth by Rule, mediation shall proceed only if the following conditions are met:

1. The person who is or may be the victim of domestic violence is fully informed, both orally and in writing, about the mediation process, his or her right to decline the mediation process, and his or her option to have a support person present at mediation session(s);
2. The parties are able to mediate without fear of coercion or control;
3. Security, if deemed necessary by the court, is provided for the safety of the person who is or may be the victim of domestic violence and all other persons present at the mediation.

In such cases, the mediator is authorized to terminate mediation if the mediator believes there is a threat of domestic violence or coercion between the parties.

C. If a party has been convicted of domestic violence or another offense involving physical harm to a family or household member at the time of the offense, or a party has been determined to be the perpetrator of an abusive act toward a child, the court shall hold a hearing on the request for mediation and shall make written findings of fact regarding the parties' best interests prior to referral to mediation. The parties have the obligation to disclose to the court any information regarding prior convictions for violence against family or household members or adjudication as a perpetrator of child abuse. The court shall also consider any stalking, domestic violence, or temporary protection orders issued against either party to protect the other party or any children of the parties.

RULE 2.26 FAMILY FILES

A. Documents that fall outside the scope of "court documents" as defined in Rule 44(C) of the Ohio Rules of Superintendence for the Courts of Ohio shall be maintained in the "family file" at the Domestic Relations Division and shall not be maintained in the court records that form the public case file.

B. The family file shall contain the following items:

- (i) Health care documents, including but not limited to physical health, psychological health, psychiatric health, mental health, and counseling documents;
- (ii) Drug and alcohol use assessments, screens and reports, and pre-disposition treatment facility reports;
- (iii) Guardian ad litem reports, including collateral source documents attached to or filed with the reports;
- (iv) Home investigation reports or home studies, including collateral source documents attached to or filed with the reports;
- (v) Child custody evaluations and reports, including collateral source documents attached to or filed with the reports;
- (vi) Domestic violence risk assessments, reports and screens;
- (vii) Genetic testing results;
- (viii) Supervised parenting time or companionship or visitation records and reports, including exchange records and reports;
- (ix) Financial records and financial disclosure statements regarding property, debt, taxes, income, and expenses, including collateral source documents attached to or filed with records and statements, including but not limited to income tax returns and wage records;
- (x) Asset appraisals and evaluations.
- (xi) Any other document pursuant to Order of the Court.

C. The documents that are placed in the family file are not evidence, except as otherwise admitted in accordance with state law or local rule. Parties shall not deliver evidentiary materials to the Clerk or Court for placement in the family file in lieu of admission at hearing. Exhibits admitted at hearing shall not be placed in the family file after hearing.

D. The court records that form the public case file shall include a “Family File Notice” for each document that has been placed in the family file for that public case file. The Clerk of Courts or the Judicial Assistant receiving the document for placement in the family file shall prepare the Family File Notice and provide notice to the parties of the filing of the Family File Notice.

E. Upon motion of any party or upon the Court’s own motion, other documents containing sensitive personal information may be ordered to be maintained in the family file.

F. Attorneys and parties submitting a document via e-filing for inclusion in the Family File shall include a Notice of Submission or equivalent cover page preceding the document containing personal information. The Clerk of Courts shall include the Notice of Submission or other cover page on the public docket and direct the remaining pages to the Family File.

G. The contents of the family file may be inspected by the parties, an attorney for one of the parties, or a guardian ad litem (GAL) upon request filed with the Clerk. Inspection of family files may be permitted by others upon motion to the Court and for good cause shown. Authorized viewers may take notes while reviewing the contents of the documents, but they are prohibited from copying those documents, distributing them, or showing them to unauthorized individuals,

or from removing them from the Courthouse. These documents shall be returned to the custody of the Domestic Relations Judicial Assistant or other Court staff upon completion of review.

H. Notwithstanding the provisions of this Rule, the Court may order certain confidential documents to be filed under seal by the Clerk. Such documents shall not be accessible to any person without a court order.

I. The documents placed in a Family File are not part of the Case File as defined in Sup. R. 26(B)(1), and are not exhibits, depositions or transcripts as provided in Sup. R. 26(F). This local rule is established pursuant to Sup. R. 26(G). Unless admitted as an exhibit at hearing, or otherwise removed from a Family File pursuant to an order of the Magistrate or the assigned Judge, the documents placed in a Family File shall be retained for one year after the adjudication of the complaint, petition, or post-decree motion. In the absence of any pending post decree motions, after the passage of one year after the adjudication of the complaint, petition, or post-decree motion, the Court may securely destroy the documents and the Family File without further notice to the parties.

RULE 2.27 GUARDIANS AD LITEM

DR Local Rules 2.27 through 2.277 shall apply in all domestic relations in the courts of common pleas where a court appoints a guardian ad litem to act in the best interest of a child.

RULE 2.271 DEFINITIONS

As used in DR Local Rules 2.27 through 2.277:

A. Allocation of parental rights and responsibilities

References in this rule to cases involving “allocation of parental rights and responsibilities” shall also include those cases in which legal custody, parenting time, companionship, or visitation rights are at issue. “Allocation of parental rights and responsibilities, legal custody, parenting time, companionship, or visitation rights” has the same meaning as in R.C. 3109.04 and 3109.051.

B. Attorney for the child

“Attorney for the child” means an attorney appointed to act as legal counsel for a child and advocate for the wishes of the child.

C. Guardian ad litem

“Guardian ad litem” means an individual appointed to assist a court in its determination of the best interest of a child.

D. Child

“Child” means:

1. A person under eighteen years of age;

2. A person who is older than eighteen years of age who is deemed a child until the person attains twenty-one years of age under R.C. 2151.011(B)(6) or 2152.02(C);

3. A child under R.C. 3109.04 or a disabled child under R.C.3119.86 who falls under the jurisdiction of a domestic relations or juvenile court.

RULE 2.272 APPOINTMENT OF GUARDIAN AD LITEM (GAL)

A. Orders of appointment

Each court appointing a guardian ad litem under this rule shall enter an order of appointment. The order of appointment shall include statements regarding all of the following:

1. When the Court appoints a guardian ad litem in a case involving the allocation of parental rights and responsibilities, the guardian ad litem shall be appointed only to represent the best interest of the child and shall not also be appointed as an attorney for the child;
2. That unless otherwise specified by court rule, the appointment shall remain in effect until discharged by order of the court;
3. That the guardian ad litem shall be given notice of all hearings and proceedings and be provided a copy of all pleadings, motions, notices, and other documents filed in the case;
4. That the guardian ad litem report shall include the following language: “The guardian ad litem has provided this report to the court, unrepresented parties, and legal counsel. Any other disclosure of the report must be approved in advance by the court in accordance with the Rules of Superintendence for the Courts of Ohio. Any party receiving a copy of this report may not disclose this report or its contents without the permission of the court. Unauthorized disclosure of the report or its contents may be subject to court action, including the penalties for contempt, which include fine and/or incarceration.”
5. The terms and amount of any installment payments and deposits in allocation of parental rights and responsibilities cases.

B. Limited scope of appointment

The Court may appoint a guardian ad litem to address a specific issue or issues. The Court shall include in the order of appointment the specific issue(s) to be addressed and a statement that the guardian ad litem is relieved of the duties set forth in Sup. R 48.03(D) that are not applicable to the specific issue(s).

C. Discretionary appointment in cases for the allocation of parental rights and responsibilities

Unless a mandatory appointment is required by rule or statute, a court may make a discretionary appointment of a guardian ad litem in cases involving the allocation of parental rights and responsibilities. In making a discretionary appointment, a court should consider all of the circumstances of the case, including but not limited to all of the following factors:

- (1) Allegations of abuse and neglect of the child;
- (2) Consideration of extraordinary remedies, such as supervised visitation, terminating or suspending parenting time, or awarding custody or visitation to a non-parent;
- (3) Relocation that could substantially reduce the time of a child with a parent or sibling;
- (4) The wishes and concerns of the child;
- (5) Harm to the child from drug or alcohol abuse by the party;
- (6) Past or present child abduction or risk of future abduction;
- (7) Past or present family violence;
- (8) Past or present mental health issues of the child or a party;
- (9) Special physical, educational, or mental health needs of the child that require investigation or advocacy;
- (10) A high level of conflict;
- (11) Inappropriate adult influence or manipulation;
- (12) Interference with custody or parenting time;
- (13) A need for more information relevant to the best interests of the child;
- (14) A need to minimize the harm to the child from family separation or litigation; (
- (15) Any other relevant factor.

D. Reappointment

A court should consider reappointment of the same guardian ad litem for a specific child in any subsequent case determining the best interest of the child.

E. Guardian ad litem fees

- (1) A court appointing a guardian ad litem in a case involving allocation of parental rights and responsibilities shall make a determination of the ability of any party to pay a deposit for the fees and expenses to the guardian ad litem and may reconsider that determination at any time prior to conclusion of the case. In making this determination, the court shall consider all of the following:
 - (a) The income, assets, liabilities, and financial circumstances of the parties, as demonstrated by an affidavit, testimony to the court, or evidence of qualification for any means-tested public assistance;
 - (b) The complexity of the issues;
 - (c) The anticipated expenses, including the travel of the guardian ad litem.
- (2) At any time prior to the conclusion of a case, a guardian ad litem may submit a motion for payment. A guardian ad litem shall submit a motion for payment upon conclusion of the duties. Any motion shall itemize the duties performed, time expended, and costs and expenses incurred pursuant to Sup.R. 48.03(H)(1).

(3) In determining the allocation of guardian ad litem fees and expenses, a court shall consider any relevant factor, including any of the following:

- (a) The rate or amount of compensation of the guardian ad litem;
- (b) The sources of compensation of the guardian ad litem, including the parties, any specialized funds allocated for payment of the guardian ad litem, or pro bono contribution of services by the guardian ad litem;
- (c) The income, assets, liabilities, and financial circumstances of the parties, as demonstrated using an affidavit, testimony to the court, or evidence of qualification for any means-tested public assistance;
- (d) The conduct of any party resulting in the increase of the guardian ad litem fees and expenses without just cause;
- (e) The terms and amount of any installment payments.

(4) Unless a hearing is requested by a party or the court within fourteen days after a motion for payment is filed, a court shall issue an order regarding payment of guardian ad litem fees and expenses approving or denying any portion of the requested fees and expenses and allocating payment to one or more of the parties as appropriate.

F. Enforcement of payment

- (1) If the fees and expenses of a guardian ad litem exceed the deposits or installment payments ordered and made, the Court may do any of the following:
 - (a) Issue a lump-sum judgment against any party owing guardian ad litem fees and expenses at the time of the determination of fees or at any further proceedings regarding payment of fees;
 - (b) Enforce the payment of fees and expenses of the guardian ad litem through contempt of court proceedings;
 - (c) Enforce any order regarding the payment of guardian ad litem fees and expenses in any other manner authorized by law.
- (2) The Court shall not delay or dismiss a proceeding solely because of the failure of a party to pay guardian ad litem fees and expenses required to be paid by the court.
- (3) The inability of a party to pay guardian ad litem fees and expenses ordered by the Court shall not delay any final entry.

RULE 2.273 RESPONSIBILITIES OF GUARDIAN AD LITEM

A. General responsibilities

The responsibilities of a guardian ad litem shall include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Provide the court recommendations of the best interest of the child. Recommendations of the best interest of the child may be inconsistent with the wishes of the child or other parties.
2. Maintain independence, objectivity, and fairness, as well as the appearance of fairness, in dealings with parties and professionals, both in and out of the courtroom, and have no ex parte communications with the court regarding the merits of the case;
3. Act with respect and courtesy in the performance of the responsibilities of the guardian ad litem;
4. Attend any hearing relevant to the responsibilities of the guardian ad litem;
5. Upon becoming aware that the recommendations of the guardian ad litem differ from the wishes of the child, immediately notify the court in writing with notice to the parties or affected agencies. The court shall take action as it deems necessary.
6. If necessary, request timely court reviews and judicial intervention in writing with notice to the parties or affected agencies;
7. If the guardian ad litem is an attorney, file pleadings, motions, and other documents as appropriate and call, examine, and cross-examine witnesses pursuant to the applicable rules of procedure;
8. Be available to testify at any relevant hearing. Attorneys who are to serve as both guardian ad litem and attorney in any dual appointments shall comply with Rule 3.7 of the Rules of Professional Conduct.
9. If the guardian ad litem is not an attorney, avoid engaging in conduct that constitutes the unauthorized practice of law and be vigilant in performing the duties of the guardian ad litem;
10. If the guardian ad litem is not an attorney, request the court to appoint an attorney for the guardian ad litem to file pleadings, motions, and other documents as appropriate and call, examine, and cross-examine witnesses pursuant to the applicable rules of procedure. The court shall take action as it deems necessary.

B. Conflicts of interest

1. A guardian ad litem shall avoid any actual or apparent conflict of interest arising from any relationship or activity, including but not limited to those of employment or business or from professional or personal contacts with parties or others involved in the case. A guardian ad litem shall avoid self-dealing or associations that might directly or

indirectly benefit except from compensation for services as a guardian ad litem.

2. Upon becoming aware of any actual or apparent conflict of interest, a guardian ad litem shall immediately notify the court in writing. The court shall take action as it deems necessary.

C. Satisfaction of training requirements

A guardian ad litem shall meet the qualifications and satisfy all pre-service and continuing education requirements of DR Local Rules 2.274 through 2.275 and any local court rules governing guardians ad litem. A guardian ad litem shall do both of the following:

1. Meet the qualifications for guardians ad litem for each court and promptly advise the court of any grounds for disqualification or any issues affecting the ability to serve;

2. Provide the court documentation indicating compliance with pre-service and continuing educational requirements so the court may maintain the files required pursuant to DR Local Rule 2.277. The documentation shall include information detailing the date, location, contents, and credit hours received for any relevant education.

D. Duties of the Guardian ad Litem

Unless specifically relieved by the court, the duties of a guardian ad litem shall include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Become informed about the facts of the case and contact all relevant persons;

2. Observe the child with each parent, foster parent, guardian or physical custodian;

3. Interview the child, if age and developmentally appropriate, where no parent, foster parent, guardian, or physical custodian is present;

4. Visit the child at the residence or proposed residence of the child in accordance with any standards established by the court;

5. Ascertain the wishes and concerns of the child;

6. Interview the parties, foster parents, guardians, physical custodian, and other significant individuals who may have relevant knowledge regarding the issues of the case. The guardian ad litem may require each individual to be interviewed without the presence of others. Upon request of the individual, the attorney for the individual may be present.

7. Interview relevant school personnel, medical and mental health providers, child protective services workers, and court personnel and obtain copies of relevant records;
8. Review pleadings and other relevant court documents in the case;
9. Obtain and review relevant criminal, civil, educational, mental health, medical, and administrative records pertaining to the child and, if appropriate, the family of the child or other parties in the case;
10. Request that the court order psychological evaluations, mental health or substance abuse assessments, or other evaluations or tests of the parties as the guardian ad litem deems necessary or helpful to the court;
11. Review any necessary information and interview other persons as necessary to make an informed recommendation regarding the best interest of the child.

E. Identification as guardian ad litem

A guardian ad litem shall immediately identify himself or herself as a guardian ad litem when contacting individuals and inform the individuals about the role of the guardian ad litem, including as an attorney if a dual appointment, the scope of appointment, and that documents and information obtained by the guardian ad litem may become part of court proceedings.

F. Confidentiality

A guardian ad litem shall make no disclosures about a case or investigation, except to the parties and their legal counsel, in reports to the court, or as necessary to perform the duties of a guardian ad litem, including as a mandated reporter. The guardian ad litem shall maintain the confidential nature of personal identifiers, as defined in Sup.R. 44, and address where there are allegations of domestic violence or risk to the safety of a party or child. Upon application, the court may order disclosure of or access to the information necessary to challenge the truth of the information received from a confidential source. The court may impose conditions necessary to protect witnesses from potential harm.

G. Timeliness

A guardian ad litem shall perform responsibilities in a prompt and timely manner.

H. Record-keeping

1. A guardian ad litem shall keep accurate records of the time spent, services rendered, and expenses incurred in each case while performing the responsibilities of a guardian ad litem.
2. In allocation of parental rights and responsibilities cases, a guardian ad litem shall provide a monthly statement of fees and expenses to all parties.

3. A guardian ad litem shall file an itemized statement and accounting with the court and provide a copy to each party or other entity responsible for payment upon order of the court or upon the conclusion of those responsibilities.

RULE 2.274 PRE-SERVICE EDUCATION

A. Pre-service education required for appointment

The guardian ad litem shall complete pre-service education provided by the Supreme Court, the Ohio Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) Guardian ad Litem Association, or with the approval of the appointing court, another provider.

B. Pre-service education hours and topics

1. Pre-service education for guardians ad litem shall be twelve hours.
2. Of the twelve hours of pre-service education, six hours shall be obtained via a live education program.
3. The remaining six hours of pre-service education may be satisfied by online or live education, teaching, writing, mentoring, or field-training activities with approval by the appointing court.
4. Six hours of pre-service education shall include training on all the following topics:
 - a. Basic human needs, stages of child development, and the impact of trauma;
 - b. Communication skills, including but not limited to communication with children and adults, interviewing skills, methods of critical questioning, use of open-ended questions, understanding the perspective of a child, sensitivity, building trust, multicultural awareness, diversity, and confidentiality;
 - c. Child abuse, neglect, dependency, unruliness, delinquency, and assessing risk and safety;
 - d. Family and child issues, including but not limited to family dynamics, substance abuse and its effects, basic psychopathology for adults and children, and domestic violence and its effects, including assessing for lethality and safety;
 - e. Legal processes, available community agencies and resources, methods of service, records checks, the role of a guardian ad litem in court, local resources and service practice, report content, mediation, and other types of dispute resolution processes;
 - f. Any other topic that concerns the role of the guardian ad litem to help

determine the best interest of the child.

C. Current Guardians ad Litem

An individual who was serving as a guardian ad litem on January 1, 2021, shall be deemed compliant with the pre-service education and not be required to complete the twelve hours of pre-service education.

RULE 2.275 CONTINUING EDUCATION

A. Continuing education hours and topics

1. Continuing education for guardians ad litem shall total six hours annually and be provided by the Supreme Court; the Ohio Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) Guardian ad Litem Association; or, with the approval of the appointing court, another provider.
2. Of the six hours of continuing education, three hours shall be obtained via a live education program.
3. The remaining three hours of continuing education may be satisfied by online or live education, training, writing, mentoring, or field-training activities as pre-approved by the appointing court.
4. Continuing education shall consist of advanced education related to topics identified in DR Local Rule 2.274.

B. Failure to comply

If a guardian ad litem fails to complete six hours of continuing education within any calendar year, the individual shall not be eligible to serve as a guardian ad litem on any new appointments until this continuing education requirement is satisfied. The court shall have the discretion to continue the current guardian ad litem appointments.

RULE 2.276 GUARDIAN AD LITEM REPORTS

A. General report requirements

1. A guardian ad litem shall prepare a written final report, including recommendations to the court, within the times set forth in this division. The report shall affirmatively state that responsibilities have been met and shall detail the activities performed, hearings attended, persons interviewed, documents reviewed, experts consulted, and all other relevant information considered by the guardian ad litem in reaching the recommendations and in accomplishing the duties required by statute, by court rule, and in the order of appointment from the court.

2. All reports shall include the following warning: **“The guardian ad litem has provided this report to the court, unrepresented parties, and legal counsel. Any other disclosure of the report must be approved in advance by the court in accordance with the Rules of Superintendence for the Courts of Ohio. Any party receiving a copy of this report may not disclose this report or its contents without the permission of the court. Unauthorized disclosure of the report or its contents may be subject to court action, including the penalties for contempt, which include fine and/or incarceration.”**

3. Oral and written reports shall address relevant issues, but shall not be considered determinative.

4. A guardian ad litem shall be available to testify at any relevant hearing and may orally supplement the report at the conclusion of the hearing.

5. A guardian ad litem may provide an interim written or oral report at any time.

B. Guardian ad litem reports in allocation of parental rights and responsibilities cases

1. Not fewer than seven days before the final hearing date, unless the due date is modified by the court, a guardian ad litem shall provide a written report to the court, unrepresented parties, and legal counsel. The court must approve, in advance, any additional disclosure of the report or its contents by a party or attorney. Unauthorized disclosure of the report or its contents may be subject to court action, including the penalties for contempt, which includes fine and/or incarceration.

2. The court shall consider the recommendation of the guardian ad litem in determining the best interest of the child only when the report or a portion of the report has been admitted as an exhibit.

3. Written reports of the guardian ad litem submitted via e-filing shall include a Notice of Submission or equivalent cover page preceding the report. The Clerk of Courts shall include the Notice of Submission or other cover page on the public docket and direct the remaining pages of the report to the Family File

RULE 2.277 RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COURT

Each court appointing guardians ad litem shall do all of the following:

A. Maintain a public list of approved guardians ad litem while maintaining individual privacy pursuant to Sup.R. 44 through 47;

B. Establish criteria, which include all requirements of Sup.R. 48 through 48.07, for appointment and removal of guardians ad litem and procedures to ensure an equitable distribution of the work load among the guardians ad litem on the list. Equitable distribution means a system through which appointments are made in an objectively

rational, fair, neutral, and nondiscriminatory manner and are widely distributed among substantially all persons from the list maintained by the court. The court may consider the complexity of the issues, parties, counsel, and the children involved, as well as the experience, expertise, and demeanor of available guardians ad litem.

C. Coordinate the application and appointment process, keep the files and records required by Sup.R. 48 through 48.07, maintain information regarding training opportunities, and receive written comments and complaints regarding the performance of guardians ad litem practicing before that court;

D. Maintain files for all applicants and for individuals approved for appointment as guardians ad litem with the court. The files shall contain all records and information required by Sup.R. 48 through 48.07 and by local rules for the selection and service of guardians ad litem, including a certificate or other satisfactory proof of compliance with training requirements.

E. Require all applicants to submit a resume or information sheet stating the applicant's training, experience, and expertise demonstrating the ability of the applicant to successfully perform the responsibilities of a guardian ad litem;

F. Review a criminal and civil background check and investigation of information relevant to the fitness of the applicant to serve as a guardian ad litem;

G. Review all guardian ad litem reports, written or oral, to ensure that the guardian ad litem has performed those responsibilities required by R.C. 2151.281;

H. Conduct, at least annually, a review of its list to determine that all guardians ad litem are in compliance with the training and education requirements of Sup.R. 48 through 48.07 and local rules, have performed satisfactorily on all assigned cases during the preceding calendar year, and are otherwise qualified to serve;

I. Require all guardians ad litem on its list to certify annually they are unaware of any circumstances that would disqualify them from serving and to report the training they have attended to comply with Sup.R. 48.05;

J. Develop a process or local rule for comments and complaints regarding the performance of guardians ad litem practicing before that court that does all of the following:

1. Designates a person for accepting and considering written comments and complaints;

2. Provides a copy of the comments and complaints to the guardian ad litem who is the subject of the complaint or comment;

3. Forwards any comments and complaints to the administrative judge of the

- court for consideration and appropriate action;
4. Develops a provision for the timely disposition by the court;
 5. Notifies the person making the comment or complaint and the subject guardian ad litem of the disposition;
 6. Maintains a written record in the file of the guardian ad litem regarding the nature and disposition of any comment or complaint.

RULE 2.28 MEDICAL SUPPORT OBLIGATIONS

For Orders implemented using the Ohio Child Support Guidelines in effect after March 28, 2019, the child support obligee is rebuttably presumed to be the party that will maintain health insurance for the child(ren). Unless otherwise ordered, the child support obligee will pay the child(ren)'s non-covered health care expenses up to \$510.21 per child (total cash medical amount) each calendar year. Extraordinary non-covered health care expenses are any expenses in excess of \$510.21 per child per calendar year and will be divided between the parties in the same proportion as their income ratios as shown on the most recent child support worksheet. The percentages are currently found on line 17 of the child support worksheet. Health care expenses include, but are not limited to, medical, dental, orthodontia, vision care, pharmacological and psychological expenses.

Unless otherwise ordered, alternate health insurance coverage for the child(ren) by a third party is permissible. The requirement to provide health insurance coverage will not require dual or secondary insurance.

RULE 2.29 ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

A. **PURPOSE AND SCOPE:** This rule is established to govern the use of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies by attorneys and/or parties in the preparation and submission of materials to the Hancock County Court of Common Pleas. It aims to ensure the ethical use of AI and maintain the integrity of evidence.

B. **DEFINITIONS:**

1. **Artificial Intelligence (AI):** Any technology that uses machine learning, natural language processing, or any other computational mechanism to simulate human intelligence, including document generation, evidence creation or analysis, and legal research.
2. **AI-Assisted Material:** Any document or evidence prepared with the assistance of AI technologies.

C. **DISCLOSURE OF AI ASSISTANCE:** Attorneys and/or parties must disclose the use of AI-assisted technology in the creation or editing of any document or evidence submitted to the court. Such disclosure should include a general description of the AI technology used and its role in the preparation of the materials. The disclosure must be made at the time of submission through a

certification attached to the document or evidence, indicating the type of AI used and certifying the attorney's final review and approval of the AI-assisted material.

D. **RESPONSIBILITY AND REVIEW:** Attorneys and/or parties remain ultimately responsible for the accuracy, relevance, and appropriateness of AI-assisted materials submitted to the court. Attorneys and/or parties must thoroughly review all AI-assisted materials to ensure they meet all legal and ethical standards. Use of AI does not absolve attorneys from their duty of competence, diligence, and supervision as required under the Ohio Rules of Professional Conduct.

E. **SANCTIONS:** Violations of this rule may subject an attorney and/or party to sanctions, including, but not limited to, sanctions pursuant to Civil Rule 11 and/or Civil Rule 37.

RULE 2.30 PHOTOGRAPHIC, AUDIO, AND VIDEO RECORDING OF COURT PROCEEDINGS

A. The court shall remain open to the public at all times unless, by special order, the courtroom is closed to the public. The presence of cameras, video recorders, audio recorders or other recording devices will only be permitted by the court pursuant to the requirements of Rule 12 of the Rules of Superintendence for the Courts of Ohio.

B. The use of any technology capable of broadcasting or otherwise transmitting sounds or images from the courtroom, including but not limited to wearable and A.I. enabled technology, is prohibited by all attorneys, parties, witnesses, members of the public, and all other persons entering any courtroom. It shall be the responsibility of each attorney to ensure that their client(s), client's representatives, witnesses and other persons associated with the attorney or client are in compliance with this rule.

C. Requests to record, broadcast or transmit any court proceedings shall be made to the individual judge in writing and filed with the Clerk before it will be considered. Requests for cameras or recording in the courtroom will be considered in the order of filing.

RULE 2.31 REPORTING TO LAW ENFORCEMENT & COMPLIANCE PLAN

A. The court has a duty to ensure to ensure complete, accurate, and timely submission of information into the state's computerized criminal history repository at the Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI), the Ohio Law Enforcement Automated Data System (LEADS), and other law enforcement databases.

B. The Court, in collaboration with the clerk of court, law enforcement agencies, and any other applicable justice system partners, will develop a Reporting to Law Enforcement & Compliance Plan.

C. The Reporting to Law Enforcement & Compliance Plan will identify procedures and timelines for:

1. Reporting information regarding protection orders as prescribed by the Revised Code and Supreme Court rules, including 3113.31 and Sup.R. 10(A); and

2. Reporting sealed and expunged records to BCI, LEADS, and other law enforcement databases pursuant to the Revised Code, including 3113.31.

D. The Court will review the Reporting to Law Enforcement & Compliance Plan every three years from its adoption date.