

Kentucky Court of Justice Open Court Pilot Project

Media Guidelines

The Kentucky Court of Justice has opened proceedings to the public in some child protection cases under a pilot project taking place March 19-May 31, 2018. Family Courts in Harrison, Hopkins, Jefferson, Nicholas, Pendleton and Robertson counties are participating in the project. The open cases involve child dependency, neglect and abuse, and termination of parental rights. Sexual abuse cases will remain closed. The judge may still close proceedings if it is determined to be in the best interest of the child or for other good cause.

What the Media Can Do

- Observe proceedings in the courtroom.
- Report on cases that take place in open court without identifying any child or other party or witness in a case.

What the Media Cannot Do

- Record the hearing/case (no video, audio, photos, etc.).
- Take written or electronic notes if those notes contain the name or personal information of any minor child who is a party or a witness unless the name/information was obtained outside of court.
- Get copies of any documents or court recordings of a case.
- Tell anyone the name or personal information of any party or witness in the case unless the person you are telling is also a party or witness in the case.

Family Court Case Schedule

The schedules for Family Courts participating in the Open Court Pilot Project are:

Jefferson County

8:30 a.m. ET Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday
Jefferson County Judicial Center, 700 W. Jefferson St., Louisville

Hopkins County

9 a.m. CT Tuesday
Hopkins County Justice Center, 120 E. Center St., Madisonville

Harrison County

1:30 p.m. ET on the first & third Wednesday of the month
Harrison County Justice Center, 115 Court St., Cynthiana

Nicholas County

1 p.m. ET on the first & third Tuesday of the month
Nicholas County Courthouse, 125 E. Main St., Carlisle

Pendleton County

10 a.m. ET on the first & third Tuesday of the month
Pendleton County Judicial Center, 120 Ridgeway Ave., Falmouth

Robertson County

10 a.m. ET on the first & third Tuesday of the month
Robertson County Judicial Center, 127 E. Walnut St., Mount Olivet

Open Court Pilot Project

For the first time in Kentucky, some child protection cases will be open to the public under a four-year pilot project that will take place 2018-2021. Proceedings are normally closed due to confidentiality, but this study will look at whether it is beneficial to open them for the public to observe. Judges in the first six counties to participate in the project volunteered to open their courts for a two-month evaluation period. The Supreme Court of Kentucky issued an order March 13, 2018, authorizing the Open Court Pilot Project. The 2016 Kentucky General Assembly passed legislation for the project under KRS 21A.190-192.

Survey About Your Experience

Reporters will have the opportunity to complete a survey about their experience in open court. Surveys will be available in the lobby.



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