



## **TEEN COURT PLAN**

All words and phrases contained herein shall be construed according to definitions in Article 45A.401 of the Texas Code of Criminal Procedure, where provided.

### **I. About the Lewisville/Flower Mound Teen Court Program**

Teen Court is an alternative, voluntary program which offers youthful offenders an opportunity to make restitution for an offense through community service, specialized classes and jury service. By bringing the teens before a jury of their peers, Teen Court seeks to deter future unlawful behavior while providing direct experience with the court system and a greater understanding of their future role as productive citizens. Instead of paying a fine, the teen is sentenced to constructive service in a community service organization and jury duty in the Teen Court. Other non-monetary sanctions are also possible. Upon successful completion, the case is dismissed thus avoiding the fine and keeping the teen's record clear.

### **II. Eligibility**

To be eligible to participate in the Teen Court program, the defendant must not have successfully completed the teen court program in preceding 12 months and must be currently enrolled in school and be:

- 10 through 19 years of age charged with a class C traffic citation or;
- 17 through 19 years of age charged with a class C Penal Code citation.

Participation in Teen Court is based on an admission of guilt. To be approved for this program, the defendant must appear (*with a parent or legal guardian if under age 17*) at their scheduled Juvenile Docket where the Judge will determine if Teen Court will be granted.

### **III. Objective**

**The purpose of this program and its related procedures is to:**

- A. Hold teenage offenders responsible for their behavior and help them recognize that the consequences are a direct result of their own actions.
- B. Provide teenage offenders with a positive experience in the judicial system, thereby reducing recidivism and helping deter the possibility of committing other crimes.
- C. Educate youth volunteers and offenders on the legal and judicial process.
- D. Establish positive relationships between the community and its youth, promoting increased understanding and communication
- E. Assist Lewisville, Flower Mound and local community agencies in saving labor expense by providing youth as community service workers.

#### **IV. Teen Court Implementation**

Once approved to enter into the Teen Court program, the Juvenile Case Manager will meet with the parent and child to get the Teen Court agreement signed. A Teen Court date will be assigned and given to the Teen and their parent. At this court date, the Teen Court jury will assess the number of community service hours and jury terms the defendant will have to do. The Juvenile Case Manager will monitor and keep the defendant and their parent informed of all appropriate due dates on the case and will be the defendant's primary contact if they have any questions.

#### **V. Teen Court Agreement & Sentencing**

**There shall be a written binding Teen Court Agreement that contains the components required in Article 45A.401 of the Texas Code of Criminal Procedure. The objectives shall a.) consider the child's circumstances, b.) be rationally relevant to the alleged conduct, c.) be realistic to accomplish, and d.) be in the best interest of the child and the community.**

**The written agreement shall contain the following components:**

- A. An identification of the alleged conduct and Teen Court terms in clear and concise language understandable to the child.
- B. Positive and negative consequences of successful completion of, or failure to comply with, the terms of the diversion agreement.
- C. The agreed length of the Teen Court plan.
- D. Signatures of the teen and parent indicating each's consent to Teen Court, with the understanding that both the teen and parent are waiving all claims for accidents or injury or compensation of any nature against the City of Lewisville and/or the Town of Flower Mound while performing community service hours ordered in Teen Court.

#### **VI. Teen Court Costs**

- A. **Teen Court Reimbursement Fees.** Article 45A.401 authorizes the clerk of the court to collect reimbursement fees totaling \$20 to defray the costs of the Teen Court Program.
- B. **Other Teen Court Programming Costs.** Some programming the teen could be ordered to do on Teen Court may have costs associated that the teen or parent would have to agree to pay for. These costs will vary based on providers.

## **VII. Referral to Court upon Unsuccessful Completion**

**If the teen does not successfully complete the Teen Court Program, the case shall be set for a show cause hearing before the Judge. The Judge will confer with all interested parties to determine what is in the best interest of the child, what protects the long-term safety of the community, and whether to:**

- A. Find substantial compliance and successful completion, and/or
- B. Declare the Teen Court Deferral unsuccessful, revoking the probation, entering a guilty conviction and ordering remaining fines to be paid.
- C. Extend the Teen Court Deferral period to allow Defendant more time to complete the terms.
- D. Modify the terms of the Deferral Agreement.

## **VIII. Dismissal Judgment created when program completed successfully**

- A. When the Juvenile Case Manager reviews the case at the end of the probation term, and defendant has successfully completed all the requirements of the program, a judgment will be created and signed by the Judge dismissing the case.