

**PROVINCE OF ONTARIO
MINISTRY OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL**

CROWN POLICY MANUAL

March 21, 2005

YOUTH CRIMINAL JUSTICE ACT

PRINCIPLES

Prosecution of young persons aged 12 to 17 who commit criminal offences is governed by the Youth Criminal Justice Act (“YCJA”). The principles of the youth criminal justice system are set out in s. 3(1) of the YCJA as follows:

- Prevent crime by addressing the circumstances underlying a young person’s offending behaviour
- Rehabilitate young persons who commit offences and reintegrate them into society, and
- Ensure that a young person is subject to meaningful consequences for his or her offence

in order to promote the long-term protection of the public.

To further these goals, the YCJA sets out a distinct, separate criminal justice system for young persons, including the use of extrajudicial sanctions in appropriate cases. “Extrajudicial sanctions” is a term used in the YCJA. It consists of a program of alternative measures, including youth justice committees. These alternatives to the formal justice system are designed to provide an effective and timely response in holding young persons accountable for their offending behaviour. Any program of alternative measures authorized for the purposes of the YOA, including youth justice committees, is deemed to be a program of extrajudicial sanctions under the YCJA.

Prosecutors must ensure that all dealings with youth cases conform with the principles and legal requirements of the youth justice system as set out in the YCJA.