

# Going to court with your child

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When you go to court for the first time you may not know what to expect. You may be worried about what will happen to your child. Court can be very daunting. It is important to find a solicitor to help you and your child to understand what might happen.

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## A solicitor

You should contact a solicitor before your first court appearance, and should check to see if you are entitled to Legal Aid. The solicitor will meet with you and your child to give legal advice and discuss your child's case. They will advise you on what to do and say.

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## The day of the court appearance

For a morning court appearance you should arrive for court for 9.30am, for an afternoon court appearance you should arrive for 1.30pm.

You should report to the Court Usher on your arrival. He or she will usually be holding a clipboard. They wear a uniform but this varies from court to court. They will tell you where to wait and in which court the case will be heard. They will also ask your name and which solicitor is representing you.

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## Can friends and relatives come with me?

Friends and relatives may not be able to enter the court and wait with you. Only parents, carers and close relatives like grandparents who may be involved in caring for the child can go into the courtroom.

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## Who is in the courtroom?

There will be at least two magistrates who will hear your case. Occasionally, there is a district judge who will hear the case alone. Also present will be your solicitor, a court prosecutor and the Clerk to the Court. There will also be someone from the Youth Offending Team and an Usher.

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## When you go into the courtroom

You will be shown to a seat and informed when to sit and stand. Your child will be asked their name, address and date of birth.

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## Will the magistrate talk to me?

The Clerk to the Court may welcome you in order to identify you as the parents. Occasionally magistrates may ask you something. Most information will be given to the court by your solicitor. Make sure you give your solicitor as much information as possible. There is a private room available for yourself, your child and your solicitor to talk before you go into the courtroom. The magistrates may ask what you have tried to do to prevent your child from offending.

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## What might happen to my child?

Your child's case may be dealt with at the first appearance, though the case may be adjourned for many reasons; the court may wish to set a trial date, or request reports are prepared. You may have to attend the court a few times before the case is dealt with.

If a report is requested, a member of the Youth Offending Team will talk to you outside the courtroom and explain what will happen.

If you or your child are unable to attend court on any occasion you must inform the court. You can do this through your solicitor before the hearing. If you are ill you may have to produce a sick note.

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

There will be a duty Youth Offending Team Officer in court if you would like further advice. If you wish for help or advice through the court process please ring and ask for the Duty Youth Offending Team Officer at:

West Berkshire Youth Offending Team,  
Merchant House, 14-20 Oxford Road,  
Newbury, Berkshire, RG14 1PA. Telephone:  
01635 553600.

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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)

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