




Chambers of
JOANNE MOTOIKE
PRESIDING JUDGE OF JUVENILE COURT

Superior Court of California County of Orange

FILED
ORANGE COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT

MAY 21 2021

DAVID H. YAMASAKI, Clerk of the Court

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Orange County Juvenile Court
Miscellaneous Order M-2021-4
Re: Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) and SharePoint Access

A. Applicability of Order:

1. The Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) program was established to serve the needs of abused and neglected children in the juvenile court. CASA recruits, trains, supervises and supports community volunteers who investigate the circumstances of the child, facilitate the provision of services, monitor compliance with orders of the court, and advocate in court and in the community in the best interests of the child.
2. Pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code, § 102, CASAs may be appointed to any dependent, nonminor dependent, or ward who is subject to the jurisdiction of the juvenile court, and that appointment may continue after the youth attains the age of majority, upon the consent of the nonminor dependent. CASAs serve at the pleasure of, and report directly to, the Juvenile Court. The duties, responsibilities, and limits of the authority of CASAs are contained in and described by Welfare and Institutions Code, §§ 100 – 109, and California Rules of Court, Rule 5.655.
3. This order shall apply only to the Orange County CASA program, its administrative personnel, advocates and volunteers. The authorization granted by this order shall not apply to CASA from any other county in California.
4. This order is separate from and in addition to any other current orders regarding the Orange County CASA program.

B. SharePoint Access:

1. Each CASA is an officer of the court (Welf. & Inst. Code, §103 (e)), with the relevant rights and responsibilities that pertain to that role and shall act

Page 2

consistently with the local rules of court pertaining to CASAs. CASA volunteers are considered court personnel for purposes of viewing court files. (Welf. & Inst. Code, §103 (i) and §827 (a)(1)(A).)

2. To maximize service to the Court and the needs of abused, abandoned, and neglected children, the CASA program is permitted to administer a case assessment review program designed to determine the needs of dependents and wards **prior** to the appointment of a CASA. To accomplish this, CASA staff are currently permitted to review court files prior to the children becoming wards or dependents to identify children in need of a CASA. The goal of the case assessment review is to ensure all children in need of a CASA have one available at the earliest possible time in the proceedings.
3. The Orange County Superior Court, Juvenile Division, has created a dedicated SharePoint site for the Orange County Social Services Agency to upload case-specific reports, e.g., petitions, detention reports, jurisdictional reports, etc., in cases pending before the Juvenile Court. This SharePoint site is a web-based document library system that allows authorized users to review documents prior to and in anticipation of initial detention hearings, where expediency is of the essence.

FOR GOOD CAUSE SHOWN THEREFOR, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED:

1. In order to facilitate the purposes and goals of the CASA program and to aid in the case assessment for any dependency or juvenile justice matter involving those minors for whom CASA has not yet been appointed, CASA is granted access to the SharePoint site and the documents it contains for the sole purpose of identifying youth who are eligible for the appointment of a CASA and recommending a CASA appointment for those youth at the earliest time possible. This authorization is contingent upon a need for information as it pertains to CASA's conduct of official activities only.
2. The juvenile case reports and documents uploaded to the SharePoint site, both in electronic and hard-copy format, are confidential and may be accessed by CASA personnel without a separate order of the juvenile court pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code §827 and Orange County Superior Court Local Rule §903.1. CASA shall not disclose, publish, or disseminate any of the documents accessed through the SharePoint site nor any information obtained through those documents without further order from the court.

Page 3

3. This authorization for electronic access is granted after having considered and balanced the necessity of protecting the health and safety of the public, judicial officers, courthouse staff, counsel, and other interested parties as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic by reducing the number of persons present in courtrooms and court hallways against the need to keep juvenile court case file information and documents confidential.

This order will expire May 21, 2022.

SO ORDERED:

Dated this 21st day of May, 2021



Joanne Motoike
Presiding Judge of the Juvenile Court