

Childrens Court of Queensland (District Court)

Practice Direction No. 1 of 2020

Court Arrangements (COVID-19) in the Childrens Court

1. In light of recent advice to reduce physical interaction where possible, regard should be had to the pressure likely to be placed on the transport from youth detention centres, as well as the transport of children to court provided by Youth Justice and other social services.
2. In the interests of public health, it is important to reduce the number of children entering and leaving detention centres as well as the contact children have with alternate transport providers.
3. It is also necessary to limit where possible contact between the parties, public, court officers and practitioners.
4. For those reasons, until the crisis has passed, practitioners should:

- a. consider if it is necessary for a child to attend court.

All children required to appear that are in detention will appear by video link. If the child is in detention for any reason other than the current offence before the court advise the Childrens Court List Manager that the child is in detention and advise the relevant detention centre that they are responsible for organising the video link with the Childrens Court List Manager;

- b. advise if trials are judge alone or jury trials at first mention.

- c. in relation to sentence hearings,

- i. consider whether it is necessary to seek an adjournment of listed matters where an accused child faces the likelihood of detention.
- ii. liaise with prosecutors to identify those matters which do not require an arraignment before sentence listing.

- iii. advise the Childrens Court List Manager of those matters requiring priority, particularly those where the accused child's time on remand is approaching the period likely to be served on any sentence.
 - iv. advise the court if the child has turned 18.
 - v. be prepared for the likely move to the exclusive use of audio-visual facilities for sentencing.
5. On mentions and reviews and bail applications appear, where possible, by telephone.
6. Email any documents on which it is intended to rely to the judge's associate before the hearing of any matter. With the exception of new indictments, documents should not be handed up in court until further notice.
7. Consider whether there are matters not requiring witnesses or the presence of the accused child in court, for example s 590AA applications, that can be brought on.
8. Be aware that Youth Justice will not be available in court as they have leave to appear via telephone in all matters (pending availability in the relevant Court room) until further notice.

Judge Richards
President of the Childrens Court of Queensland
30 March 2020