POLICY FOR THE USE OF PORTABLE ELECTRONIC DEVICES IN COURTHOUSES AND COURTROOMS FOR THE JUVENILE AND DOMESTIC RELATIONS DISTRICT COURTS FOR THE 16TH JUDICIAL DISTRICT

1. **Definition of "Portable Electronic Device"**
   The term "Portable electronic device" is defined to include personal computers, tablet computers, mobile telephones (including cell phones and any form of telephone with cameras and audio and video recording and transmission capabilities), electronic calendars, e-book readers and "smart" watches, or any other electronic personal communication device. It does not include a camera, a video camera, video or audio recording equipment, or a recording device that is not otherwise a component of a portable electronic device.
2. **Visitor to the court**

   Means a member of the public who is not an active or retired judge, a magistrate, and attorney-at-law who possesses and presents a valid state bar identification card, a law-enforcement officer as defined in Virginia Code Section 9.1-101 or court security officer, a probation officer who possesses and presents proper credentials and who is at the courthouse in the conduct of his official duties, a state or local agency employee who possesses and presents proper credentials and who is at courthouse in the his official duties, a court reporter during the course of his official duties within the courthouse, and any other individual who has been authorized to possess a portable electronic device in the court upon a determination by the sheriff of the city or county in which the court sits that such individual's possession of a portable electronic device does not pose a security risk or threat and that access to such portable electronic device is necessary for conducting such individual's work or business in the court.

3. **Possession and Use of Portable Electronic Devices**

   The following polices and procedures govern the possession and use of portable electronic devices in the courthouse and in the courtroom.

Portable electronic devices are **not** allowed in the courthouse with the following exceptions:

(1) Court visitors may bring portable electronic devices into the courthouse for the purpose of presenting evidence during a court proceeding.

(2) Court visitors who represent to security personnel that they have no other means of storage available to them, such as a vehicle parked on or near the courthouse premises.
(3) All portable electronic devices shall be required to undergo security screening upon entrance to the courthouse.
(4) All portable electronic devices shall remain on silent mode.
(5) All portable electronic devices shall be placed in a locker, pouch or other forms of on-site storage provided at the security entrance to the courthouse. The visitor shall be allowed to obtain the portable electronic device if needed to present evidence when the case is called into court with the expressed permission of the presiding judge. The portable electronic device shall only be used for the purposes and in the manner authorized by the presiding judge.

A judge may further limit or ban possession or use of any portable electronic device pursuant to Virginia Code Section 19.2-266 (to regulate media coverage or judicial proceedings) and if possession or use of the portable electronic device may or does interfere with the administration of justice or cause any threat to safety or security; or for any other reason.

Any use of a portable electronic device in the courthouse or courtrooms to take photographs, make audio or video recordings, or transmit live audio or video streaming shall be prohibited except with prior written authorization by a judge of the District or JDR court.

Any person using any portable electronic device in violation of this policy or related court order may be removed from the courthouse, found in contempt of court, and subject to penalties as provided by law. Any portable electronic device used in violation of this, or any other court order or policy may be confiscated by the court or sheriff's department responsible for providing court security and they shall not be liable for any damage to or loss of such confiscated portable electronic device.

This policy shall be posted on the court's home page on the Virginia Judicial System website; on the court's local website (if any) or an equivalent local government website where such information is communicated to the public; at the courthouse entrance; and in the clerk's office.