

**§ 7B-1703. Evaluation decision.**

(a) The juvenile court counselor shall complete evaluation of a complaint within 15 days of receipt of the complaint, with an extension for a maximum of 15 additional days at the discretion of the chief court counselor. The juvenile court counselor shall decide within this time period whether a complaint shall be filed as a juvenile petition, handled as a juvenile consultation for a vulnerable juvenile, or handled in some other manner authorized by this Article.

(b) Except as provided in G.S. 7B-1706, if the juvenile court counselor determines that a complaint should be filed as a petition, the counselor shall file the petition as soon as practicable, but in any event within 15 days after the complaint is received, with an extension for a maximum of 15 additional days at the discretion of the chief court counselor. The juvenile court counselor shall assist the complainant when necessary with the preparation and filing of the petition, shall include on it the date and the words "Approved for Filing", shall sign it, and shall transmit it to the clerk of superior court.

(c) If the juvenile court counselor determines that a petition should not be filed or the complaint handled as a juvenile consultation, the juvenile court counselor shall notify the complainant and the victim, if the complainant is not the victim, immediately in writing with specific reasons for the decision, whether or not legal sufficiency was found, and whether the matter was closed or diverted and retained, and shall include notice of the complainant's and victim's right to have the decision reviewed by the prosecutor. The juvenile court counselor shall sign the complaint after indicating on it:

- (1) The date of the determination;
- (2) The words "Not Approved for Filing"; and
- (3) Whether the matter is "Closed" or "Diverted and Retained".

Except as provided in G.S. 7B-1706, any complaint not approved for filing as a juvenile petition or handled as a juvenile consultation shall be destroyed by the juvenile court counselor after holding the complaint for a temporary period to allow review as provided in G.S. 7B-1705.

(d) If the juvenile court counselor determines that a complaint should be handled as a juvenile consultation, the juvenile court counselor shall obtain referral information. (1979, c. 815, s. 1; 1998-202, s. 6; 2001-490, s. 2.6; 2017-57, s. 16D.4(t); 2018-142, s. 23(b); 2021-123, s. 5(c).)