



Truancy

One of the most important things families can do to help children succeed is to make sure they attend school regularly. In Minnesota, students must attend school until age 16. Teens ages 16 and 17 may withdraw from school only if their parents give written permission following a meeting with school personnel.

Students are considered truant when they miss school or class without a valid excuse. Truancy is defined as 7 days of unexcused absences.

EXCUSED ABSENCES

Usually students can miss class for reasons such as:

- illness
- death of a family member
- doctor appointments
- religious holidays

When your child is absent with a valid excuse, contact the school attendance clerk the day of the absence. When your child returns to school make sure you give the school a written note explaining the absence.

UNEXCUSED ABSENCES

Some examples of unexcused absences include:

- staying home to take care of siblings
- missing the school bus
- making doctor appointments that could have been scheduled after regular school hours
- refusing to go to school
- skipping school for the day or for a class period
- working at a job.

STRATEGIES TO ENCOURAGE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

- Insist that your teenager or child goes to school every day
- Talk to your child about school. Ask how you can help
- Discuss your concerns with your child's teachers. Ask for referrals if necessary
- Ask the school to contact you immediately if your child is absent without a valid excuse
- Periodically check in with your child's teachers to find out how things are going for your child.
- Get to know your child's friends and their families

Truancy can have strong negative effects on students' lives. It can block future opportunities and is associated with drug use, daytime crime, and violence.

Do you have more questions about truancy? Call the Minnesota Parent Center at 952-838-9000, or 1-800-537-2237.

For more information on parenting call INFO-U at 612-624-2200 and request a catalog of available topics.

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