

Article 22.

Probable Cause Hearing and Transfer Hearing.

§ 7B-2200. Transfer of jurisdiction of a juvenile under the age of 16 to superior court.

(a) Discretionary Transfer. – Except as otherwise provided in G.S. 7B-2200.5, after notice, hearing, and a finding of probable cause the court may, upon motion of the prosecutor or the juvenile's attorney or upon its own motion, transfer jurisdiction over a juvenile to superior court if the juvenile was at least 13 years of age but less than 16 years of age at the time the juvenile allegedly committed an offense that would be a felony, other than a Class A felony, if committed by an adult.

(b) Mandatory Transfer. – The court shall transfer the case to superior court for trial as in the case of adults if the felony the juvenile allegedly committed constitutes a Class A felony and (i) the court finds probable cause or (ii) upon notice of the return of a true bill of indictment as provided in G.S. 7B-2202.5.

(c) Remand to District Court. – In any case where jurisdiction over a juvenile has been transferred to superior court, upon joint motion of the prosecutor and the juvenile's attorney, the superior court shall remand the case to district court. The prosecutor shall provide the chief court counselor or his or her designee with a copy of the joint motion prior to submitting the motion to the court. The superior court shall expunge the superior court record in accordance with G.S. 15A-145.8 at the time of remand and, if the juvenile meets the criteria established in G.S. 7B-1903, may issue an order for secure custody upon the request of a prosecutor. The prosecutor shall provide a copy of any issued secure custody order to the chief court counselor or his or her designee, as soon as possible and no more than 24 hours after the order is issued. (1979, c. 815, s. 1; 1991 (Reg. Sess., 1992), c. 842, s. 1; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 22, s. 25; 1998-202, s. 6; 2017-57, s. 16D.4(d); 2018-142, s. 23(b); 2023-114, s. 1(b); 2024-17, s. 2(c).)

§ 7B-2200.1: Reserved for future codification purposes.

§ 7B-2200.2: Reserved for future codification purposes.

§ 7B-2200.3: Reserved for future codification purposes.

§ 7B-2200.4: Reserved for future codification purposes.

§ 7B-2200.5. Transfer of jurisdiction of a juvenile at least 16 years of age to superior court.

(a) If a juvenile was 16 years of age or older at the time the juvenile allegedly committed an offense that would be a Class F or G felony if committed by an adult, the court shall transfer jurisdiction over the juvenile to superior court for trial as in the case of adults unless the prosecutor declines to prosecute in superior court as provided in subsection (a1) of this section after either of the following:

- (1) Notice to the juvenile of the return of a true bill of indictment as provided in G.S. 7B-2202.5.
- (2) Notice, hearing, and a finding of probable cause that the juvenile committed an offense that constitutes a Class F or G felony if committed by an adult.

(a1) The prosecutor may decline to prosecute in superior court a matter that would otherwise be subject to mandatory transfer pursuant to subsection (a) of this section if the juvenile has allegedly committed an offense that would be a Class F or G felony if committed by an adult. If the

prosecutor declines to prosecute the matter in superior court, jurisdiction over the juvenile shall remain in juvenile court following a finding of probable cause pursuant to G.S. 7B-2202. Prior to adjudication, the prosecutor may choose to transfer the matter pursuant to subsection (a) of this section if the juvenile has allegedly committed an offense that would be a Class F or G felony if committed by an adult.

(b) If the juvenile was 16 years of age or older at the time the juvenile allegedly committed an offense that would be a Class H or I felony if committed by an adult, after notice, hearing, and a finding of probable cause, the court may, upon motion of the prosecutor or the juvenile's attorney or upon its own motion, transfer jurisdiction over a juvenile to superior court pursuant to G.S. 7B-2203.

(c) Repealed by Session Laws 2024-17, s. 2(d), effective December 1, 2024, and applicable to offenses committed on or after that date.

(d) In any case where jurisdiction over a juvenile has been transferred to superior court, upon joint motion of the prosecutor and the juvenile's attorney, the superior court shall remand the case to district court. The prosecutor shall provide the chief court counselor or his or her designee with a copy of the joint motion prior to submitting the motion to the court. The superior court shall expunge the superior court record in accordance with G.S. 15A-145.8 at the time of remand, and, if the juvenile meets the criteria established in G.S. 7B-1903, may issue an order for secure custody upon the request of a prosecutor. The prosecutor shall provide a copy of any secure custody order issued to the chief court counselor or his or her designee, as soon as possible and no more than 24 hours after the order is issued. (2017-57, s. 16D.4(e); 2017-197, s. 5.3; 2018-142, s. 23(b); 2019-186, s. 8(a); 2021-123, ss. 3(d), 4; 2023-114, s. 1(a); 2024-17, s. 2(d).)

§ 7B-2201. Fingerprinting and DNA sample from juvenile transferred to superior court.

(a) When jurisdiction over a juvenile is transferred to the superior court, the juvenile shall be fingerprinted and the juvenile's fingerprints shall be sent to the State Bureau of Investigation.

(b) When jurisdiction over a juvenile is transferred to the superior court, a DNA sample shall be taken from the juvenile if any of the offenses for which the juvenile is transferred are included in the provisions of G.S. 15A-266.3A. (1981, c. 862, s. 2; 1998-202, s. 6; 2010-94, s. 13.)

§ 7B-2202. Probable cause hearing.

(a) Except as otherwise provided in G.S. 7B-2200 and G.S. 7B-2200.5 and in matters that have been removed from superior court pursuant to G.S. 15A-960, the prosecutor shall calendar the date of the probable cause hearing and the court shall provide notice and conduct a hearing to determine probable cause in all felony cases in which a juvenile was 13 years of age or older when the offense was allegedly committed. Except as otherwise provided in this section, the hearing shall be conducted within 15 days of the date of the juvenile's first appearance. The court may continue the hearing for good cause.

(b) At the probable cause hearing:

- (1) A prosecutor shall represent the State;
- (2) The juvenile shall be represented by counsel;
- (3) The juvenile may testify, call, and examine witnesses, and present evidence; and
- (4) Each witness shall testify under oath or affirmation and be subject to cross-examination.

(b1) A probable cause hearing conducted in any case in which a juvenile was 13, 14, or 15 years of age at the time the juvenile allegedly committed an offense that would be a Class A felony if committed by an adult or in any case in which a juvenile was 16 or 17 years of age at the time the juvenile allegedly committed an offense that would be a Class F or G felony if committed by an adult shall be conducted within 90 days of the date of the juvenile's first appearance. The court may continue the hearing for good cause.

(c) The State shall by nonhearsay evidence, or by evidence that satisfies an exception to the hearsay rule, show that there is probable cause to believe that the offense charged has been committed and that there is probable cause to believe that the juvenile committed it, except:

- (1) A report or copy of a report made by a physicist, chemist, firearms identification expert, fingerprint technician, or an expert or technician in some other scientific, professional, or medical field, concerning the results of an examination, comparison, or test performed in connection with the case in issue, when stated in a report by that person, is admissible in evidence;
- (2) If there is no serious contest, reliable hearsay is admissible to prove value, ownership of property, possession of property in a person other than the juvenile, lack of consent of the owner, possessor, or custodian of property to the breaking or entering of premises, chain of custody, and authenticity of signatures.

(d) Counsel for the juvenile may waive in writing the right to the hearing and stipulate to a finding of probable cause.

(e) If probable cause is found and transfer to superior court is not required by G.S. 7B-2200 or G.S. 7B-2200.5, upon motion of the prosecutor or the juvenile's attorney or upon its own motion, the court shall either proceed to a transfer hearing or set a date for that hearing. If the juvenile has not received notice of the intention to seek transfer at least five days prior to the probable cause hearing, the court, at the request of the juvenile, shall continue the transfer hearing.

(f) If the court does not find probable cause for a felony offense, the court shall:

- (1) Dismiss the proceeding, or
- (2) If the court finds probable cause to believe that the juvenile committed a lesser included offense that would constitute a misdemeanor if committed by an adult, either proceed to an adjudicatory hearing or set a date for that hearing. The adjudicatory hearing shall be a separate hearing. The court may continue the adjudicatory hearing for good cause. (1979, c. 815, s. 1; 1981, c. 469, ss. 15, 16; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 22, s. 26; 1998-202, s. 6; 2015-58, s. 1.2; 2017-57, s. 16D.4(f); 2018-142, s. 23(b); 2019-186, s. 8(b); 2023-114, s. 1(c); 2024-17, s. 2(e).)

§ 7B-2202.5. Indictment return appearance.

(a) The prosecutor must immediately notify the court if a true bill of indictment is returned for an offense (i) that constitutes a Class A felony if committed by an adult that was allegedly committed when the juvenile was at least 13 years of age but less than 16 years of age or (ii) that constitutes a Class F or G felony if committed by an adult that was allegedly committed when the juvenile was at least 16 years of age but less than 18 years of age.

(b) The court shall calendar the matter for an appearance within five business days of the date the true bill of indictment was returned. At the appearance, the court shall determine only if notice of a true bill of indictment charging the commission of an offense identified in subsection (a)

of this section was provided in accordance with G.S. 15A-630. If the court finds that such notice was provided, the court shall (i) transfer jurisdiction over the juvenile to superior court for trial as in the case of adults and (ii) determine conditions of pretrial release, as required by G.S. 7B-2204. (2024-17, s. 2(f).)

§ 7B-2203. Transfer hearing.

(a) At the transfer hearing, the prosecutor and the juvenile may be heard and may offer evidence, and the juvenile's attorney may examine any court or probation records, or other records the court may consider in determining whether to transfer the case.

(b) In the transfer hearing, the court shall determine whether the protection of the public and the needs of the juvenile will be served by transfer of the case to superior court and shall consider the following factors:

- (1) The age of the juvenile;
- (2) The maturity of the juvenile;
- (3) The intellectual functioning of the juvenile;
- (4) The prior record of the juvenile;
- (5) Prior attempts to rehabilitate the juvenile;
- (6) Facilities or programs available to the court prior to the expiration of the court's jurisdiction under this Subchapter and the likelihood that the juvenile would benefit from treatment or rehabilitative efforts;
- (7) Whether the alleged offense was committed in an aggressive, violent, premeditated, or willful manner; and
- (8) The seriousness of the offense and whether the protection of the public requires that the juvenile be prosecuted as an adult.

(c) Any order of transfer shall specify the reasons for transfer. When the case is transferred to superior court, the superior court has jurisdiction over that felony, any offense based on the same act or transaction or on a series of acts or transactions connected together or constituting parts of a single scheme or plan of that felony, and any greater or lesser included offense of that felony.

(d) If the court does not transfer the case to superior court, the court shall either proceed to an adjudicatory hearing or set a date for that hearing. The adjudicatory hearing shall be a separate hearing. The court may continue the adjudicatory hearing for good cause. (1979, c. 815, s. 1; 1983, c. 532, s. 1; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 22, s. 27; 1998-202, s. 6; 2015-58, s. 1.3.)

§ 7B-2204. Right to pretrial release; detention.

(a) Once the order of transfer has been entered, the juvenile has the right to pretrial release as provided in G.S. 15A-533 and G.S. 15A-534. The release order shall specify the person or persons to whom the juvenile may be released. Pending release, the court shall order that the juvenile be detained in a detention facility while awaiting trial. Personnel of the Division of Juvenile Justice of the Department of Public Safety, or personnel approved by the Division, shall transport the juvenile from the detention facility to court.

(b) The court may order the juvenile to be held in a holdover facility at any time the presence of the juvenile is required in court for pretrial hearings or trial, if the court finds that it would be inconvenient to return the juvenile to the detention facility. Personnel of the Division, or personnel approved by the Division, shall transport the juvenile from the holdover facility to court and shall transport the juvenile back to the detention center.

(c) If the juvenile reaches the age of 18 years while awaiting the completion of proceedings in superior court, the juvenile shall be transported by personnel of the Division, or personnel approved by the Division, to the custody of the sheriff of the county where the charges arose.

(d) Should the juvenile be found guilty, or enter a plea of guilty or no contest to a criminal offense in superior court and receive an active sentence, then immediate transfer to the Division of Prisons of the Department of Adult Correction shall be ordered. Until such time as the juvenile is transferred to the Division of Prisons of the Department of Adult Correction, the juvenile may be detained in a holdover facility or detention facility approved by the Section.

or approved by the Division of Juvenile Justice of the Department of Public Safety.

(e) The juvenile may be kept by the Division of Prisons of the Department of Adult Correction as a safekeeper until the juvenile is placed in an appropriate correctional program. (1979, c. 815, s. 1; 1987, c. 144; 1991, c. 352, s. 1; 1998-202, s. 6; 2011-145, s. 19.1(h); 2017-186, s. 2(k); 2019-186, s. 9; 2021-123, s. 2; 2021-180, s. 19C.9(ff); 2023-114, s. 4(e).)