

The Juvenile Review Board Diversion Program Is:

- A non-punitive alternative to the juvenile justice system offered to children and families of children who have committed minor delinquent acts as a first-time-offender or who are displaying at-risk behavior at home, in school, or in the community which could result in a referral to the juvenile court
- The JRB diversion process is guided by the International Institute of Restorative Practice's theory
- Its affiliation is with the local youth and family services and not with the court
- All cases are assigned a case manager who closely guides the offender as they work on completing their diversions
- The focus is on empowerment, accountability and the repairing and building of relationships
- All records are erased upon program completion

The Benefits of Using Restorative Practice Principles:

- It keeps our youth out of the court system
- It strengthens individual responsibility and accountability
- It allows each party to be heard in a safe environment
- It promotes healthy communication
- It provides an opportunity for the offender to make meaningful amends
- It promotes building relationships with each other and within our community

YOU HAVE BEEN REFERRED TO THE JUVENILE REVIEW BOARD; NOW WHAT?

STEP 1: Intake Appointment

The case manager for the DMYFS Juvenile Review Board will contact you soon to set up an intake appointment.

- These appointments last about 1 ½ hours.
- The youth charged needs to be present with at least one parent or guardian.
- During the appointment there is discussion about the incident that led to the referral, the hearing process is explained, and some background information is collected.
- Each party involved participates in a separate intake.
- The diversion process is entirely voluntary and the juvenile must admit to the behavior for which they have been referred, otherwise they will be referred back to the court system.

STEP 2: Scheduling the Hearing

Once the intake is complete a hearing will be scheduled.

Hearings are scheduled as follows:

- The 3rd Tuesday of each month between 3-5pm
- DMYFS office, 405 Main Street, Suite 11, Middlefield, CT
- Please park in the lower parking lot to the left of the police station and enter the door with the DMYFS sign. Please wait in the hallway until the case manager gets you.

The Juvenile Review Board Members consist of carefully selected professionals, including police, social workers, mediator, teachers,

counselors, court personnel and community members. Each member is bound by confidentiality.

STEP 3: During the Hearing

During the hearing you will be asked to introduce yourself and any family members with you. Board members will ask questions about the incident that brought you here and any other questions pertinent to the case. The JRB decides if the case is appropriate for the diversion program. If so, then a diversion contract is created with everyone's input.

Diversion goals:

- Promoting future responsible behavior
- Help deal with issues that may be the cause of the youth's behavior
- Take into consideration the needs of any victim related to the offense

Diversions may include:

- Personal Responsibility – Restitution, apology, community service
- Education – Alcohol and drug programs, safety training
- Prevention and Intervention – Individual and/or family counseling, participation in a group of interest

Step 4: The Restorative Piece

In some instances, the case manager will bring all parties involved together for a meeting that focuses on the restorative piece of the diversion program. The case manager ensures that it happens in a safe space. There are clear guidelines that all must follow for the duration of the meeting. This is an important part of the restorative practice.

Step 5: The Diversion Process

The average length of the diversion process is six months. Typically, the juvenile appears before the Juvenile Review Board twice, the first time for the initial hearing and the second time to close the case. During the process, the youth stays in close communication with the case manager, and often there are weekly check-ins made by phone or in person. When the diversions stated in the contract are completed, the case manager will recommend that the case be closed to the JRB. After the final hearing to close the case, all paperwork related to the case is shredded. There are no records kept at the court or with the Durham Middlefield Youth and Family Services. In the event that the participants are noncompliant with the diversions, the JRB will consider termination of the process and the case is sent back to the referring agent.