



Mediation of criminal cases and disputes involving children and young people



Children and young people can be parties to criminal offences and disputes. Persons under 15 years of age suspected of criminal offences are not subject to criminal liability, i.e. they cannot be convicted of a crime. However, they are liable for the damage they cause.

Various types of offences or disputes involving minors may be accepted for mediation. Pursuant to section 3 of the Act on Conciliation in Criminal and Certain Civil Cases, crimes involving underage victims must not be referred to conciliation if the victim needs special protection because of the nature of the crime or because of his/her age.

Mediation can be requested by

- a party to the offence or dispute
- a custodian or guardian
- the police, prosecutor, an educational institution, social services or another authority.

If you wish to submit a request for mediation, please contact your local mediation office. In domestic violence offences, only the police or the prosecutor may request mediation. Participation in mediation is voluntary and free of charge for the parties.

Mediation provides an opportunity to

- meet other parties in a safe environment
- discuss what has happened
- correct the damage caused by the incident
- improve relationships between people.

Progress of mediation

- The mediation office will contact the parties to determine whether mediation can be initiated. In addition to the minor's personal consent, the consent of the custodians or guardian is also needed.

- If mediation starts, mediators will be selected.
- The mediators will organise a joint meeting and, if necessary, one-on-one meetings.
- Custodians may attend meetings if this is in the interests of the minor. However, the custodian of a person under the age of 15 may not be refused participation.
- If the parties reach an agreement at the mediation meeting, a written agreement may be drawn up. The mediation office can monitor compliance with the agreement.

Mediation includes service guidance. Mediation does not necessarily lead to the end of criminal proceedings. If the offender is over 15 years old, the prosecutor will make a decision on how to proceed in cases subject to public prosecution.