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IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE FIRST JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
IN AND FOR ESCAMBIA COUNTY, FLORIDA

JANE DOE, as parent and natural guardian of minor child, J.D.,

Plaintiff,

v. CASE NO.: _____

S.L. JONES CHRISTIAN ACADEMY, INC., and DA'QUARIUS BRITT, individually,

Defendants.
_____/

PLAINTIFF'S MOTION FOR LEAVE TO PROCEED UNDER PSEUDONYMS AND MOTION TO DETERMINE CONFIDENTIALITY OF COURT RECORDS
(Fla. R. Civ. P. 1.100(c); Fla. R. Gen. Prac. & Jud. Admin. 2.420(c)(9), (e))

Plaintiff, JANE DOE, individually and as parent and natural guardian of J.D., a minor, by and through undersigned counsel, moves this Court for an order (1) permitting Plaintiff and her minor daughter to prosecute this action under the pseudonyms "Jane Doe" and "J.D."; (2) determining that their true names, and information that would identify them, are confidential under Florida Rule of General Practice and Judicial Administration 2.420(c)(9); and (3) establishing a procedure by which their true identities are disclosed to Defendants subject to appropriate restrictions. In support, Plaintiff states as follows:

I. INTRODUCTION

This action arises from the sexual battery of a fifteen-year-old student by her teacher. J.D. was a child when she was abused, and she remains one today. The Florida Legislature has determined that the victim of a sexual offense against a child may be designated by pseudonym

"in all court records and records of court proceedings, both civil and criminal." § 92.56(3), Fla. Stat.

Plaintiff does not ask the Court to seal this case. The docket, the pleadings, the substance of the allegations, and every proceeding will remain open to the public. Plaintiff asks only that two names be withheld from the public file: her daughter's, and her own, because the mother's name leads directly to the child's. Defendants will be given both true identities under the terms of the Court's order, so the relief requested costs them nothing in their ability to investigate or defend.

II. FACTUAL BACKGROUND

1. J.D. is now sixteen years old. At all times material, she was a student at Defendant S.L. Jones Christian Academy, Inc. ("S.L. Jones"), a small private school in Pensacola, Florida, and Defendant Da'quarius Britt ("Britt") was her teacher.

2. As alleged in the Complaint filed contemporaneously with this Motion, on August 29, 2025, Britt sexually molested J.D. on school grounds; later that day, using a false pretext he had given to J.D.'s family, he drove her off campus, molested her in his vehicle, and raped her in a motel room. (Compl. ¶¶ 20-48.) The conduct alleged constitutes offenses described in chapters 794 and 800, Florida Statutes. The matter was investigated by the Escambia County Sheriff's Office.

3. Plaintiff Jane Doe is J.D.'s mother. She brings this action on J.D.'s behalf as her parent and natural guardian, *see* § 744.301(1), Fla. Stat.; Fla. R. Civ. P. 1.210(b).

4. Plaintiff and J.D. reside together in Escambia County and share a surname. J.D.'s family is known within the S.L. Jones school and church community, among students, parents, faculty, and staff. Anyone who learns Plaintiff's name in connection with this lawsuit will know the identity of the child who was abused.

5. In September 2025, allegations concerning Britt and "a young female student" at S.L. Jones circulated on social media and on an online news website. Those posts did not identify J.D. and J.D.'s identity as the victim has not been publicly disclosed. The posts demonstrate, however, that public interest in these events is real and that any identifying detail placed in the public court file would circulate quickly and permanently.

III. MEMORANDUM OF LAW

A. Florida courts permit a party to proceed under a pseudonym when a substantial privacy interest outweighs the presumption of openness.

Florida Rule of Civil Procedure 1.100(c) requires that pleadings bear a caption naming the parties, and Florida maintains a strong presumption of public access to civil proceedings and their records, "subject to certain narrowly defined exceptions." *Barron v. Fla. Freedom Newspapers, Inc.*, 531 So. 2d 113, 114 (Fla. 1988). Among the exceptions *Barron* recognized are closures necessary to avoid substantial injury to innocent third parties and to protect privacy rights not generally inherent in the type of proceeding at issue. *Id.* at 118. Those grounds are now codified in Rule 2.420(c)(9)(A).

Courts applying this framework ask whether the party seeking anonymity "has a substantial privacy right which outweighs the 'customary and constitutionally-embedded presumption of openness in judicial proceedings.'" *Doe v. Frank*, 951 F.2d 320, 323 (11th Cir. 1992). Relevant considerations include whether the party would be compelled to disclose information of the utmost intimacy, whether the party is a minor, whether the party faces a risk of harm from identification, and whether anonymity would pose a unique threat of fundamental unfairness to the defendant. *Plaintiff B v. Francis*, 631 F.3d 1310, 1316 (11th Cir. 2011). No single factor is dispositive; the court considers the totality of the circumstances. *Id.*

Florida courts have applied these principles to allow child victims of sexual abuse, and the parents who sue on their behalf, to proceed under pseudonyms. *See Doe v. Am. Online, Inc.*, 783 So. 2d 1010 (Fla. 2001) (action prosecuted by mother, as "Jane Doe," on behalf of her minor son, a victim of sexual exploitation).

B. Florida public policy specifically protects the identities of child sexual abuse victims in civil court records.

Section 92.56(3), Florida Statutes, provides that a pseudonym may be used instead of the victim's name to designate the victim of an offense described in chapter 794 or chapter 800 "in all court records and records of court proceedings, both civil and criminal." Although subsection (3) is phrased in terms of the State's use of a pseudonym, the statute expressly reaches civil records, and it reflects the Legislature's judgment that the identity of a sexual offense victim does not belong in the public court file. That protection belongs to the victim, who alone may waive it by a writing filed with the court. § 92.56(4), Fla. Stat. J.D. has not waived it.

The same policy runs throughout Florida law. Information revealing the identity of a victim of child abuse or of a sexual offense is confidential and exempt in law enforcement records (§ 119.071(2)(h), Fla. Stat.) and that status must be maintained when such information enters the court file (§ 119.0714(1)(h), Fla. Stat.; § 92.56(1)(a) Fla. Stat.). Public officers and employees are forbidden to disclose such a victim's identity. § 794.024, Fla. Stat. and the Rules of General Practice and Judicial Administration already minimize minors' names to initials in court filings. Fla. R. Gen. Prac. & Jud. Admin. 2.425(a). Rule 2.420(c)(9)(A)(vii) authorizes confidentiality to comply with exactly this kind of established public policy set forth in Florida statutes, rules, and case law.

C. Each relevant consideration favors pseudonymity.

Information of the utmost intimacy. This case requires J.D. to describe, in pleadings, discovery, and testimony, the sexual battery of her own body, the physical injury she suffered, and the psychological aftermath. It is difficult to imagine information more intimate.

The plaintiff is a minor. J.D. is sixteen. The interests of children weigh heavily in this analysis (*Plaintiff B*, 631 F.3d at 1316) and they are at their apex where, as here, the child is the victim of a sexual crime.

Risk of harm. Public identification would expose J.D. to stigma, harassment, and re-traumatization within the small school and church community in which she lives, and to the permanent association of her name with these events online, where allegations about this incident have already circulated. Unlike the general anxiety that accompanies any lawsuit, this harm flows from public identification itself, and it is precisely the harm section 92.56 is designed to prevent.

J.D.'s identity has not been made public. Neither J.D. nor Plaintiff has called public attention to these events or disclosed J.D.'s identity. The protection Plaintiff seeks is therefore still meaningful; once her name or J.D.'s name enters the public file, it cannot be recalled.

No unfairness to Defendants. Defendants know who J.D. is. Britt was her teacher, and S.L. Jones enrolled her. J.D.'s identity was provided to S.L. Jones and to Britt during the Escambia County Sheriff's investigation of this case. Under the procedure proposed below, Defendants' counsel will receive the true identities of Plaintiff and J.D., may use them freely in investigation and discovery, and may serve third-party subpoenas in those names. Defendants' ability to test Plaintiff's claims, examine witnesses, and present a defense is wholly unaffected. Any question concerning the use of names before the jury can be addressed at the pretrial conference.

The public interest is fully served. The public's legitimate interest is in the conduct alleged, the institution's response, and the operation of the courts. All of that information remains open and

available. Withholding the names of a child victim and her mother subtracts nothing from the public's ability to observe and evaluate this litigation.

D. Plaintiff Jane Doe's own pseudonym is necessary to protect J.D.

Designating J.D. by initials accomplishes nothing if her mother's full name appears in the caption of a lawsuit alleging that a teacher raped her daughter. Plaintiff and J.D. live together, and their family is known in the S.L. Jones community. Plaintiff's name is, functionally, J.D.'s name. For that reason, courts routinely permit the parent who sues on a minor victim's behalf to proceed under a pseudonym as well. *See Am. Online*, 783 So. 2d 1010. Confidentiality of Plaintiff's identity is independently warranted to avoid substantial injury to an innocent third party, J.D., Fla. R. Gen. Prac. & Jud. Admin. 2.420(c)(9)(A)(v), and to avoid substantial injury to a party through disclosure of matters protected by a privacy right not generally inherent in a civil action for damages, *id.* 2.420(c)(9)(A)(vi).

E. The requested confidentiality satisfies Rule 2.420(c)(9) and (e).

Pursuant to Rule 2.420(e), Plaintiff identifies the particular court records she seeks to have determined confidential: (i) the Confidential Notice of True Identities filed with this Motion; and (ii) in any filing in this action, the true names, residential address, date of birth, and any other information that would identify Plaintiff or J.D., including the names of J.D.'s siblings and other minor family members. Confidentiality is required to protect the interests set forth in Rule 2.420(c)(9)(A)(v), (vi), and (vii), as discussed above.

The degree, duration, and manner of the confidentiality requested are no broader than necessary. Fla. R. Gen. Prac. & Jud. Admin. 2.420(c)(9)(B). The docket, the pleadings, and all proceedings remain public; only identifying information is withheld. No less restrictive measure is available. *Id.* 2.420(c)(9)(C). Initials alone would not protect J.D. while her mother is named,

and redacting the mother's name while publishing J.D.'s initials would leave the same path to identification open. Because J.D. is a minor and the harm of disclosure is permanent, Plaintiff requests that confidentiality continue after the conclusion of this action unless the Court orders otherwise.

IV. PROPOSED PROCEDURE

Plaintiff respectfully proposes that the Court's order provide as follows:

(a) Plaintiff and her minor daughter shall be designated "Jane Doe" and "J.D.," respectively, in the caption and in all filings, orders, and proceedings in this action.

(b) Plaintiff's Confidential Notice of True Identities, filed with this Motion, shall be maintained by the Clerk as confidential pursuant to Rule 2.420.

(c) Within five (5) days after counsel for a Defendant appears, Plaintiff shall serve that counsel with the true names of Plaintiff and J.D.

(d) The true identities of Plaintiff and J.D. may be disclosed only to the parties; their counsel and counsel's staff; their insurers; retained consultants and experts; court reporters and videographers; mediators; and witnesses to whom disclosure is reasonably necessary for the prosecution or defense of this action. Each person to whom disclosure is made shall be informed of the Court's order and shall not further disclose the information.

(e) Any party filing a document containing information that would identify Plaintiff or J.D. shall file it in accordance with the confidentiality procedures of Rule 2.420, with a redacted version in the public file.

(f) The parties may use the true names of Plaintiff and J.D. in subpoenas and records requests to third parties where necessary, provided a copy of the Court's order accompanies each such request. Records produced in response shall be treated as confidential when filed.

(g) Use of the parties' true names during voir dire and trial shall be addressed at the pretrial conference.

(h) Any party may move to modify the order for good cause shown.

V. CONCLUSION

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff, JANE DOE, individually and as parent and natural guardian of J.D., a minor, respectfully requests that this Court enter an order (1) granting Plaintiff leave to

proceed under the pseudonyms "Jane Doe" and "J.D."; (2) determining that the true names of Plaintiff and J.D., and all information that would identify them, are confidential pursuant to Florida Rule of General Practice and Judicial Administration 2.420(c)(9); (3) adopting the procedure set forth in Section IV; (4) directing the Clerk to maintain the Confidential Notice of True Identities as confidential pending the Court's ruling on this Motion; and (5) granting such further relief as the Court deems just and proper. A proposed order is attached as Exhibit A.

CERTIFICATE OF GOOD FAITH

Pursuant to Florida Rule of General Practice and Judicial Administration 2.420(e), undersigned counsel certifies that this Motion is made in good faith and is supported by a sound factual and legal basis.

CERTIFICATE OF CONFERRAL

This Motion is filed contemporaneously with the Complaint, before any Defendant has been served or has appeared through counsel, and conferral under Florida Rule of Civil Procedure 1.202 is therefore not presently possible. Undersigned counsel will confer with counsel for each Defendant promptly upon appearance and will file a supplemental certificate stating whether the Motion is opposed. If any Defendant opposes the Motion, Plaintiff requests that it be set for hearing in accordance with Rule 2.420(e).

Dated: October 28, 2026

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Madeline E. Pendley
Madeline E. Pendley, Esq.
Florida Bar No.1019746
Rafferty, Domnick, Cunningham & Yaffa
815 S. Palafox St., 3rd Floor
Pensacola, Florida 32502
P: (850) 208-0826
madeline@pbglaw.com
Counsel for Plaintiff

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I HEREBY CERTIFY that this Motion, together with its exhibits (with confidential materials served in accordance with Rule 2.420), will be served upon each Defendant together with the Summons and Complaint in this action.

/s/ Madeline E. Pendley
Madeline E. Pendley, Esq.