

# The Youth Court

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## Why am I going to court?

- You have been charged with an offence and the police have made a decision that because of the seriousness of the offence or because you have already received out of court disposals, you have to be dealt with by the Youth Court.
- Magistrates will decide whether you are guilty of the offence and will then sentence you for that offence.

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## What do I need to do before going to court?

- If you have not got a solicitor it is important to contact a local solicitor and make arrangements for them to represent you. It is not a good idea to attend court without one. Ask the police for a list of local solicitors.
- Check that you are able to attend court on the date given – only in exceptional circumstances can you not attend.
- Make arrangements with parent(s) or carer(s) to attend on time.
- If you are under 16 the court will not usually deal with your case unless your parent(s)/carer(s) are present.

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## Where is the court?

Most cases are heard at:  
Reading Youth Court, Civic Centre,  
Reading, Berkshire, RG1 7TQ.  
Telephone enquiries for the court can be made on 0118 9801800.

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## What do I have to do at court?

- When you arrive at court you have to let the Court Usher know you are present.
- You then wait in the waiting area and will be told by the Usher when it is time to go into court.
- In court you must stay standing until the Magistrates tell you it is okay for you to sit down.
- Whenever the Magistrates enter or leave the courtroom everyone stands.

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- You will need to speak clearly when answering any questions and try to look at the Magistrates when you are talking.
- Do not take food/drink into court and turn off any mobile phones.

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## What will happen in court?

- If you have pleaded guilty to the offence the Magistrates can either:
    - Sentence you immediately, this is likely if you get a Referral Order.
    - Put your case off for 2 or 3 weeks (called adjourning) so that a report can be written by a Youth Offending Team Officer who will make arrangements to meet you after court.
  - If you are pleading not guilty your case is likely to be adjourned for a few weeks for a trial. During a trial the Magistrates will listen to evidence and come to a decision about whether you are guilty or not.
  - If you are found not guilty that is the end of the matter and you will not need to attend court again.
  - The Magistrates may decide your case has to be dealt with in Crown Court.
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## What happens if I don't attend?

- If you fail to attend court then you are breaching your bail conditions. This is a very serious matter and the Magistrates will issue a warrant for your arrest – the police can then arrest you to bring you before the court. If it is felt necessary you can be held in police custody until a court is available to deal with you.
- Any breach of bail will affect any bail conditions in the future and may result in you being remanded to custody.

West Berkshire Youth Offending Team assists the Magistrates Court in making sure that young people attend court and in advising the court.

If you need any further information or would like to talk to someone about attending court please contact us on the telephone number below.

If you need legal advice about your case you need to speak to a solicitor.

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### **West Berkshire Youth Offending Team**

Merchant House, 14-20 Oxford Road, Newbury, Berkshire, RG14 1PA.

Telephone: 01635 553600 | E-mail: [yot@westberks.gov.uk](mailto:yot@westberks.gov.uk)

[www.westberks.gov.uk/yot](http://www.westberks.gov.uk/yot)

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