



Chief District Court Judge's Chambers
Te Whare o Ngā Kaihautū Waka o Te Kōti-ā-rohe o Aotearoa

Final – March 2026

INTRODUCTION

This resource is a plain English quick reference guide to clarify some of the most common issues that regularly cause confusion between the Youth Court and media representatives. The contents are drawn from correspondence received by the Chief District Court Judge's Chambers, the existing media guidelines and the Media and Reporting Protocol in the Youth Court. It aims to help build a shared understanding and positive working relationship between the judiciary, court staff and the media. It applies specifically to the Youth Court.

RIGHT TO BE IN COURT

Media are defined as those being in court to report on proceedings and being subject to a code of ethics and an official complaints body. Individuals do not have to be on the Ministry's 'accredited media' list which is used to distribute media information electronically. They do have to be defined as media under legislation and as explained in the Media Guide.

Media are legally entitled and permitted to attend Youth Court proceedings, including in-chambers discussions and closed sessions.

Media do not have to apply to attend court unless they intend to film/record proceedings in which case they do have to fill out and submit a form.

It is good practice for media to identify themselves to court staff prior to attending Youth Court.

Equally it is good practice for judges to acknowledge/welcome their presence.

REPORTING OF PROCEEDINGS

Permission is required from the sitting judge prior to media publishing coverage of any proceedings in the Youth Court. This includes information arising from being present in court or from a decision published online.

The welfare and best interests of the child or young person is the primary consideration when judges are determining whether or not permission to publish is granted.

It is the responsibility of the media to ensure reporting observes any statutory prohibitions, suppressions or conditions.



TE AO MĀRAMA

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ACCESS TO COURT INFORMATION

- In general media have access to all court information where legislation allows. Judges make decisions where legislation does not allow, following applications made by media.
- Media in court (and those applying to the registry) should usually be given copies of Minutes, Suppression Orders, Judgments and Sentencing Notes unless a judge decides there are grounds for them to be withheld. It is good practice to supply a reasoning for any denied applications.
- Daily lists should be proactively emailed by registries to court reporters by gam each day.
- Media can be sent press sheets by email or supplied them in hard copy in the court.

ISSUES/ADVICE/COMPLAINTS

Questions around requests, coverage or behaviour can be raised through counsel, the relevant Head of Bench, the National Executive Judge or directly with the Principal Advisor at the Chief District Court Judges Chambers (who is also the secretariat for the District Court Media Committee). This applies to media and judges.

KEY CONTACTS

- National Executive Judge – judgejames.johnston@justice.govt.nz
- Te Whare Communications Manager – sarah.boyd@justice.govt.nz
- Te Whare Principal Advisor Media – steve.corbett@justice.govt.nz

KEY SOURCES

- [In-Court Media Coverage Guidelines 2016](#) (currently under review) – Courts of NZ website
- [Ministry of Justice Media guide](#) – Ministry of Justice website
- [District Court \(Access to Court Documents\) Rules](#) – NZ Legislation website.