

STRATFORD JUVENILE REVIEW BOARD

JRB Process

The purpose of this document is to provide the details to the Stratford Juvenile Review Board (JRB) process. *This document is for informational purposes only.*

Stratford Juvenile Review Board Summary

The Stratford Juvenile Review Board (“JRB”) is a community-based diversion process that is an alternative response to a crime or other wrongdoings perpetrated by youth and serves as an opportunity to reduce youth involvement with the juvenile justice system. Juvenile Court, Police or School may refer eligible youth to the JRB for a community-based or school-based arrest (non-felony delinquent offense) and/or a Family With Service Needs (“FWSN”- status) offense such as truancy, indecent or immoral conduct and defiance of school rules.

The Stratford JRB collaborates with the youth and their family to design a reparative action plan that emphasizes accountability, responsibility and repairing the harm done to people and relationships. The JRB plan consists of a combination of formal and informal responses to address the referral matter as well as identifying the needs of youth and their families to recommend services and supports to increase skills for future success. Finally, the Stratford JRB assists the youth and family to strengthen competencies and knowledge of resources in education and for prevention to reinforce the building blocks of youth development.

Stratford JRB Case* Eligibility Requirements:

The Stratford JRB accepts referrals from Juvenile Court, Police or School for delinquency or status offences committed in the Town of Stratford or any municipality by an un-emancipated person who is at least 7 years old and under the age of 18 who resides in Stratford.

- Youth must be a current Stratford resident
- Ages 7 – 17
- Youth admits responsibility
- Youth not currently on probation or administrative supervision
- Parent/Legal guardian agree to JRB participation and involvement
- Youth case* is:
 - Non-felony community-based arrest
 - Non-felony school-based arrest
 - Family With Service Needs (FWSN) including truancy, defiance of school rules, indecent or immoral conduct

*referral cases are subject to review by JRB Case Manager

Step 1: Referral Matter and Referral Source

- If a youth case meets eligibility requirements, the referral source may give the youth and his/her family the opportunity to participate in the Stratford JRB process.
 - Stratford JRB accepts referrals from schools, police and juvenile court
- If the youth and family accept the opportunity, the referral source will fill out a referral form; obtain authorization from youth and parent/legal guardian to release case information to the Stratford JRB Case Manager.
- The referral source sends the case information to the JRB Case Manager. The referral source may provide contact information to the parent/legal guardian to call the Stratford JRB Case Manager directly.
- The Stratford JRB Case Manager and parent/legal guardian schedule intake meeting.

Step 2 (a): Stratford JRB Intake Meeting – Process and Option Review

- Eligible cases require the referred youth and his/her family to meet with the Stratford JRB Case Manager for an intake meeting.
- The JRB Case Manager will review the JRB process with the youth and family to ensure the youth and family understand their options to make an informed decision to move forward.
- The Youth is given two choices to resolve the referral matter:
 - Choice A: Return the referral to its source to be handled by authorities and/or Juvenile Court
 - Choice B: Divert the case from Juvenile Court by voluntarily participating in the JRB Process

Note: The following details are given to the youth and family to make an informed decision regarding their participation in Stratford JRB process. It is written in conversational tone and “You” is reference to the youth referred to the JRB.

Choice A: Referral Authorities and Juvenile Court:

You have been “allegedly” involved in an incident(s) that is against the law or is violation of school and parent rules. “Allegedly” means, “not yet proven in court.” You have the right to go before a judge in the Juvenile Court and have the judge decide, based on all of the evidence, whether or not the State can prove that you actually committed this offense.

- If the judge finds that the State **cannot prove** the case against you, the case would be dismissed and there would be no record of it.
- If the judge finds that the State **has proven** the case against you, you will be convicted, or adjudicated to be a child from a Family With Service Needs (“FWSN”), and you will have a juvenile court record.
 - If you are convicted, or adjudicated to be a FWSN child, you will likely:
 - Be placed on probation or supervision
 - Be required to comply with several conditions set by the court including visit regularly with a probation officer, attend school, participate in special programs and submit to random drug/alcohol testing
 - Failure to obey the orders of probation or supervision could result in removal from your home /community and placed in a residential facility or a state institution for up to eighteen months

Choice B: Stratford Juvenile Review Board (JRB):

The JRB is a voluntary opportunity with the goal to divert youth from the Juvenile Justice System and/or provide appropriate services to prevent future incidents. The philosophical framework the Stratford JRB diversion process is Balanced & Restorative Justice (BARJ) as incorporated into Connecticut General Statutes. The Stratford JRB utilizes Restorative Justice Practices to provide a *different way* to work with you. Restorative Justice Practices focus on repairing harm caused by the incident, building accountability, responsibility and understanding impact of incident on those involved and include parent/legal guardians, family and the community throughout the process.

- If you accept responsibility for the referral incident(s) and you and your parent/legal guardian agree to participate with the Stratford JRB process, the JRB Case Manager works with you and your family to determine actions to be taken to repair harm done. The actions depend upon the particular circumstances of each case such as your age, the referral matter, your attitude and your school and family situation. The JRB reparative action plan consists of a combination of formal and informal responses to address the referral matter as well as assisting you and your family increase competencies and resources in education and prevention.
 - The Stratford JRB is not part of Juvenile Court, Board of Education or Police Department.
 - You and your family will not have to make several appearances in the Juvenile Court if you choose to work with the JRB.
 - **If the act you committed involved damage to property or injury to someone, your parents may still be required to pay the victim for the damages (restitution) or injury regardless of your decision to participate with the JRB.**
- You and your family will meet with the Juvenile Review Board Panel to present the reason for your referral and the reparative actions you have completed. The JRB Panel is a group of people who work professionally with youth and families, such as counselors, principals, juvenile probation officers and community stakeholders. Each Panel member is held to highest standards of professionalism and honors individual rights of confidentiality.
 - The JRB Panel may ask questions of you and your family and you may ask questions of The Panel. Based on your presentation and input from other sources, The Panel will decide if you have successfully completed JRB or not.
- Your successful completion of the Stratford JRB process is documented and is reported to the referral source as needed.
 - If you choose not to complete the reparative actions during the JRB process, the JRB Case Manager will refer your case back to its source. The Juvenile Court will then be aware that the JRB diversion program had been offered but you chose not to complete. You will receive a new summons to appear in Juvenile Court and/or additional discipline actions will be taken to resolve the matter. Should you appear in Juvenile Court, you will have a juvenile record.

Additional Considerations:

Court Rights: You have certain rights in connection with the court process that you do not have with the JRB diversion program. If you choose to have your case handled in the court system:

- You have the right to say nothing to the police or other officials. You can refuse to answer any of their questions because they can use anything you say against you in the Juvenile Court.
- You have the right to talk to a lawyer before you answer any questions from the police or other officials and you have the right to have that lawyer with you if you decide to answer any of their questions.
- If your parents cannot afford a lawyer the Juvenile Court may provide one for you.
- If you decide to talk to the police or other officials, you have the right to stop answering questions anytime you wish. No one can force you to answer any questions.
- You must also have your parent(s) or a guardian with you if you decide to make a written or verbal statement to the police or other officials, about the offense for which you are charged, if you admit to doing anything wrong or if you admit to committing a crime. If you are 16 or 17, you could give up this right and speak with the police or court officials without a parent present.
- You also have the right to require the State to prove the case against you with witnesses, people who say they saw or heard you commit the offense for which you are charged, and evidence presented to a judge. You have the right to confront those witnesses, which means that your attorney can ask them questions to see what they actually saw or heard and to see if they are telling the truth.
- If you feel that you are not responsible for the offense for which you are charged, you should not have your case heard by the Juvenile Review Board but instead, you should exercise your right to have your case decided in the Juvenile Court.

Victim Rights: The law gives the victim, any person harmed by your actions, certain legal rights. In court, they have the right to learn your name and address in the event they decide later to sue you or your parents in a civil court for their losses. They also have the right to appear in court to see what happens with your case and to tell the judge about how they feel about what you did. To preserve the victim's rights in the Juvenile Review Board process, you must agree to allow the Juvenile Review Board to release your identity to the victim, if requested, and allow the Juvenile Review Board to tell the victim how your diversion was handled if they ask for that information.

Parental Charges against You: If your parent(s) brought the charges against you, the matter must be resolved through the court or through JRB.

Confidentiality and Mandated Reporting: Although the matters discussed during the Juvenile Review Board process are confidential, if information disclosed during the process, that constitutes a violation of the law or a school policy or regulation, or that would require a mandated reporter to make a report, that information may be disclosed to the appropriate authorities as required by law.

Additional Considerations - continued:

School Records: To gain a comprehensive view of you and the reason for referral, you may give permission for the JRB Case Manager to access school records and get information from school personnel. Your academic performance and behavioral functioning help determine impact on you at school. All information is kept confidential with the JRB Case Manager.

Counseling Services: If it is determined that you and your family may benefit from counseling services to address the referral matter, you and your family are not obligated to use the counseling or therapy services offered by the local Youth Services agency. You and your parent/legal guardian may select any qualified agency or counselor/therapist with whom to work. The JRB Case Manager will gain authorization from you and parent/legal guardian to contact your provider to confirm your compliance with treatment.

Referral Services: If it is determined that more intensive services are best suited to address the referral incident, the JRB Case Manager will recommend appropriate resources. Such services include but are not limited to: substance use treatment programs, in-home family treatment programs, psychiatric and psychological testing. Some services require the JRB Case Manager to make direct referrals and gain authorization from you and parent/legal guardian for you to participate.

Step 2 (b): Stratford JRB Intake Meeting – Youth and Family Decision

- If the youth and family choose to participate in the JRB process, the JRB Case Manager obtains a signed agreement from the youth and his/her legal guardian.
- The JRB Case Manager will schedule a follow up meeting to begin
 - If the youth and family choose not to participate in the JRB process, the referral is returned to its source

Step 3: Stratford JRB Process – Assessment & Restorative Action Plan Development

- The JRB Case Manager meets with you and your parent/legal guardian to begin the JRB process. The JRB Case Manager listens to you and your parent/legal guardian to gain greater understanding of the referral matter from your perspective.
- The JRB Case Manager collaborates with you to address the incident and the harm, to strengthen relationships and to build your awareness in order to empower you to make informed decisions in the future. Focus areas include:
 - Harm Done: The youth understands the impact of their actions on family, peers, school and community and takes the needs of others into consideration.
 - Accountability & Responsibility: The youth works to repair the harm through actions that are developmentally appropriate and promote interpersonal competencies.

Step 3: Stratford JRB Process – Assessment & Restorative Action Plan Development (cont.)

- Parental/Guardian Involvement: The youth and his/her family are actively involved in the process of resolving the harm, understanding contributing factors and work together to move forward.
- Community involvement: The JRB Panel represents the Community and work with the youth to develop and increase the mutually beneficial relationship between the youth and the community based on mutual responsibility and trust.
- Each case is unique; therefore, each plan is specific to the youth and his/her circumstances. Generally, the JRB Case Manager meets with you and your parent/guardian four (4) to six (6) times to discuss and assess factors contributing to the referral matter. You and your family develop a restorative action plan with the JRB Case Manager. The restorative action plan identifies opportunities to repair harm and resources best suited to address the contributing factors in your case. Plans consist of a combination of restorative acts.
 - Personal Responsibility - Examples include, but are not limited to: Restitution, apology, JRB supervision, community/volunteer service as appropriate
 - Education – Examples include, but are not limited to: Drug and alcohol workshops, educational-supportive counseling, research projects
 - Prevention – Examples include, but are not limited to: Individual and family counseling, drug and alcohol counseling/treatment, positive youth development activities
- Please note: Services that are beyond the scope of the Stratford JRB or Stratford Community Services are referred to appropriate providers or recommended to parent/legal guardian to complete plan steps

Step 4: Stratford JRB Process – Implementation of Restorative Action Plan

- You and your parent/legal guardian are responsible to complete the agreed upon plan. “Timeline” for completion is based on schedules, availability of services and access to resources and, most importantly, your development from the experiences.

Step 5: Stratford JRB Process – Panel Meeting and/or Case Closing

- The JRB Case Manager provides the date and time of the Stratford JRB Panel meeting. The meeting is confidential and all JRB Panel members are required to sign confidentiality agreements.
- The purpose of the Panel meeting is to discuss the referral matter that brought you to the JRB and for you to share how you have repaired the “harms done”, what you have learned over the course of the JRB process and experience support from the community for your efforts.
- The JRB Panel members will ask you and your family questions to assess if the negative impact of your referral incident has reduced or eliminated. You and your family are encouraged to ask questions of the Panel.
- This supportive process serves to connect you and your family with the community to engage in a positive way. The JRB Panel members recognize the importance of a reciprocal relationship as central to building a healthy community.
- The JRB Panel members discuss the totality of circumstances surrounding your case after your presentation to determine your case disposition.



Step 5: Stratford JRB Process – Panel Meeting and/or Case Closing (continued)

- Successful completion: The Panel agrees that you have learned from the incident that brought you to the JRB and your case will be closed.
- Unsuccessful completion: The Panel remains concerned about you and your reason for referral. The Panel provides resources and/or additional actions you are to take to complete within a specific timeframe. When you complete the recommended actions, you will present to the Panel again or to the JRB Case Manager.
 - If you choose not to complete the final recommendations from the JRB Panel, the JRB Case Manager returns your case to the referral source as an unsuccessful completion. The referral source will have a record that states you participated in the JRB process but were unsuccessful. You will not be eligible for the JRB diversion process in the future.