

FACT SHEET: May 2018

What is Court-annexed Peer Resolution?

Court-annexed Peer Resolution (PR) has been introduced to provide an alternative option for dealing with children who come into conflict with the law. It is a process through which Youth Volunteers (aged 13 - 17) assist the Children Court by recommending sanctions for children (under 18) who come before the Court on minor offences.

How does Court-annexed PR Work?

When a child admits to breaking the law, a Children Court Judge or Master may refer the child (or "Respondent") to Court-annexed PR. A Court-annexed PR Hearing will then be scheduled.

During the Hearing, a group of Youth Volunteers referred to as "Peer Assessors" question the Respondent to learn more about his or her interests, strengths and goals, and why he or she committed the offence.

The Peer Assessors listen to opening and closing statements prepared by three Peer Advocates - the Respondent Advocate, the Victim Advocate and the Community Advocate - who each speak on behalf of the Respondent, the victim(s) and/or the community affected by the offence.

After hearing all that everyone has said, the Peer Assessors will hold private discussions to review the details of the case in order to recommend sanctions that must help the Respondent take responsibility for the offence and repair the harm caused.

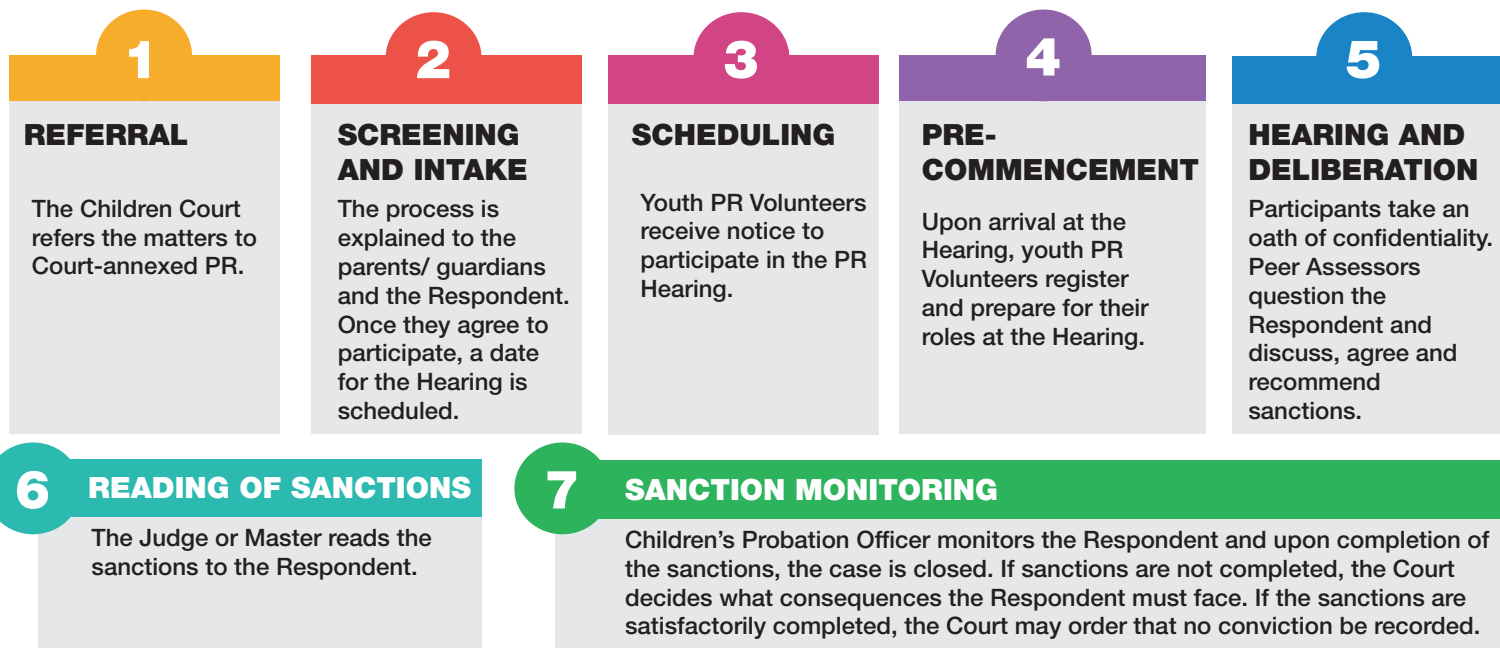
What are the Benefits of Court-annexed PR?

- **Builds accountability:** Children learn productive ways to take responsibility for their actions and repair the harm caused.
- **Offers second chances:** The Court may order that no conviction be recorded once sanctions are completed successfully.
- **Stands as an early intervention solution:** By learning to make better choices now, there is a stronger chance that children will not re-enter the criminal justice system as they grow older.
- **Offers new learnings:** Children learn about the rule of law, consequences of actions, and taking responsibility.
- **Builds youth empowerment:** Children are given a voice in the decision-making process.
- **Builds community connection:** On completing the sanctions, Respondents can give back to the community by getting involved in community programmes and other activities.

What Types of Matters can be Referred to Court-annexed PR?

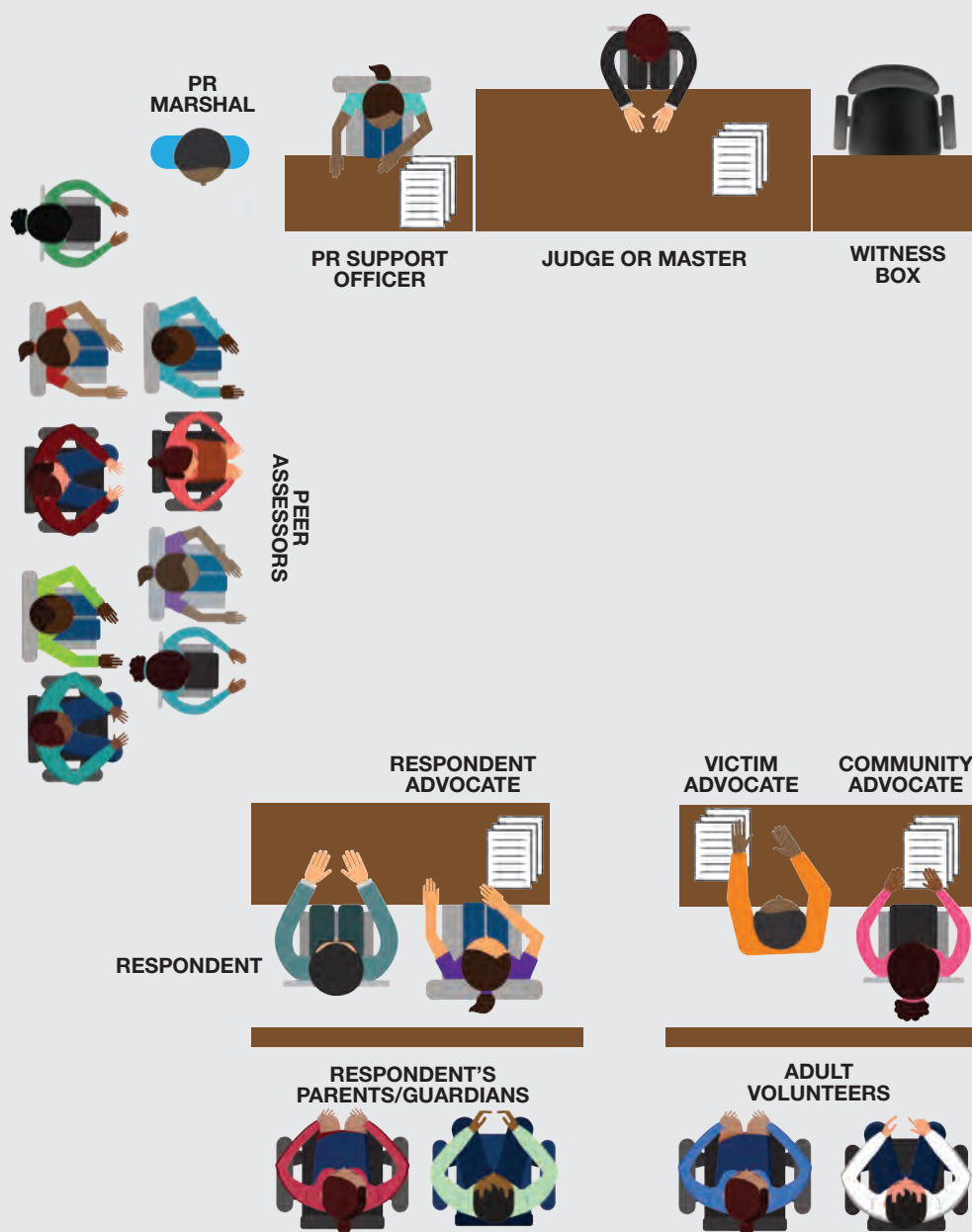
A Children Court Judge or Master decides whether a matter is fit to be referred to Court-annexed PR. However, as stated in the Family and Children Division Act No. 6 of 2016, offences which cannot be referred to Court-annexed PR include Murder, Manslaughter, Kidnapping, Sexual Offences, Unlawful Possession of a Firearm and Robbery.

7 Stages to Court-annexed PR



Roles and Responsibilities in Court-annexed Peer Resolution (PR)

(All Volunteers must undergo training before entering Court-annexed PR)



Adult Volunteers (persons 18 and over) provide guidance to Peer Assessors, explain the details of the sanctions to Respondents and provide support to Respondents while they carry out their sanctions.

YOUTH VOLUNTEER ROLES (Children aged 13-17)

PR Support Officer

Provides administrative support for the smooth running of PR Hearings, including reading the summary of the case, taking notes, collecting and gathering all the paperwork and recording all sanctions given.

PR Marshal

Organises the set-up of the Hearing Room, alerts participants when the Hearing is ready to begin, calls the Hearing to order, ensures that all participants are in their correct seats and assists the Judge or Master in maintaining order.

Peer Assessors

Analyse the facts of the PR case, ask the Respondent questions, discuss and recommend sanctions to the Judge or Master.

Respondent Advocate

Provides support to the Respondent and speaks on his or her behalf by presenting him or her in the best possible light through opening and closing statements.

Victim Advocate

Tells the Peer Assessors about the impact, if any, of the Respondent's action(s) on the victim(s) and the harm caused as a result.

Community Advocate

Serves the interest of the community and tells the Peer Assessors about the impact, if any, of the offence on the community.

For more information, please contact the Peer Resolution Centre Coordinating Unit:

- Children Court (North), 6 Elizabeth Street, St. Clair, Port of Spain
(868) 223-1060 ext 1583/1584 | ccprnorth@tlawcourts.org
- Children Court (South), Corner Delhi and Fyzabad Roads, Fyzabad
(868) 223-1060 ext 1318 | ccprsouth@tlawcourts.org
- Children Court (Tobago), 2nd Floor, Supreme Court Tobago, Bacolet Street, Scarborough, Tobago
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