

***A Message from Blue Earth County
Attorney Patrick R. McDermott:***

We all want our children to have the best education they can get to become successful, productive adults. Regular attendance at school is the best way to ensure that goal. That is why school attendance is mandatory in the state of Minnesota. Studies have shown that children who are truant from school are more likely to engage in delinquent or criminal activity, and abuse alcohol or other drugs. We need to address this problem actively to prevent today's truant from becoming tomorrow's delinquent or chemically dependent.

The Truancy Intervention Program helps parents to become actively involved to ensure their children regularly attend school. This process has proven to be effective, as long as everyone follows through on their obligations. If truancy continues, the matter will be petitioned into Juvenile Court to step up the level and intensity of intervention.

The Truancy Intervention Program is focused on increasing attendance, getting truants in school, and keeping them out of Juvenile Court. This benefits our community and most importantly, our children.

Patrick R. McDermott

Factors Contributing to Truancy

A number of issues can play a role in students' attendance. The Truancy Intervention Program tries to address these concerns.

- Chemical use
- Transportation
- Parental involvement
- Mental health
- Bullying
- School relationships
- Language barriers
- Physical health
- Family isolation
- Peer influence
- Learning disabilities
- Teen pregnancy
- Parent school history
- Cultural barriers

Contact Us

**Please send referrals to:
attorney.truancy@blueearthcountymn.gov**

If you have any questions or concerns, please
contact the Blue Earth County Attorney's
Office:
507-304-4600.

Office of Blue Earth County Attorney
Patrick R. McDermott
County Attorney

TRUANCY INTERVENTION PROGRAM



**Office of
Blue Earth County Attorney**

Patrick R. McDermott
Blue Earth County Attorney
P.O. Box 3129 • 401 Carver Road
Mankato, Minnesota 56002-3129
507-304-4600

<http://www.blueearthcountymn.gov/countyattorney>

What Is a Truant?

A child is considered a “habitual truant” if she or he is under the age of 17 years and is absent from attendance at school without lawful excuse for seven school days or for one or more class period on seven school days.

Children age 17 will be considered truant if they have not lawfully withdrawn from school with their parents’ permission. *[MN Statutes 260C.007, Subd.19.]*

A parent or guardian may seek an excused absence from school for his/her child. A school has the right to accept or deny an application for an excused absence.

Acceptable excused absences include:

- Sickness
- Doctor’s visit
- Religious holiday
- Extreme family emergency

Unacceptable absences include:

- Babysitting
- Work or rest because of work
- Travel (unless pre-approved by school)
- Needed at home
- Cold weather
- Missed bus
- Child not immunized

Truancy Intervention Program

The Truancy Intervention Program (TIP) is a three-step process designed to improve a student’s attendance. By intervening early, the program can make a lasting impact on a student’s academic success as well as their future.

Step One:

An Assistant County Attorney meets with the parents/guardians of the child with attendance issues. The attorney will discuss why parents/guardians should send the child to school, the necessity of education, and the legal consequences if attendance does not improve.

Step Two:

The school will monitor attendance of students in the program. If attendance is still an issue, the student and parents are invited to participate in a Student Attendance Review Team (SART) hearing. The team will create a contract addressing the causes of the child’s attendance problems and possible solutions.

Step Three:

If school attendance does not improve after the implementation of the SART contract, the County Attorney will take legal action against the student, parents/guardians, or both.

Legal Consequences if Truancy Is Not Resolved by the TIP Process

- Parents of truant students can be fined.
- Court could require the parents to deliver their child to school every morning.
- Students can be fined up to \$100.
- Students can lose their driving privileges.
- A student can be placed under supervision.
- A student can be removed from his/her home and placed in a foster home, group home, or shelter.
- A student can be placed under court-ordered house arrest.
- A student could be placed on GPS monitoring.
- A student can be court-ordered to complete community work service.
- A student can be court-ordered to participate in other programs.
- A student’s electronic devices, including cell phones and video games, can be removed.

As a parent/guardian, it is your responsibility to make sure that your child attends school daily. Regular attendance improves academic success and graduation rates. It is essential that you are involved in the intervention program for the long-term academic success of your child. Collaboration with the school and county is key to solving a student’s attendance issues.

Education is the foundation for a successful future. In Minnesota, the law requires students to attend their classes and school daily. School attendance is essential for academic success. We encourage you to attend school regularly and take pride in your school.