

GOING TO COURT WITH YOUR CHILD

Part of the YOUTH OFFENDING series



If you are going to Court for the first time,
you may not know what to expect.
It can be a daunting place, especially
when you are worried about what is
going to happen to your child.

Free Parentline
0808 800 2222
Free Textphone
0800 783 6783

Website
www.parentlineplus.org.uk
Email
parentsupport@parentlineplus.org.uk

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WHAT WILL A SOLICITOR DO FOR MY CHILD?

To help you and your child prepare for Court it is important to find a solicitor. The solicitor will meet with you and your child to discuss the case and will offer you legal advice. S/he will let your child know what to do and say in Court. It is important to contact a solicitor before your first Court appearance. Check with them whether you are entitled to legal aid.

WHAT HAPPENS ON THE DAY OF THE COURT APPEARANCE?

You will be expected to arrive at 9.45am for a morning appearance or at 1.45pm for an afternoon appearance. You will not be given a specific time for when your case will be heard.

You will need to report to the Court Usher. S/he is usually dressed in a black gown and will be carrying a clipboard. S/he will tell you which Courtroom your child's case will be heard in and where to wait. S/he will also ask your name and which solicitor is representing your child.

CAN I TAKE A FRIEND OR RELATIVE WITH ME?

Yes, you can bring along a friend or relative to support you in the waiting room. But only parents or close relatives like grandparents, who may be involved in caring for your child, can go into the Courtroom with you.

WHO WILL BE IN THE COURTROOM?

At least two magistrates, your solicitor, a Crown Prosecutor and the Clerk to the Court who will ask your name. There will also be someone from the Youth Offending Team.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE GO INTO THE COURTROOM?

You'll be shown where to sit (usually in front of the dock) and it will be announced when you need to sit or stand.

Your child will stand in the dock and will be asked to say their name, address and date of birth.

WILL THE MAGISTRATES SPEAK TO ME?

The Clerk of the Court may welcome you in order to identify you as the parents.

WHAT WILL THE MAGISTRATES ASK ME?

Very occasionally magistrates may ask you something. Most of the time information will be given to the Court by your solicitor. It is important to give him or her as much useful information as possible before you go into the Courtroom. The magistrate will want to know what you have tried to do to prevent your child from offending and where you have gone to try to get help with your child. There is a private room available where you and your child can talk to your solicitor before going in to the Courtroom.

WHAT MIGHT HAPPEN TO MY CHILD?

The Court may adjourn the case for a variety of reasons: they may wish to set a trial date, or request reports to be prepared.

If a report is requested a member of the Youth Offending Team will talk to you outside the Courtroom and explain what it is about.

It may be that you will need to return to the Court with your child a few times before the case is dealt with.

If you or your child cannot attend the Court on any occasion it is very important that you inform the Court of the reason why. You can do this through your solicitor before the hearing. If you are ill on the day and don't appear in Court you may have to produce a sick note.

WILL THE MAGISTRATE ASK ME TO DO ANYTHING?

The magistrate may issue you with a Parenting Order. Ask for a leaflet on Parenting Orders from your Youth Offending Team.

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FURTHER HELP

Parentline Plus

A national charity offering information and support to parents.

- Parentline:
0808 800 2222
- Textphone (if you are deaf, hard of hearing or have a speech impairment):
0800 783 6783
- Email:
parentsupport@parentlineplus.org.uk
- Website:
www.parentlineplus.org.uk

You can also contact or ask:

- Your local Youth Offending Team or your social worker.

Parentline Plus: 520 Highgate Studios, 53-79 Highgate Road, Kentish Town, London NW5 1TL
Free Parentline: 0808 800 2222

Free textphone for people who are deaf, hard of hearing or have a speech impairment: 0800 783 6783

Web: www.parentlineplus.org.uk Email: parentsupport@parentlineplus.org.uk

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