



Superior Court of California
County of Mendocino
100 N. State St., Ukiah, CA 95482
www.mendocino.courts.ca.gov/

PRESS RELEASE

Contact: Kim Turner

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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**MENDOCINO COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT
ASSUMES RESPONSIBILITY FOR
HEARING JUVENILE INFRACTION CASES**

On February 1, 2026, the Court will begin processing juvenile traffic and non-traffic infractions. For many years, this work has been done by the Probation Department's Juvenile Division, but a change in law now requires that the Court take on this workload.

When juveniles are cited for infraction violations, they will receive a notice from the Court, scheduling them for a hearing in front of the Court's Presiding Juvenile Judge Carly Dolan. These hearings are mandatory and require a parent or legal guardian to accompany the minor. Both the adults and minors may appear remotely over Zoom and are not required to come to the courthouse for the hearing. These hearings are always confidential.

If the juvenile pleads guilty or no contest on traffic infractions, the Court intends make orders that help the juvenile improve their driving. The Court partners with the California Highway Patrol to refer juveniles to a traffic safety program called Start Smart taught by a CHP Officer. Minors may also attend traffic violator school to gain more knowledge about the rules of the road and safe driving practices. If the juvenile successfully completes traffic violator school, the violation will not appear on the juvenile's driving record.

If the infraction is for a non-traffic law violation, the Court will use its discretion to make orders that help juveniles make different choices about law violations in the future. This may involve community service work or other orders that the Court deems would help the juvenile understand the consequences of breaking the law.

The Court will offer alternatives to paying the fine associated with the violation if the parent or juvenile has a financial hardship. The goal of the juvenile infraction program is to raise the juvenile's awareness and accountability for their conduct, ultimately making them better drivers and citizens.

For more information contact:

Kim Turner
Court Executive Officer
100 N. State Street, Room 303
Ukiah, CA 95482
kim.turner@mendocino.courts.ca.gov

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