

The Montgomery County Juvenile Justice Process

When a person under the age of 18 is charged with a misdemeanor offense, his case is sent to the Family Crimes Division of the Montgomery County Department of Police. The case is then screened for eligibility for the Montgomery County Diversion Program -- it must be the youth's first contact with police (with a few exceptions), it must be a misdemeanor that is covered under the Diversion Program, and the youth must admit involvement in the offense. The Diversion process is voluntary. Successful completion of the Program can lead to the case closing at the police department level, without Department of Juvenile Services involvement.

Screening and Assessment Services for Children and Adolescents (SASCA), a division of the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services, sends a letter to everyone who agrees to Diversion. The letter includes instructions to make an appointment with one of SASCA's licensed clinical social workers, who will conduct a detailed assessment and drug screening. Any recommendations for substance and/or mental health education or treatment must be completed in order to be compliant with Diversion. Any costs associated with such recommendations are the responsibility of the juvenile's family.

For certain offenses, along with the SASCA screening, the youth and his parents meet with the Diversion Program Coordinator to determine which other programs the youth would be required to complete. These could include Teen Court, educational programs, or community service.

Offenses typically handled by the Diversion Program:

Possession of Alcohol

Furnishing Alcohol to Minors (hosting of a party included)

Possession of CDS (Controlled Dangerous Substance) – Marijuana and/or Paraphernalia

Theft under \$1000

Destruction of Property

Possession of a Weapon

False Statement to a Peace Officer

Possession of a False Identification

Disorderly Conduct

Trespass

Disturbing School Activities

For more information about the Diversion Program, please contact the Diversion Coordinator, Georgine DeBord, at 240-773-5408.