



TEEN COURT JUROR HANDBOOK



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Parents Educators/Teachers & Students In Action (PESA)
Teen Court Project for Justice Program

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For more information please visit our website: www.LATeencourt.com

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Teen Court Schedule

Location: _____

Date

Time

Introduction by Judge David S. Wesley (Ret.)

Welcome Teen Court Participants. You will find Teen Court to be one of the most rewarding experiences you can participate in while pursuing your high school education. Teen Court is an innovative program with the judicial system where juvenile cases are handled by the Probation Department, the Los Angeles Superior Court and you, the students. As students, you will serve as jurors on the case. You will question the juvenile charged with a crime (the “minor”), the parents of the minor and then deliberate. You will have the opportunity to render a judgment. If you find the minor guilty of the offense, you will make recommendations regarding sentence and rehabilitation of the minor. Teen Court is not moot court. It is an actual proceeding involving a minor who has been charged with a crime.

Through Teen Court you will be able to utilize interpretive thinking to determine if a minor is responsible for the act he/she has been accused of committing. You will also be able to utilize critical thinking to create a sentence that will address the need of the minor to learn that what he/she did was not proper, but also to restore the minor into being a productive member of our community.

Remember your voice is important. Your opinion matters, through the experience of questioning the minor and his/her parents, through expressing your opinion and listening to the opinions of your fellow jurors in deliberations, you will learn how to express yourself and listen to others with respect and responsibility. This is a fundamental aspect of our democracy: inquire to obtain vital information, listen to others, disagree with others in a respectful manner, express our views, listen to the views of others, and through appropriate discussions make a decision as a group that is best for our community.

I look forward to the time I can meet you personally. Please consider attending the following annual summer programs: the California Association of Youth Courts (CAYC) Summit as well as the Stop Hate and Delinquency by Empowering Students (SHADES) Juror Training Institute, so that I can get the opportunity to meet you personally as well as get to know you.

Sincerely,

Judge David S. Wesley (Ret.)
Teen Court Program Director

Duties of Teen Court Student Participant

- Attend monthly Teen Court Sessions.
- Serve as a Juror.
- Listen carefully to the testimony.
- No talking during proceedings, unless allowed by the judicial officer.
- ASK QUESTIONS regarding the facts of the case when serving as a juror.
- Consideration and respect of fellow students, teachers, the juvenile offender (the “minor”), parents of the minor and judicial officers at all times.
- Do not make jokes or laugh.
- No use of phones. If you feel you may have an emergency, please be courteous and participate at another time.
- Do not make facial gestures that would be considered disruptive.
- If the juvenile offender/minor makes any gesture towards you, ignore him/her. Do not feed into potential disruptive behavior.
- Be diligent and pay close attention to the proceeding.
- Deliberate.
- When serving as a juror, determine the appropriate sentence.
- When serving as the juror foreperson, prepare the jury verdict form.

Suggested Questions – Goals and Guidelines

Goals:

- Get background information regarding the facts of the case
- Get background information about the minor
- Get the cause of the problem
- Determine how best to help the minor

Guidelines:

- No such thing as a dumb question
- Ask the question in your own words and customize it to the facts of the case
- Follow through on the answer. Example: If you ask the minor whether he/she has used drugs before, and the answer is “yes,” ask what kind of drugs, how long, how often, etc.
- Pay attention to questions asked by fellow jurors and the answers given by the minor
- You are permitted and encouraged to ask questions of the parent(s)/guardian

Suggested Questions – Crime

- Ask a question about each of the required elements of the crime.
- Did you do the crime you have been charged with?
- Why did you do this?
- Was it your idea to commit the crime?
- If not, whose idea was it?
- Were you pressured into doing this?
- Did you do this alone? If not, with whom?
- Do you still talk to _____ (companion, if there is one)?
- Did you think of the consequences?
- Do you regret doing this? Why?
(Because it was wrong or because you got caught?)
- What would you do differently now, if anything?

Suggested Questions – School Activities and Consequences

School Activities:

- What school do you attend?
- What grade are you in?
- What are your grades in each class you have?
- Are you involved in any school activities?
- What activities?
- If no activities, why not?
- Do you have any hobbies?

Consequences:

- What did you learn from this experience?
- What will you do to make sure you do not do this again?
- Do you realize how you hurt those who love you by doing this?
- Do you realize how this might influence others who look up to you, like younger siblings, to think it is alright to do this type of conduct because you did it?
- Do you realize how you harmed the victim of your crime?

Suggested Questions – Parent/Guardian

Parent & Family Awareness:

- Who do you live with? (Father, Mother, Guardian)
- How did your family react to this incident? (Mother, Father, Guardian)
- Were you punished for this incident?
- What was the punishment?
- Do you have brothers or sisters?
- Are they younger or older?
- Are they aware of this incident?
- Do you think you are a good role model?
- How is your relationship with your parent/guardian?
- How is your relationship with your siblings?
- How do you behave at home?
- Do you listen to your parents or guardian?

Suggested Questions – Parent/Guardian

Sample Questions to Parent/Guardian:

- Who notified you about this incident?
- How did you feel about it?
- Did you talk to the minor about the incident?
- What did he/she tell you about the incident?
- Do you believe the minor told you the truth about the incident?
- How do you feel about this incident?
- What kind of punishment did you give the minor?
- How does your child behave at home?
- How often do you check on how the minor is doing at school? Or if he/she has homework?

Suggested Questions – Petty Theft (Shoplifting) Cases

- Were you found with something that did not belong to you?
- How did the item you were found with get in your possession?
- Why did you take possession of the item that did not belong to you?
- Did you go into the store planning to steal?
- When did you decide to steal?
- Did you have any money with you?
- Have you stolen before?
- Will you continue to steal?
- What have you learned from this?

Suggested Questions – Drug Related Cases

- Did someone find drugs on you or in your possession?
- How did you end up possessing the drugs?
- What kind of drugs were you possessing?
- Have you ever used drugs like the ones you were caught possessing?
- Have you ever sold drugs like the ones you were possessing?
- How long have you been using drugs?
- What kinds of drugs have you used before?
- Why do you use drugs? If so, how often do you use drugs?
- When was the last time you used drugs?
- Do you drink alcohol? If so, how long have you been drinking alcohol?
- Why do you drink alcohol?
- Do you plan to continue using drugs or drinking alcohol? Why or why not?
- Have you ever been to an AA or NA meeting?

Suggested Questions – Graffiti Cases

- Were you were caught with any writing materials? If so, what types of writing materials?
- What do you use these writing materials for?
- What types of writing materials do you use?
- What do you write?
- Where do you write these things?
- Why do you write these things?
- Are you always alone when you write these things? If not, who are you with?
- Have you, or anyone you were with when you are writing things on walls, etc., ever gotten hurt? If so, how?
- Did you ever think about who cleans up the stuff you write?
- Have you ever thought how you would feel if someone wrote something you did not like on a wall where you live?
- Do you belong to a tagging crew?
- How long have you been tagging?

Jury Deliberations

It is important that the decision by the jury be a decision by consensus. In order to have a consensus or majority, each juror must be allowed the opportunity to speak. As such, the juror foreperson (or presiding juror) must take the role as a “peace keeper” to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to speak.

A proper deliberation will include the following:

- Discuss the facts of the case
- Determine if the facts are consistent with the elements of the crime
- Vote taken by the juror foreperson

A proper deliberation will accomplish the following:

- Promote Active Listening
- Promote a safe place to disagree with respect and judgement
- Provide an opportunity for input from less experienced and/or less vocal jurors

If help is needed to promote these concepts, the Teen Court at a particular school might consider utilizing “The Talking Piece Concept.”

The Talking Piece Concept refers to an item that is designated as a “Talking Piece.” The Talking Piece is passed around the circle and the person holding the talking piece is the only one speaking. The holder of the Talking Piece is speaking from the heart and the rest of the circle is listening with open hearts. Everyone in the circle has an opportunity to speak, and everyone has the right to pass the talking piece without speaking. The Talking Piece serves as a reminder that only the student holding the piece has the floor to speak.

If a Teen Court wants to obtain a “Talking Piece” let the PESA Intern assigned to your school know or contact Ms. Leslye Kasoff of the Superior Court at (213)-633-1031 to obtain one. Some schools make one with their school mascot, etc.

Opening and Closing Instructions

Instructions and Admonition:

Members of the jury, I will now instruct you on the law as it applies to this case and I will give you a copy of the instructions to use in the jury room.

You as jurors in this case must decide what the facts are. It is up to you and you alone to decide what happened, based on the evidence that you receive in this trial.

Do not let sympathy, bias or prejudice influence your decision. You must follow the law as I explain it to you, even if you disagree with it. If you believe that anyone's comments of the law conflict with my instruction, you must follow only my instructions.

Instructions on the Crime Charged:

[VARIES]

Concluding Instructions of Submission to the Jury:

You will now go into the jury room to begin your deliberations. The first thing you should do is choose a foreperson. The job of the foreperson is to ensure that your discussions are carried out in an organized way, and that everyone has a fair chance to be heard. The foreperson will also read the verdict to the court when you return.

It is your duty as a juror to talk with one another and to deliberate on the case. Each of you must decide the case for yourself, but only after you have discussed the case with the other jurors. Do not hesitate to change your mind if you become convinced that you are wrong, but do not change your vote just because other jurors disagree with you.

Keep an open mind and openly exchange your thoughts about this case. Keep in mind that immediately announcing how you intend to vote at the beginning of your deliberations may interfere with an open discussion. Please treat one another courteously. Your role is to be an impartial judge of the facts.

You have two tasks complete in the jury room:

First, you must determine if the minor has committed a crime. In Teen Court, in order for the minor to be found guilty of a crime, a majority of the jurors must agree. A majority is one half of the jurors plus one. (This paragraph can be found in the L.A. Teen Court Jury Instructions "Concluding Instructions on Submission to the Jury" page 50, second to last paragraph).

You may deliberate in whatever order you choose. However, the Court suggests that you answer the following questions to reach a verdict:

1. What did the minor do?
2. Did the minor commit the crime charged?
3. What terms and conditions of probation will teach the minor the most about what he or she has done wrong and will change his/her behavior in the future?
4. What terms and conditions of probation are appropriate to benefit any people who have been impacted, including the victim and the minor's family?

Sentencing Guidelines (with explanations)

1. **CURFEW:** A curfew is recommended for weekdays and weekends. Take into consideration the age of the minor, extra-curricular activities, and parental consent and discretion.
2. **COMMUNITY SERVICE:** Determine the amount of Community Service hours to be completed. The hours recommended must be completed within six months. It can include graffiti clean-up.
 - Possession of marijuana is usually limited to **25 hours of Community Service**.
3. **COUNSELING:** Can be individual counseling or with parents/guardians.
 - **Alcohol or Drug Rehabilitation** – If the charges include alcohol and/or drugs, or if the minor states prior use of either one, consider AA or NA meetings.
 - **Parenting Classes** – If parental supervision appears to be poor, parenting classes may be recommended.
4. **ASSOCIATION:** Minor can be restricted from associating with certain people or certain places, especially those involved in the offence.
5. **LETTER OF APOLOGY:** A letter of apology to the victim, parents or store manager. Specify the length of the letter, including spacing and font.
6. **ESSAY:** The purpose of the essay should be an understanding of the wrongness of the offence. (Example: “Effects of Shoplifting on Consumers” or “How Drugs Damage the Body”) Specify the length of the essay, including spacing and font.
7. **SCHOOL:**
 - **Tutoring** – if minor’s grades need improvement
 - **Attendance check** – Minor should report all absences to the school and probation. You can also consider daily or weekly attendance checks if truancy or tardiness appears to be an issue.
 - **Daily Journal** – Minor keeps a daily journal to share with parents.
 - **Extra-curricular Activities** – If the minor appears to have too much free time, consider requesting that the minor participate in an extra-curricular activity at his or her school, church or elsewhere as approved by the probation department.
8. **SERVE AS A TEEN COURT JUROR:** A minor can be asked to serve as a juror as part of the original sentence or it can be used as community service hours.
9. **MISCELLANEOUS:** Any other ideas that you may have that would be beneficial to the minor or relevant to the case.

What CANNOT be recommended or ordered: Imprisonment, for any length of time; Payment of a fine.

Sample Jury Verdict Form



LOS ANGELES COUNTY TEEN COURT



Jury Verdict Form

We the Jury find the minor _____ Guilty/Not Guilty of the charge of:

(Insert Minor's Name)

(Check Below)

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Guilty | <input type="checkbox"/> Not Guilty |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Guilty | <input type="checkbox"/> Not Guilty |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Guilty | <input type="checkbox"/> Not Guilty |

We the Jury recommend the following disposition: (check as appropriate and fill in the blanks)

- 1. Curfew:** The minor is not to be out between the hours of _____ **PM** and _____ **AM** without parental consent.

- 2. Community Service:** Perform _____ hours of community service under the supervision of the Probation Department.

Participate as a Teen Court juror in at least _____ sessions of Teen Court.

- 3. Counseling:** The minor is ordered to participate in a counseling program (with or without parent).
 - Individual Counseling
 - Family Counseling with parent/guardian
 - Anger Management classes
 - Substance Abuse Counseling

- 4. Parenting Classes:** The minor's parents must participate in a parenting skills program.

5. **Associations:** During the term of probation, the minor is not to associate with:

6. **Stay Away From:** During the term of probation, the minor must stay away from:
 Victim
 Location
 Other

7. **Letter of Apology:** The minor is ordered to write letter(s) of apology to:

Must be completed and given to Probation Officer by:

8. **Essay:** The minor is ordered to write a _____page essay on:

Must be completed and given to Probation Officer by:

9. **AA/NA Meetings/Drug Testing:** The minor must attend _____ AA/NA meetings per week.
 Submit to random testing as directed by the Probation Department

10. **Academics:**
 Maintain Satisfactory Grades
 Participate in a tutoring program
 Follow school attendance policy and report absences to the school and the Probation Department.

11. **Mentor:** The minor is ordered to participate in a probation-approved mentoring program.

- 12. **After School Program:** The minor must participate in an after school program (club/sports,etc.) approved by parent/Probation Department.
- 13. **District Attorney's JOIN Program:** The minor is ordered to participate in the JOIN Program.
- 14. **Additional Conditions:** Do not engage in the following activities_____

- 15. **Other:** _____

Signed (Each Juror)

- | | | |
|----------|--------------|-----------|
| 1. _____ | (Foreperson) | 8. _____ |
| 2. _____ | | 9. _____ |
| 3. _____ | | 10. _____ |
| 4. _____ | | 11. _____ |
| 5. _____ | | 12. _____ |
| 6. _____ | | 13. _____ |
| 7. _____ | | 14. _____ |

NOTES

Friends of Teen Court Project for Justice Program

The following individuals and entities are to be commended for supporting the “The Teen Court Project for Justice Program” administered by PESA.

Teamsters Local 572

Jacqueline Brown

Mike Cavalluzzi

Joe D. Battle

Assemblymember Cristina Garcia

Alex Vargas – Mayor of Hawthorne

Honorable Michael Eng

Dennis G. Saab D

Honorable Cynthia Zuzga

Georgia N. Kezios

Honorable Sergio C. Tapia II

Edward and Rosemarie Vasquez

Louis E. Morales, Jr.

Honorable Lee Tsao

Richard Mario Chacon

Southern California Pipe Trades District Council #16

Barbara Torres

Barbara Yaroslavsky

Maria Cavalluzzi

Whitney Taylor

Lillian Simonian

Margarita C. Corona

Honorable Olivia Rosales

Donna B. Vasquez

David Dickey

Miguel F. Garcia

Philip Marshall

Angela Gilmartin

Victoria Caro

Danielle Gibbons

Jesse A. Arana



Teen Court Alumni Association Application

Contact Information

Name	
Street Address	
City State Zip Code	
Cell Phone	
E-Mail Address	
Teen Court interested in participating at:	

Education

Teen Court High School Graduated from or will graduate from:
Semester/Year of Graduation:

Agreement and Signature

By submitting this application, I affirm that the facts set forth in it are true and complete. I understand that if I am accepted as a member, any false statements, omissions, or other misrepresentations made by me on this application may result in my immediate dismissal.

Name (printed)	
Signature	
Date	

Our Policy

It is the policy of this organization to provide equal opportunities without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, gender, sexual preference, age, or disability.

The Teen Court Alumni Association is being sponsored and administered by PESA (Parents, Educators/Teachers & Students in Action)

Thank you for completing this application form and for your interest in volunteering with us.

Please return it to your PESA representative or send it to:

PESA
18017 Chatsworth Street, Suite 337
Granada Hills, Ca. 91244
Facsimile: 818-761-8180
Email: pesaemmee@gmail.com

For more information regarding how to support the Teen Court Project for Justice Program, please visit our website at:
www.LATeencourt.com



Questions? Contact PESA at:
18017 Chatsworth Street, Suite 337
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(800) 894-7201

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