

Vernon County Teen Court Direct Referral Frequently Asked Questions

Who can make a direct referral to Teen Court?

Teen Court receives direct referrals from law enforcement, human services and the school districts in Vernon County.

Does a youth need to admit guilt in order to participate in Teen Court?

Yes. Teen Court does not serve to establish guilt or innocence, but gives meaningful consequences to a youth who has admitted guilt. A youth who wants to plead not guilty should be sent to circuit or municipal court.

What kinds of consequences or sanctions does Teen Court give to offenders?

Youth who choose to participate in Teen Court are sanctioned by a jury of their peers to a wide variety of consequences that are meant to be meaningful and educational so as to help these youth make better choices in the future. Sanctions may include community service, letters of apology, research papers, alcohol and drug education classes, journal entries....

Why make a direct referral to Teen Court?

If you feel that the offense is not typical behavior for the youth in question and that he or she would put forth effort to improve his/her situation, they are likely an ideal candidate for Teen Court. Youth who successfully complete Teen Court have the record of that offense dropped, and do not pay the fine. Teen Court is an opportunity for youth to 'have a second chance', while still being held accountable for their actions.

What happens when a youth does not successfully complete?

If a youth does not successfully complete their sanctions the Teen Court coordinator will send a letter of non-compliance back to the referring officer and the ticket can be issued at that time and the youth will be sent on to circuit court or municipal court.

Does Teen Court work?

Our statistics show that less than 18% of youth who successfully complete Teen Court re-offend. Those that do, often show up in the records only with minor violations such as traffic violations. Only a very small number re-offend with the same offense for which they were originally referred. It has been proven that direct referrals to Teen Court save time and money for circuit court, human services, law enforcement and the county.

Who can give me more information about referrals to Vernon County Teen Court?

Jim Lee, Human Services: 608-637-5228

John Spears, Vernon County Sheriff's Dept. 608-637-5317

Jonel Kiesau, Vernon County Teen Court 608-606-4122

