**Wabasha County Social Services**

**Policy Manual**

**Code: 3.216**

**Policy Statement**

**TITLE:** Truancy and Educational Neglect Prevention

**PURPOSE:** to establish an interagency coordinated approach to preventing Truancy Petitions or Educational Neglect Reports.

**REFERENCE:** MS 260C.007; 260C.163; 260C.201 subd1; 626.556, subd 2; 120A.22 Sub 5&6

**PERSONNEL RESPONSIBLE:** Children’s Services Social Workers; School Social Workers or other designated Truancy Personnel

**EFFECTIVE:** 1998

**REVISED:** 5/29/12

***TRUANCY (Students ages 12 and over)***

In an effort to most effectively intervene in truancy situations, the following procedures have been adopted by Wabasha County Social Services (WCSS). They are based on the premise that early intervention and coordinated efforts between schools, parents, Social Services, and the County Attorney’s office will result in the least number of students requiring a truancy petition and court involvement.

**Step 1** When a student has had four unexcused full- or partial-day absences, the school will send a letter and the Truancy Fact Sheet (Form A) to the parents with a copy to WCSS. The school principal or designated representative should follow-up by having a conversation with the parent regarding the student’s absences.

**Step 2** Upon receipt of the school’s letter, WCSS will send a letter to the child (Form B) and to the parents (Form C). Both letters will include a memorandum from the Wabasha County Attorney’s Office (Form D). Copies of these letters will be sent to the school for their records.

# Step 3 Should truancy continue, at the sixth unexcused absence, the school should contact the designated worker at WCSS to set up a time for a pre-petition meeting. The school will then notify both the parents and the child of the meeting time and location.

## Step 4 The designated Social Worker from WCSS will attend the pre-petition meeting. The purpose of the meeting is to give all parties an opportunity to express their view of the truancy problem, brainstorm possible solutions to resolve the problem, offer services, and attempt to avoid a court petition. The Truancy Fact Sheet will be reviewed at the meeting.

**Step 5** Should truancy continue after the meeting, a truancy petition (Form E) will be filed directly by the school. Attached to the petition should be copies of all the above letters that have been sent to parents along with the most recent attendance record indicating all excused and unexcused absences.

## *EDUCATIONAL NEGLECT ( Students ages 7-11, or younger if enrolled)*

For children ages 7-11 (or any child age 5-6 who is enrolled in school) seven, unexcused, *full day* absences qualifies as an educational neglect child protection report. The school representative should call WCSS Intake at 651-565-3351. The report must include the student’s name, DOB, grade, parents’ names, address and phone, number of absences, and what efforts have been taken to work with the parents to correct the situation. The Educational Neglect Fact Sheet (Form F) should have already been sent or given to parents by this time.

A Family Assessment Social Worker will be assigned to the case. The school will likely be an important partner in resolving the attendance issues and the school personnel may be contacted to assist in various ways.

***ABSENCE POLICIES***

Please note that it is *up to each school district* to determine their own policy for excused and unexcused absences. Minnesota Statutes regarding truancy and educational neglect only take effect after the occurrence of 7 unexcused absences. Social Services can serve as resource for help with families who have excessive absences, however if the school continues to count the absences as excused, the situation *will not* qualify for educational neglect or pre-petition interventions.