

YOU CAN TALK TO A
LAWYER FOR FREE AT
TASMANIA LEGAL AID

To get free legal information call **1300 366 611** or use the Legal Talk chat from the bottom right-hand corner of our website. Legal Talk and our phone lines are available Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm.

A lawyer can listen to your story and help identify the next steps you can take.

? Do I have to go to school?

All Tasmanian students have to participate in education and training until they complete Year 12, attain a Certificate III, or turn 18 years of age (whichever comes first). If you have finished Year 10 you can get an apprenticeship or traineeship under a training contract as one of the education and training participation options. If you haven't met the school leaving requirements you cannot work for an employer during education and training hours unless an '[Application for Part-time Attendance](#)' or '[Application for Exemption from Attending School](#)' is completed and approved in advance.

? Am I allowed to have a job?

You can get a job and work outside of your school or training hours. Generally there is no minimum age to start casual or part-time work in Tasmania but there are age restrictions for certain types of work. For example, you must be 18 years of age to work behind a bar.

? What about drinking and smoking?

You must be 18 years of age to drink alcohol on licensed premises. In some circumstances it may be legal to consume alcohol in a responsible manner on private property under the supervision of a responsible guardian. For more details please see the Tasmania Police website's [Youth and Alcohol Fact sheet](#). You must also be 18 years of age to smoke or use any tobacco product or purchase alcohol or any tobacco product.



? What about sex?

It is a crime for anyone to have sex with you if you are under the age of 17 years. It is a defence if the person believed on reasonable grounds that you were over 17 years of age. Your consent to sex will be a defence if you were 15 or older and the other person was not more than 5 years older than you, or you were 12 or older and the other person was not more than 3 years older than you were. See the fact sheet on [age of consent for sex](#) for further information.

? What about tattoos and body piercings?

You need to be 18 to get a tattoo and provide ID if requested. If you are 16 or older, you can have a body piercing such as ears, eyebrows or belly button without a guardian present. See the fact sheet on [tattoos, piercing and body modifications](#) for further information.

? When can I drive a car or ride a motorbike?

You are not allowed to drive a motor vehicle or ride a motor bike on a public street (including footpaths, or public spaces open to the public such as car parks or parks) without a licence. You must be 16 years of age before you can get a learner's licence. As a learner, once you have passed a driving test you may be granted a provisional licence.

? Can my parents make rules?

Your parents are entitled to lay down the ground rules in their home. If you and your parents are having hassles over the rules, you can try to sort them out through family mediation. If your parents are separated or divorced, you might be caught in the middle. Your wishes in these situations are important and will be taken into account if the matter ever goes to court. There are laws that protect you from being physically, sexually or

emotionally abused, and also from being neglected by family members or other people. If you are being abused, tell someone - contact one of the agencies listed below or tell a teacher or guidance officer at school.

- **Kidshelpline** call 1800 551 800
- **Strong Families Safe Kids Advice and Referral Line** call 1800 000 123
- **Family Violence Counselling Support Service** on 1800 608 122 (if you do not wish to report the matter to police first) for advice, support and counselling.

? Can the Police arrest me?

If a police officer has reasonable grounds to suspect that you may have committed an offence and intends to interview you or ask you any investigatory questions, this should be done in the presence of your parent or guardian or another responsible adult. An exception to this is if you are 17 years old and the offences the police have reasonable cause to suspect you have committed are in connection with traffic laws.

If you are charged with an offence, you will usually be summoned to Court. This means being given or sent a notice with the address, date and time of Court.

A police officer may arrest you instead of giving or sending you a summons if he or she believes the offence is serious enough and if the arrest:

- is necessary to prevent you from continuing or repeating the offence
- makes it easier to get a restraint order against you
- prevents the concealing, loss or destroying of evidence relating to the offence, and
- is to ensure that you will appear before the Court, if it is unlikely you will appear if given a summons.

For more information see the fact sheet: [Dealing with Police](#).

? What about going to Court?

If you are a young person and you need to go to court you should read our fact sheet [Young People and the Youth Justice Court](#). This gives more information about the Court process. Also refer to [Going to the Magistrates Court](#) and if you are going to the Hobart Magistrates Court see [Hobart Volunteer Court Support Scheme](#).

As a young person there are some other options to avoid going to court that you should consider. Please read our fact sheet on [Alternatives to Court for Young People](#).

? Why am I being called a 'child'?

If you are under 18 years of age the law will call you a "child". The following terms may also be used to describe anyone under the age of 18: a minor, a youth or a young person.