



DALLAS COUNTY JUVENILE DEPARTMENT

Henry Wade Juvenile Justice Center

2600 Lone Star Drive, Box 5 Dallas, Texas 75212

DALLAS COUNTY GUIDELINES FOR THE DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION TO THE NEWS MEDIA

I. Juvenile Department Records and Information

A. Public Information Liaison

1. The Agency maintains a 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM, Monday thru Friday, immediate response service for members of the news media (voice 214-698-2221 or 214-698-2223).
2. The Public Information Liaison will be designated by the Chief Probation Officer. Until otherwise notified, the Chief Probation Officer will be the Public Information Liaison. Notwithstanding, all open records requests under the Texas Public Information Act (PIA), Chapter 552 of the Texas Government Code, should be made on the County's GovQA Public Records Center, accessible on the Juvenile Department's web page, under the Public Information section.
3. News media inquiries should go to the Public Information Liaison. Staff are not prohibited from speaking with reporters about their specific jobs, experiences and the agency services with which they are directly familiar, but they should encourage reporters to start with the Public Information Liaison to ensure that the most knowledgeable sources provide information. No staff should represent their personal views as Agency positions, nor be interviewed at length without their supervisor's knowledge and approval.
4. The Public Information Liaison attempts to accommodate all reasonable requests for media access to Agency facilities, with access limited only by security, client confidentiality, and legal and scheduling concerns.

B. Staff Interviews

1. No staff member is required to talk with reporters and should feel free to politely decline, but must assure the reporter that the Public Information Liaison will provide information and arrange interviews and tours as approved.
2. Staff who intend to provide information to reporters must notify the Chief Probation Officer, the Public Information Liaison of the contact as soon as possible. Guidance for media interviews is available through the Public Information Liaison.

C. Access to information

1. All matters of public record, such as information about the Agency's operations, the juvenile justice system, juvenile law, and data on youth crime, etc., may be available on our website: <https://www.dallascounty.org/departments/juvenile/research-statistics.php>.
2. Some information is withheld from the news media and public, such as: case information about clients and their families (per Title 3, Texas Family Code), information protected by law in personnel matters and pending litigation, and information which might violate a person's right to privacy or threaten security.

II. Court Information – Subject to Court Approval

A. Availability – Information from the Juvenile Court. The following information will be made available for the limited purpose of tracking a case through the Court System:

1. Date, time and place of next Hearing

The information will be released only after the media person requesting the information agrees in writing to keep confidential the name of the juvenile unless or until the juvenile is certified to stand trial as an adult, or as otherwise authorized by the Court.

B. Detention Hearings – Generally, information about Detention Hearings will not be given to the media, and media coverage will not be allowed in Detention hearings.

C. The news media is encouraged to adopt a policy of non-publication of names of juvenile offenders, as the Court will not order general information on juvenile matters to be released to the media for dissemination to the public, except under the following conditions:

1. The juvenile has been certified to stand trial as an adult.
2. The information has been released by Court Order to be disseminated to the public because a Law Enforcement Agency requested media assistance in the apprehension of a juvenile offender who is at large and who poses a clear and present danger to public safety.
3. The juvenile's record is reviewed by the Court after the Court is satisfied, based upon a review of an affidavit, that there is probable cause to believe that the particular juvenile committed a crime of violence.
4. **After the file review by the Court**, the Court's file photograph and the juvenile's name will be released to the media with a request to disseminate the name and photograph if:
 - a. The Law Enforcement Agency requesting media assistance has, consistent with time and circumstances, made a reasonable effort and has been unable to locate the whereabouts of the suspect;
 - b. The juvenile's past record coupled with the allegations of the current offense and a consideration of the totality of the circumstances indicate that the juvenile is a clear and present danger to the public; and,
 - c. There is reason to believe that publication of the name and photograph would aid law enforcement in apprehending the suspect.



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NEWS MEDIA PRIVILEGE AGREEMENT

In accordance with the Texas Family Code and national standards, neither the Dallas County Juvenile Department nor the Juvenile Court permit public access to case records or to any information which might lead to public disclosure of the identity of children on probation or in custody. However, in the interest of public awareness and education, the Court may approve access to Media Representatives from established News Media Organizations. Such access is not a right but a privilege granted at the discretion of the Court and Department only after the Media Representative and the News Media Organization agree to withhold names, addresses, photographs, tapes or other information which might publicly identify a child.

Name of News Media Representative

Name of News Media Organization

In return for identifying information, I agree to keep the identity of a child confidential. I further agree not to publish the identity or photograph of a child nor make a public identification of a child without specific approval of the Juvenile Court.

For purposes of tracking a specific case through the Dallas County Juvenile Justice System, and conditioned upon the above confidentiality agreement, I request information on the child allegedly involved in the following offense

_____ which occurred on the _____ day of _____, 20____, at _____ AM/PM.

Signature of News Media Representative

Signature of Managing Editor or News Director

Date

Date

Court Authorization for Access to Juvenile Information

For purposes of tracking a specific case through the Dallas County Juvenile Justice System, the following information is hereby provided under the terms and conditions noted above:

When requesting further hearing information from the Court, please refer to the juvenile’s name (if you have obtained it) and/or cause number. The Department will not release the name of any juvenile. The Court Coordinator will provide docket setting information upon request. The Detention Hearing may not be covered by the media. Since these hearings are usually not open to the public (all other Court Hearings are open forums), the media representative will need to show "good cause" to attend the Detention Hearings in a specific case or for general purposes. Once you have completed the paperwork, for information (hearing dates and times) please call:

304th District Court: Ms. Temecca Williamson at 214-698-4936 or 305th District Court: Ms. Tracie Broadnax at 214-698-4924

Presiding Judge

Date

Please return **completed form in person** to the Deputy District Court Clerk at 2600 Lone Star Drive-Henry Wade Building, 3rd Floor **DURING BUSINESS HOURS 9 AM – 4 PM, M-F**. Questions concerning the Juvenile Department’s Media Policy may be directed to the Juvenile Department’s General Counsel, Ms. Denika Caruthers, at 214-698-2221.