

A GUIDE TO THE JUVENILE COURT SYSTEM IN VIRGINIA



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INTRODUCTION

HOW THIS GUIDE CAN HELP YOU

We hope this guide will help **young people and their families** learn about the juvenile justice system in Charlottesville.

This guide will help you **understand your rights** and the different parts of Virginia's juvenile justice system.

INTRODUCTION

THE BASICS

1. What is a juvenile?

- In Virginia, a juvenile is any person less than 18 years old.

2. What is the juvenile justice system?

- The juvenile justice system is the part of the larger justice system for people under the age of 18. It has its own laws and procedures about how juveniles should be treated.

3. How do the words of the juvenile justice system differ from the language of the adult system?

<u>JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM</u>	<u>ADULT JUSTICE SYSTEM</u>
Offense	Crime
Take into custody	Arrest
Petition	Warrant
Adjudication Hearing	Trial
Found delinquent	Found guilty
Disposition	Sentencing
Not delinquent	Not guilty
Detention	Jail

INTRODUCTION

THE BASICS

Juveniles: Remember, you have the following rights

- The right to remain silent. You are not required to talk to the police.
- The right to have a lawyer represent you in Court (if you cannot afford a lawyer, one can be appointed for you)
- The right to be present at all court hearings that deal with your case
- The right to call witnesses to testify for you
- The right to have a lawyer question witnesses who testify against you
- The right to be given written notice of court charges against you
- The right to have a public hearing
- The right not to be locked up with adults
- The right to appeal the judge's decision to a higher court.

Parents/Guardians: Remember, you have the following rights and responsibilities

- The responsibility to be present at all hearings
- The right to hire a lawyer for the child (if your child cannot afford a lawyer, one can be appointed)
- The responsibility to remember that your child is the focus of court involvement.

PRE-TRIAL (PRE-ADJUDICATORY)

ENTERING THE JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM

Once a juvenile is suspected of committing an **offense** (breaking a law), there are **several ways to enter the juvenile justice system:**

- 1. Arrest:** if a police officer thinks you committed a crime, you can be taken into custody and charged with an offense.
 - An arrest may occur as the result of a stop or a stop and frisk: when a police officer temporarily detains an individual and may pat down (frisk) their outer clothing. In this case:
 - The police officer must have reasonable suspicion that an individual is armed and dangerous, or has just committed or is about to commit an illegal act.
 - The police officer is not required to identify a specific crime they think is being committed, but a stop and frisk requires a lawful stop based on the officer having a reasonable suspicion.
 - Remember to be calm and polite.
 - The police officer may frisk you if there is reason to believe you possess a weapon or other illegal item.
- 2. Petition:** when someone (complainant) thinks you did something illegal or thinks you may be in need of help, he/she can file a petition with the Intake Officer of the Court Service Unit.
 - A **complainant** could be any person who brings a charge against you, or wants the court to consider you as a child in need of supervision or services (CHINS) or an abused or neglected child.

PRE-TRIAL (PRE-ADJUDICATORY)

ENTERING THE JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM

- **Petition** is a legal document that brings the case involving a juvenile into court. A petition says that you are one of the following:
 - **Delinquent:** a juvenile who has committed an act which would be a crime if committed by an adult
 - **Child in need of supervision (CHINSup):** one who is truant (does not attend school) or runs away from home
 - **Child in need of services (CHINS):** a juvenile whose behavior, conduct, or condition presents or results in a serious threat to himself or another person. The child is in need of treatment, rehabilitation, or services and is not receiving them.
 - The petition shows facts concerning the case and requests a **hearing** to be before a judge to determine the truth of these facts.
- 3. **Written summons:** In some cases you will receive a written summons, which shows the charges against you. This most often happens with charges like marijuana or alcohol possession, or traffic violations.
 - You must go to court on the day and at the time listed on your summons.
 - If you do not appear in court, the judge may issue an order for you to be picked up by the police and held in detention.

PRE-TRIAL (PRE-ADJUDICATORY)

INTAKE

Intake is a meeting where an intake officer decides whether or not to file charges to send you to court.

Things to know about intake:

1. Intake is the first appointment with the juvenile justice system during which the referral is reviewed and a decision is made whether to file a petition to send you to court or to divert the case. When a case is diverted, it means you don't have to go to court.
2. You will either have the intake hearing right after you are arrested or you will be sent a letter with a date to attend with your parents/guardians.
3. You, your parent/guardian, the intake officer, and the complainant (the person who brought a charge against you) will be at the intake meeting.
4. You *may* have a lawyer present, but most people do not bring one.
5. You may bring someone for moral support. Some people bring a helpful family member, a mentor, or someone else who is helpful to you and your family. You may not bring another juvenile.

PRE-TRIAL (PRE-ADJUDICATORY)

INTAKE

6. How you behave and look at Intake can make a difference! Show respect. Be sure that you and your parent/guardian are on time, dressed appropriately and act politely.
- What you say during the intake meeting cannot be used directly against you in court.
 - However, if you tell the judge a different version of what happened than you told to the intake officer, then the fact that you told different stories could be used against you to show that you do not give reliable testimony. In other words, it can be used to “impeach” you as a witness, which means that the judge may not believe your testimony.

What will happen at an intake meeting?

- The intake officer will ask the complainant about what happened,
- The intake officer will determine if there’s probable cause, or enough information to decide if your case should go forward.
- The intake officer will decide whether your case will go to court or be diverted.
- The intake officer will NOT determine if you are guilty or not guilty.

PRE-TRIAL (PRE-ADJUDICATORY)

INTAKE

What can happen as a result of the Intake meeting?

1. **Dismissal. No charges are filed.**

2. **Informal Action/Diversion:**

- **Your case is diverted when the intake officer decides that you don't need to go to juvenile court for your offense. If this is so, a petition is not filed in the juvenile court.**
- The intake officer will keep a report and give you your diversion plan that you will have to complete.
 - The diversion plan may include community service or a treatment program.
 - If you do not completely follow the assigned diversion plan, your case could be referred back to the juvenile court.

3. **Petition is Filed:**

- The intake officer will determine whether you should be detained (held in a juvenile detention facility) or released to your parents/guardians based on the possibility of risk to yourself, risk to community, or risk of not coming to court if you are not held
- A first appearance hearing or appointment of counsel hearing will be scheduled (see next section).
- If a petition is filed against you alleging that you committed an act that would be a crime if committed by an adult, then an intake officer must notify the **superintendent of your school division for some offenses** including:
 - a firearm offense, homicide, felony assault and bodily wounding, criminal sexual assault, manufacture, sale, gift, distribution or possession of Schedule I or II controlled substances, manufacture, sale or distribution of marijuana, arson, robbery, prohibited criminal street gang activity, recruitment of other juveniles for a criminal street gang activity, or an act of violence by a mob.

TRIAL (ADJUDICATORY)

DETENTION HEARING

In some cases, a juvenile may be held in secure detention before trial. This occurs when a juvenile may present a danger to self or others, or there is a concern that s/he may not come to Court.

What is a detention hearing?

- A **detention hearing** is a court hearing to decide whether the need for further detention if the intake officer determines that you should be held in a juvenile detention facility.
- **You are required to have a lawyer at a detention hearing. The court can appoint a free lawyer for you.**
- The hearing will be held in front of a juvenile court judge within 72 hours (3 days) from the time you entered the detention facility to decide if you should stay in detention until your next court hearing.

What are the possible results of the detention hearing?

- The judge may allow you to go home (or another supervised place) until your next court hearing-- with or without special rules,
- The judge may release you to go home and require you to wear an electronic monitoring device that notifies the court if you leave your house,
- The judge may release you to go home on house arrest with very strict rules,
- The judge may order you to be held in detention until your next court hearing

TRIAL (ADJUDICATORY)

DETENTION HEARING

- The judge may decide to hold you in detention if he/she believes that:
 - You present a danger to other people or to the property of other people;
 - You present a danger to yourself;
 - You will not appear for a court hearing; or
 - You have run away from a placement where a judge ordered you to stay.

Where would you be held in the detention?

- Most juveniles are held in the Blue Ridge Juvenile Detention Center, located south of Charlottesville in Albemarle County

How long can you be held in detention?

- If you are held before your adjudication (guilt or innocence) hearing, you can be held for up to 21 days.
- If you are held after your sentencing (adjudication hearing), you can be held for an additional 30 days before your disposition

TRIAL (ADJUDICATORY)

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. Preparing for your court date

- **Planning what to wear:**
 - **Dress appropriately.**
 - *Do NOT wear shorts, tank tops, t-shirts with words or pictures, strapless tops, or loose pants.*
- **Planning what to bring:**
 - **Do not smoke cigarettes** outside the courthouse.
 - **Do not chew gum** in the courthouse.
 - Do not bring a weapon.
 - ***Leave anything that you do not need in your car or at home.***
 - You will have to go through a metal detector to get inside the courtroom and may be searched.
 - Do not bring your cell phone.

2. Getting to the courthouse

- Court hearings are held in the **Charlottesville Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court.**
 - **Address:** 411 East High Street Charlottesville, VA 22902
- **Arrive early to allow time for parking:**
 - You may park in the Market Street Parking Garage at 504 E Market St., Charlottesville, VA for \$2.50 per hour.
 - There is some parking on the streets nearby, but it is only for one or two hours. You may be in Court longer than this.
 - The Market Street Parking Garage is less than a 5-minute walk from the courthouse
- You may have to wait for your case to be heard, but **you still need to be on time.**

TRIAL (ADJUDICATORY)

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

3. At the courthouse before your hearing

- **Do not leave the courthouse without permission**
 - Sometimes people have to wait for long periods of time for their hearing.
 - You may leave the cour**room** temporarily, but you may not leave the cour**thouse**.
- **It is helpful to be respectful and polite.**
- Sit up, be alert, be attentive, and behave politely inside **and** outside the courthouse.
- **Listen carefully** for the Clerk or Bailiff to call your name.
- When you are called, walk up and stand before the judge. Your body language and what you say can have an impact on how the judge thinks about you.

4. Appointment of Counsel Hearing

- **What is it?**
 - This is a short court procedure where the judge will explain the charges filed against you and ask you if you want a lawyer to help you through the court process.
- **Who will be there?**
 - You and your parent(s) or guardian(s)
 - Juvenile court judge
 - Bailiff: an uniformed sheriff's deputy who calls out the cases and keeps order in the court
 - Clerk: the clerk sits near the judge, keeps records about your case, and keeps track of the court schedule
 - Probation Officer: a Department of Juvenile Justice employee who works with juveniles on probation to set rules for their behavior and help them to get services to avoid future legal problems
 - Your hearing will likely be open to the public

TRIAL (ADJUDICATORY)

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

➤ What is the procedure?

- These are general steps that may happen, but your individual case may be different
- When the clerk or bailiff calls your name, you, your parents, the complainant, and any witnesses will walk up to the judge.
- The judge will explain the charges filed against you
- The judge will then ask if you want a lawyer to help you through the court process

➤ What are the possible results from the appointment of counsel hearing?

- The judge can appoint a lawyer to represent you if you cannot afford to hire a private lawyer.
- The court appointed lawyer may be a public defender or it could be a private lawyer.
- To figure out whether you qualify for a court-appointed lawyer, the judge will look at your income and property, and not your parent's or other guardian's. If you need an attorney assigned to you, you will fill out paperwork at the clerk's office. They will give you your attorney's contact information, but it may take up to 24 hours for the attorney to receive the information about your case.
- If your case goes to trial and you lose, you may have to pay for the court-appointed lawyer. However, people who are represented by lawyers often have much better results than people who don't have a lawyer.
- You can say that you plan to hire a lawyer or your parents/guardian may hire a lawyer, but you should only do that if you definitely have funds to pay the hundreds or thousands of dollars it will probably cost.
- The juvenile's parents/guardian may hire a lawyer for the juvenile.

TRIAL (ADJUDICATORY)

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

5. Delinquency Adjudication Hearing (Trial) This is the trial where the judge makes a decision about whether a juvenile is delinquent (guilty) or not.

➤ **What is it?**

- A court hearing to decide whether you are delinquent based on the evidence presented.
 - If you were not detained after your intake hearing, your adjudication hearing must be held within 120 days of your intake hearing on the charge
 - If you were detained after your intake hearing, your adjudication hearing should take place within 21 days of the time you entered detention

➤ **What is the procedure?**

- You and any witnesses present will be sworn in – you must tell the truth in court, but you are not required to answer all questions- your attorney will advise you.
- The Commonwealth's attorney (the prosecutor) will present evidence against you. If other people know what happened in your case, your lawyer or the prosecutor may ask them to come to court as witnesses

➤ **What are the possible results from the trial?**

- The judge finds that you are not delinquent
 - In this case, no further court actions are taken and your case is dismissed
- The judge may delay making a decision
- The judge finds you delinquent
 - You will then move onto the sentencing (dispositional) process. Sometimes the judge will make a full decision about your sentence immediately after the adjudication hearing or the judge may ask for a background report.

TRIAL (ADJUDICATORY)

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

- ❖ **CHINS Adjudication Hearing** This is a trial where a judge decides if you are in need of services (your behavior, conduct, or condition presents or results in a serious threat to yourself or another person) or supervision (you are truant or run away from home).
 - **What is the procedure?**
 - The court will hear from witnesses
 - **What are the possible results from the CHINS Adjudication Hearing?**
 - The judge finds you are **NOT** a Child in Need of Services or Supervision
 - The case is dismissed
 - The judge finds you **ARE** a Child in Need of Services or Supervision
 - The judge may proceed to a final decision in the case.
 - The judge may continue the case to another day and order a background report or a psychological evaluation
 - The judge may order a review of your situation in order to decide whether you may benefit from services and how to pay for it.

SENTENCING (DISPOSITIONAL)

DISPOSITIONAL HEARING

Delinquency Cases: The judge may give you one or more of these sentences, including:

1. Place you on probation
2. Order counseling for you and/or your parents
3. Order your and/or your parents to follow certain conditions
4. Order treatment for drug or alcohol use
5. Set a fine of up to \$500
6. Require you to pay back the victim (restitution)
7. Order you to perform community service
8. Order you to participate in a Restorative Justice process
9. Transfer your custody to a responsible adult or the local social service department
10. Sentence you to detention for up to 6 months
11. Suspend your driver's license
12. Commit you to the Department of Juvenile Justice to be held in a juvenile Correctional Facility
 - You may be committed to the Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice, where you will receive 24-hour supervision and a variety of special programs
 - You may be held in a Juvenile Correctional Facility an indefinite or definite period of time (up to your 21st birthday)
 - If you have an indefinite sentence, the Department of Juvenile Justice will assign you a range of months to serve based on your crimes, your record, and other factors.

SENTENCING (DISPOSITIONAL)

DISPOSITIONAL HEARING

CHINS Dispositional Hearing: The judge may decide one or more of these results:

1. Place the child on probation (only for a Child in Need of Supervision)
2. Suspend or restrict the child's driver's license (only for a Child In Need of Supervision)
3. Order services
4. Permitting you to remain with your parent(s)/guardian(s) subject to conditions
5. Ordering you and your parent(s)/guardian(s) to participate in programs or cooperate in treatment
6. Transfer custody to a relative, a licensed child welfare agency, or a local social service department

SENTENCING (DISPOSITIONAL)

AFTER COURT

1. Appeal

- You have the right to appeal any adjudication or disposition in a juvenile case to the Circuit Court.
- If you do this, you will have a new trial in the Circuit Court.
- You must file the appeal **within 10 days** of the Juvenile Court hearing.

2. Probation

- If you have been found delinquent or found to be a Child in Need of Supervision, you can be placed on probation.
- You will be assigned a probation officer who will meet with you and your parent/guardian regularly. The probation officer will set up a supervision plan that you must follow. He or she will also assign conditions of probation that list rules you must follow in order to avoid getting in more trouble.
- If you do not comply with the plan, the court could find that you have committed a probation violation. Depending on the severity of the violation, you could face serious consequences, including detention.

3. Court Costs and Fines: In some cases you may be ordered to pay court costs or fines.

- Failure to timely pay automatically results in driver's license suspension unless the debtor is able to enter into a payment plan with the court. Different courts have different payment plan terms.

EXITING THE JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM

Release from the Juvenile Justice System

- You can be released from probation or parole at any time if you complete all of the court's requirements, stay out of trouble, and follow all probation or parole rules.
- You can remain on probation or parole in the juvenile justice system up until your 21st birthday.

Parole

- When you are released from a Juvenile Correctional Facility, you will be placed on parole, which is much like probation.
- Your parole officer will meet with you while you are at the facility to plan for your return home.
- You will have a supervision plan and rules that you will have to follow.
- You can be sent back to a correctional facility if you do not follow the rules.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

1. Other Possible Consequences

- May not be accepted at your colleges of choice
 - Be disqualified from receiving awards or scholarships
 - Not be able to attain financial aid for college through FAFSA
- May not be able to enlist in the armed services
- May lose the opportunity to hold certain jobs

2. Confidentiality

- Some juvenile court records are confidential, which means that they cannot be released to anyone without your permission.
- However, it is important to know that there are times when information about you is not confidential, such as:
 - Your fingerprints and a DNA sample will be taken and kept if you are 14 or over and convicted of a felony charge
 - If you are 14 or older and charged with or convicted of certain serious offenses, this information will be given to the principal of your school.
 - If you are 14 or older and convicted of a felony, the court records may be open to the public.
 - If you are 14 or older and convicted of a felony, your record will be kept by the Juvenile Court.
 - If you are convicted of a felony as an adult, your juvenile record will be used by the Circuit Court to decide your adult sentence.

3. Record

- In most cases, juveniles' records are automatically destroyed once they turn age 19 or five years have passed since the last hearing in their case. However, records for crimes that would be felonies if committed by an adult remain public.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- If you are found not guilty or if your case is otherwise dismissed, you may ask to have your records of the case destroyed, or “expunged”.
 - This request must be granted unless the Commonwealth’s Attorney shows a good cause why the records should be retained.
 - Once records have been destroyed, the violation of law shall be treated as if it never occurred.

4. Transfer Hearing

- If you are 14 years or older at the time of the alleged serious felony offense, the Commonwealth Attorney may ask the Judge to determine whether you will be transferred to the circuit court and tried as an adult. In this case, you will have a hearing before the Juvenile Court Judge.
 - Your parents and your attorney must be notified of the transfer hearing, which will be held in juvenile court.
 - The judge will determine whether probable cause exists and whether transfer is appropriate.
- For more serious offenses, transfer to circuit court could be automatic if the judge determines at a preliminary hearing that there is probable cause that you committed the offense, and a grand jury agrees.
- **Possible results of a transfer hearing:**
 - The judge finds that probable cause exists and that the juvenile is not a proper person to remain within the jurisdiction of the juvenile court.
 - Your case will be tried in circuit court as an adult.
 - The judge finds that probable cause exists and that the juvenile is a proper person to remain within the jurisdiction of the juvenile court.
 - Transfer is denied and your case is handled in the juvenile court.
 - The judge does not find that probable cause exists and the case is dismissed.

GLOSSARY

– A –

Adjudication hearing – the trial; the court hearing to determine whether the defendant is guilty or innocent.

Adult – In Virginia, a person at least 18 years old.

Allegation – A claim that a law has been broken. A community member, including your parents or guardian can make this statement.

Appeal – A request that a case be sent to a higher court for review or rehearing.

Arrest – Taking a person into custody for the purpose of charging him or her with an offense or starting court proceedings.

Attorney (or lawyer) – a person trained in law and licensed by the state who can advise, represent, or act for persons in court.

– B –

Bailiff – The bailiff is a uniformed sheriff's deputy who calls out the cases and keeps order in the court.

– C –

Charge – A formal allegation that a person has broken a law or committed an offense.

Child in Need of Services – a juvenile whose behavior or condition is a threat to the juvenile's safety and who needs the court to intervene.

Child in Need of Supervision: A juvenile who is absent from school without a reason or who runs away from home.

Circuit court – Adult court of record. Also the court of appeal for the juvenile court.

Clerk – The clerk sits near the judge, keeps records about your case and keeps track of the court schedule.

Code of Virginia – The laws of Virginia that are recorded in a set of books often called the code.

Commitment – An order by a judge which transfers a juvenile's legal custody to the State Department of Juvenile Justice.

Commonwealth – Refers to the state of Virginia.

Commonwealth's Attorney (also called the Prosecutor) – This is a lawyer who works for the state and is responsible for presenting the state's evidence against those who are accused of breaking the law.

Complainant – The person who brings a charge against the defendant.

Complaint – A formal written accusation filed in court charging that you committed a specific offense.

Counsel – Another term for a lawyer.

Court – A setting in which formal testimony and evidence can be heard before a judge and decisions can be made about cases.

GLOSSARY

Court Appointed Counsel (may be called a Public Defender or Assigned Counsel) – This is a lawyer appointed by the court to represent a defendant who is unable to afford a private attorney.

Court Service Unit – A part of the juvenile court system which includes intake, probation, parole supervision, and other services.

Crime – An act in violation of law; also referred to as an offense or delinquency.

– D –

Delinquent – An act committed by a juvenile for which an adult could be prosecuted in criminal court.

Defendant – the person that is accused of committing an offense.

Defense Attorney – The lawyer who represents the defendant in court.

Department of Juvenile Justice- A branch of the state government that is responsible for community and correctional services for juvenile delinquents.

Detention Hearing – A hearing before a judge to determine whether a juvenile should be placed in detention, continue to be held in detention, or be released until the next court hearing.

Detention Center – A secure facility where juveniles are held temporarily; a juvenile jail.

Disposition – Sentencing; a court decision on what will happen to a youth who has been found guilty.

Disposition hearing – Sentencing hearing. A court hearing to decide the most appropriate action in a case where a juvenile has been found guilty of the charges.

Divert–to remove a youth from the juvenile justice system by referring the youth to a non-justice treatment program or simply discontinuing the case.

– F –

Felony – A criminal offense which is more serious than a misdemeanor and which can carry more severe penalties.

Fine – A penalty requiring payment of a specified sum of money to the court.

First appearance or appointment of council hearing: a court hearing where a juvenile is told of his or her right to have a lawyer and that the judge will appoint a lawyer if the juvenile cannot afford one.

Foster Care – A formal agreement whereby a judge places custody of juvenile with the local department of social services. Juveniles in foster care live with foster parents or in another placement.

– G –

Guilty: A finding by the juvenile court judge that the defendant did commit the offense he or she has been charged with.

GLOSSARY

- H -

Hearing – A court proceeding in which charges, evidence, and arguments are heard.

- I -

Innocent – A finding by the judge that the defendant did not commit the offense he or she has been charged with.

Intake – The first contact with the juvenile justice system in which the referral is reviewed and a decision is made to file a petition for court or divert the case.

Intake Officers – Probation officers who review charges brought against a juvenile and decide how to handle each case.

- J -

Juvenile - A person younger than age 18 (in Virginia).

Juvenile Correctional Facility: A secure setting where sentenced juveniles are confined and receive 24-hour supervision, education, treatment services, recreational services, and a variety of special programs; a juvenile prison.

Juvenile Court Judge – The court official who conducts the hearings for a case and makes the final decision as to what will happen. The judge listens to both sides of the story and makes sure that the people in the courtroom follow the rules. The judge decides if a person is guilty or not guilty of the charges. If a person is found guilty, the judge will decide what kind of sentence he or she will get and how long the sentence will last.

Juvenile Record – The official written file containing a court summary and information about a juvenile.

- L -

Legal Custody – A legal status assigned by the court which gives a person or an agency the right to decide where and with whom a juvenile should reside as well as the responsibility to provide shelter, protection, medical care, food, and education for the youth.

Legal Rights – Rights provided for and protected by law.

- M -

Minor – Another term for “Juvenile”.

Misdemeanor – An offense which is less serious than a felony and carries lesser penalties.

- O -

Offense – An act committed in violation of law.

GLOSSARY

– P –

Parole – The court supervision of a juvenile after release from a juvenile correctional facility. Rules are set and must be followed.

Petition – A document filed at court intake alleging that a juvenile is delinquent, a child in need of services or supervision (CHINS), or an abused or neglected child.

Plea – A defendant’s formal answer (guilty or not guilty) in court to the charges brought against him or her.

Probable Cause – Based on the evidence presented, there is reason to believe that the alleged offense occurred.

Probation – The court supervision of a juvenile found guilty of the charges. Rules are set and must be followed.

Probation Officer – A Department of Juvenile Justice employee who works with juveniles on probation to set rules for their behavior and help them to get services to avoid future legal problems.

Probation Violation – A juvenile’s failure to follow the rules of probation, which can result in the juvenile’s return to juvenile court.

– R –

Runaway – A juvenile who has left his or her parent or guardian’s home without their consent and has not returned within a reasonable period of time.

– S –

Summons – A document requiring a person to appear in court at a specified time to testify.

– T –

Transfer Hearing – A hearing to determine whether a youth’s case should be handled by the juvenile court system or transferred to the circuit court to be tried as an adult. This occurs in some very serious cases.

Truant – A juvenile between the ages of 6 and 17 who has unexcused absences from school.

– W –

Witness – A person who has personal knowledge important to a case and who can be called to court to give the judge this information.