EDUCATIONAL NEGLECT

FACT SHEET FOR PARENTS

Minnesota has compulsory education laws. This means any child under the age of 16 is *required by law to attend school*. Children ages 16 and 17 must attend unless they have been signed out by a parent. Wabasha County takes these laws seriously*.* Social Services, your home school district, and the County Attorney’s Office will take action to enforce them.

# What is Educational Neglect?

If a child under age 12 has seven (7) or more unexcused full day absences, this is considered educational neglect by the parent. In Minnesota, it is the *responsibility of the parent* to make sure their young child attends school regularly. The school is mandated to make a child protection report to County Social Services in cases of educational neglect.

**What is an unexcused absence?**

* The school absence and attendance policy, not the parent, determines if an absence is excused or unexcused
* A parent simply “calling in” does not necessarily mean the absence will be excused

**What happens if my child ends up with seven (7) unexcused absences?**

* The school will report the situation to County Social Services
* The report will be accepted for a Child Protection Family Assessment
* You will need to work with a County Child Protection Social Worker to find out the cause of your child’s attendance problems and correct them
* If the situation is not corrected, you may end up in court with a CHIPS (Child in need of Protection or Services) petition and the court will have jurisdiction over some aspects of your family’s life.

**What could a child protection plan or the court require that I do?**

* Therapy/Counseling for the parent, the child, or the whole family
* Parenting Classes or other Parent Education
* Chemical Dependency evaluation/treatment for the parent
* Psychological or Psychiatric evaluation/treatment for the parent (or child)
* Order the parent to attend school with the child
* Placement of the child in a foster home or other facility

**How do I avoid having an open child protection case?**

* Attend the meeting arranged by your school
* Be honest with the county social worker and school officials about why school attendance has been a problem
* Be creative and help come up with a plan to prevent further unexcused absences
* Follow the plan that is devised at the meeting
* Do not call to excuse your child if she/he really is not sick
* Emphasize to your child that school is important and you want them to attend

## Prepared by Wabasha County Social Services

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