

You(th) Have Rights

understanding truancy

Why do I have to go to school?

The law says that children and youth ages 7 to 17 must receive an education. Education can happen in a public school, private school, or home school.

Can I ever miss school?

Yes, if you have a valid reason, your absence can be excused.

What if I have a good reason to miss school?

Be sure to tell the school why you are absent. They have to help, but they need to know what the problem is.



What is a valid excuse?

Schools have their own attendance policies, but generally:

Absences may be excused for:

- Sickness
- Doctor appointment
- Family emergency
- Death or serious illness of a family member
- Religious reasons

Absences won't be excused for:

- Babysitting
- Work
- Long vacations
- Language barriers
- Missing the bus
- Cold weather

Get Help: 612.825.0000

www.tubman.org

Give Help: 612.825.3333

ABOUT TUBMAN: Safety. Hope. Healing. Each year, Tubman helps nearly 25,000 people of all ages, genders, and cultural backgrounds who are facing relationship violence, sexual assault, exploitation, homelessness, addiction, mental health challenges or other forms of trauma. We provide safe shelter, legal services, mental and chemical health counseling, youth programs and community education.

Truancy



What is truancy?

When you are 12 or older, you are considered truant if you miss 3 or more days of school or 3 class periods in one year without a valid excuse. Youth are responsible for their own attendance.

For students under age 12, parents/guardians are responsible for the child's school attendance.

What happens if I miss too many days of school without a valid excuse?

The court will notify your parent/guardian that you missed school. The school should work with you and your family to address the barriers to you going to school regularly.

Each county is different, but with additional absences, the school must make a report to the county. The first report usually results in an information meeting about the importance of attendance. Additional reports may be to an attendance review team and to Child Protection Services.

The county attorney will review the information and decide next steps, which may include:

- Getting a community agency to work with the family.
- A child protection investigation for students under age 12.
- A truancy hearing in juvenile court for students 12 and older.

The school can disenroll students who have missed 15 or more days of school in a row.

If I go to court for missing school, can I have a lawyer?

No, there is no right to a lawyer for truancy hearings. If the issue becomes more serious, such as considering transfer of legal custody, you would have the right to a lawyer.

What can the court do if they find me truant?

If the court decides you are truant, they can order:

- Counseling
- Supervision by a probation officer
- Transfer of legal custody
- Community service
- No driving until the age of 18
- Pay fines

For more information, go to www.tubman.org.

