

JUDGE ANDREA MARTIN

304TH JUVENILE DISTRICT COURT

HOW TO KEEP YOUR CHILD FROM COMING TO SEE ME—BACK TO SCHOOL EDITION

I am ANDREA MARTIN, the PRESIDING JUDGE of the 304th Juvenile District Court. The 304th District Court is one of two Juvenile District Courts in Dallas County that has jurisdiction over all cases involving youth who are accused of committing a crime.

A lot of youth end up in the Juvenile system because they do stupid things on impulse, because of a dare, because of their hurt pride, and because of peer pressure.

In most instances, youth hear from the “streets” that getting a juvenile charge won’t affect them. THIS IS INCORRECT! The truth is that a **juvenile criminal case can follow a youth for the rest of their life**. A juvenile criminal case can also sideline a youth’s college or military dreams and can also limit their future job opportunities.

Before I go any further, let me give you a little information on how the juvenile system works.

When a youth is accused of committing a crime, they will be arrested and taken to the Juvenile Detention Center at the Henry Wade Juvenile Court’s Building. They will remain in the detention center until their case is finalized

until a Judge releases them.

HERE IS NO BOND IN JUVENILE COURT!! RELEASE FROM DETENTION IS AT THE DISCRETION OF THE JUDGE

There are some offenses that a youth may commit without knowing that it is a criminal offense. These offenses include sexting, sharing pictures/videos of teens under 17 (usually a boyfriend or girlfriend), making bomb threats, threatening to shoot a school, vaping or using alcohol or drugs on school property, breaking/destroying school property, and fighting a teacher or school official. Also, a fight between youths at school can be crime if serious injuries result or if a weapon is used.

In some instances, a youth who engages in these behaviors can be charged with a FELONY OFFENSE WHICH COULD LEAD TO THEM BEING PLACED OUTSIDE OF THEIR HOME. **Youth need to know that the Juvenile Judges take these cases VERY seriously!!**

In the juvenile courts, youth can be subjected to a punishment of up to 40 years! **JUVENILE CASES ARE VERY SERIOUS!**

PLEASE DON'T DO ANY OF THE FOLLOWING:

1. Don't send each other nasty pictures of your privates because that is against the law.
2. If you get a nasty picture DO NOT SHARE IT!! IF YOU SHARE IT, WE CALL THAT PROMOTING/HAVING POSSESSION OF LEWD VISUAL MATERIAL DEPICTING A CHILD AND **YOU WILL BE PROSECUTED!**
3. If you decide to venture into the dark web to see porn, remember there are police and FBI who are on these sites waiting to catch you and prosecute you.

4. Be careful what you say! You may think it's cool to tell people off, but if you make threats, you can be charged with a TERRORISTIC THREAT. **YOU CAN NOT OPEN YOUR MOUTH AND THINK THERE WON'T BE CONSEQUENCES FOR WHAT COMES OUT!** You may think it's a joke but **if the person feels threatened, IT IS A CRIME.**
5. Don't post things on social media with you showing off guns or cash or anything else you should not have as a youth. Most of my cases come from things officers find on social media. There are local and federal police and task forces who have units that do nothing all day but search social media for criminal acts. **YOU WILL GET CAUGHT!**
6. Do not put yourself in a position where you could be charged with a sexual offense. WE PROSECUTE YOUNG MEN AND YOUNG WOMEN WHO ARE ACCUSED OF SEXUAL OFFENSES INCLUDING RAPE AND INDECENCY. If you are convicted, **YOU MAY BE REQUIRED TO REGISTER AS A SEX OFFENDER!** No means NO!

NOW LET ME SPEAK DIRECTLY TO PARENTS! PLEASE ACTIVELY PARENT YOUR KIDS SO THE JUDGES WON'T HAVE TO PARENT THEM IN COURT!

1. YOU pay the phone bill. THAT PHONE BELONGS TO YOU SO CHECK IT! Your child does not have a right to privacy in your home! Check who they are calling and texting. Check what social media they are on and what they are posting and viewing. **KNOW THEIR PASSWORDS!**
2. Check your child's backpack. Check their purse. Check their closets, their dresser drawers, under their bed, the bathroom cabinets, etc. DO NOT BELIEVE THAT YOUR CHILD WON'T BRING DRUGS/WEAPONS/STOLEN ITEMS INTO YOUR HOME!
3. Go to the school and check your child's locker and speak to their teachers regularly so you can know well in advance if your child is going down the wrong path!
4. KNOW WHO YOUR CHILD'S FRIENDS ARE AND WHO THEIR FRIEND'S PARENTS ARE! A lot of youth end up in Detention due to crimes committed with friends. When I ask parents who their child's friends are or where their child's friends live, MOST TIMES THEY HAVE NO IDEA!
5. KNOW WHERE YOUR CHILD IS! It does not make sense to me when parents don't know that their 12-year-old is out at 2am committing crimes!!
6. Use caution when you let your child travel with friends in their vehicles or when you let your child have friends in their vehicle. Texas is a "law of parties" state. What that means is if your child is stopped and guns/drugs are found in the car, EVERYONE IN THE CAR CATCHES A CASE!

Please take some time and talk to your child about all these things.

And, in the unfortunate case that your child ends up in trouble, please make sure they exercise their right to remain silent! **DO NOT SPEAK EXPECT TO SAY "I WANT MY LAWYER."**

JUVENILES IN TEXAS ARE **REQUIRED** TO HAVE A LAWYER REPRESENT THEM. A LAWYER WILL BE APPOINTED FOR THEM EVEN IF THEY CANNOT AFFORD ONE!

PLEASE DO NOT TALK YOURSELF INTO A CASE OR A CONVICTION!

If this information helped you and your family,

PLEASE SHARE IT with this QR code.

HAVE A GREAT YEAR!!

Judge Andrew Hester

