

Q. Does my child qualify as a runaway ?

The following elements are needed for a case of Runaway:

- Under 18
- Habitually runs away from home
- Places himself or herself in unsafe circumstances
- Is expressly found to be in need of care, guidance, counseling, discipline, supervision, treatment, or rehabilitation.
- You must be able to reflect attempts to access community resources and be able to document all steps taken

Q. Does my child qualify for a truancy petition?

The following elements are needed for a truancy:

- Under 18
- Is expressly found to be in need of care, guidance, counseling, discipline, supervision, treatment, or rehabilitation.
- Subject to compulsory school attendance and is habitually, willfully, and without good and sufficient cause, truant from school
- Have at least 10 half days of unexcused school absents or tardies within the last 90 days.
- School Districts must take specific steps to remedy the truancy



Q. How do I behave in Court?

- Dress appropriately i.e., no shorts or halter-tops. Remember to remove your hat upon entering the courtroom
- Don't chew gum, eat or bring opened food or drink items into the courtroom
- Don't talk loud while awaiting your proceeding
- Address the judge as "Your Honor" when speaking to him/her
- Stand when addressing the Judge
- Don't interrupt others while they are speaking



Concord Family Court

32 Clinton Street, Concord 03301 271-0630
Jurisdiction— Bow, Canterbury, Chichester, Concord, Dunbarton, Epsom, Loudon, Hopkinton, Pittsfield

Franklin Family Court

7 Hancock Terrace, Franklin 03235 934-3290
Jurisdiction - Andover, Boscawen, Danbury, Franklin, Northfield, Salisbury, Hill, Webster

Henniker Family Court

41 Liberty Hill Road, Henniker 03242 428-3218
Jurisdiction—Bradford, Henniker, Sutton, Warner

Hooksett Family Court

101 Merrimack Street, Hooksett 03106 485-9901
Jurisdiction - Allentown, Hooksett, Pembroke

Newport Family Court

55 Main Street, Newport 03773 863-1832
Jurisdiction - New London, Newbury, Wilmot



My child is in trouble with the Police. What happens now?



Merrimack County Attorney's Office

4 Court Street, Concord, NH 03301
(603) 228-0529
www.MerrimackCounty.net

Q. My child came home after getting arrested. What happens now?

The Police Department will contact you. You will be issued a "petition" that says when you and your child have to go to the Family Court.

Q. What will happen if my child was arrested and taken into custody?

If your child was arrested, the police can:

- Create a record of the arrest and let your child go home,
- Send your child to an agency that will shelter, care for, or counsel your child
- Require your child come back to the police station and call their parents

Q. The officer said the Prosecutor is going to file a petition. What does that mean?

A petition asks the court to get involved. It says what the state thinks your child did. It's the judge's job to decide if the petition is true or not. There are 2 kinds of petitions:

- **"CHINS (Children In Need of Services) Petition"** - It says that a child ran away, skipped school, broke curfew, or disobeyed his or her parents.
- **"Delinquency Petition"** - This petition says that a child did something that would be a crime if he or she was over 17. This can be a felony, like car theft, drug sales, rape, or murder. Or a misdemeanor, like simple assault.

You have the right to get a copy of the petition. It says what your child is accused of. It doesn't mean your child is guilty.

Q. Does my child need a lawyer?

Your child has the right to a lawyer who is effective and prepared. If you can't pay for a lawyer, the court will assign a lawyer for your child (there will be some cost attached to the appointment of counsel.) You may have to repay the bill later.

Q. How will we find out about the first court hearings?

You will get the "petition" and a "notice" that tells you when the hearing is scheduled.

Q. I can't get to court on the scheduled day. Can I reschedule my hearing?

The scheduling clerk will try to accommodate your schedule within reason. If you know that you have a scheduling conflict, please let them know right away. You may have to complete a waiver of rights form if continued.

Q What does adjudication mean?

An adjudication is a finding that the Court makes after a petition has been filed and the matter has been heard. Once a child is adjudicated delinquent, or a Child In Need of Services, then the Court has the authority to make appropriate orders with respect to the child and his/her parents.

Q. What hearings will my child have in juvenile court?

There are 4 types of hearings:

- **Arraignment** – this is when the charge will be read to your child and they will enter a plea of either "True" or "Not True"
- **Adjudicatory Hearing**
This is when the judge decides if your child committed the offense charged.
- **Disposition Hearing**
If the judge decides the petition is true, there will be a disposition hearing to deal with how to work with you and your child. This can be on the same day as the Adjudicatory hearing. If the judge says your child did not commit the offense, there will be no disposition hearing.

Review Hearings

These are hearings to see how you and your child are doing.



Q. What is my Parental Responsibility

It shall be the obligation of each parent or guardian to:

- Attend and assure the attendance of the minor, at all court hearings
- Attend and assure the attendance of the minor at all meetings with the DHHS and other support agencies
- Fully participate in all services ordered by the court
- Pay a portion, or all, of any restitution or fines imposed by the court
- Supervise the minor's compliance with all court orders and conditions of release and probation
- Failure to supervise and otherwise accept responsibility as required may be treated as a criminal contempt of court punishable by up to a \$1,000 fine and 90 days

Q. What will happen if my child's petition is found True?

If a minor is found to be delinquent or qualifies as a Child In Need of Services the Court may order:

- Return the minor to a parent
- Fine the minor up to \$250
- Order the minor to undergo physical treatment or treatments by a mental health provider, or to attend mediation sessions, parenting programs, or any other such programs the court orders;
- Place the minor on conditional release for a term no longer than 5 years;
- Place the minor in a foster, group, crisis home, or a shelter care facility;
- Order a set number of hours of uncompensated public service;
- Any combination of the above.
- All services have a cost attached other than court supervision that will be assessed for reimbursement.