

Community Resources

PHYSICIAN

Your teenager's doctor can diagnose physical or mental health issues that contribute to poor attendance. If you don't have a primary care doctor there are community resources available. Contact your school social worker for more information.

COUNSELING AGENCIES

Therapists can work with you and your teen on family or mental health issues. Look in the blue pages of the Lincoln phone book under "Counseling/Mental Health" or in the yellow pages under "Counseling Services" or "Psychologists."

TREATMENT FACILITIES

These agencies evaluate and treat alcohol and drug abuse. See the blue pages of the Lincoln phone book under "Alcohol and Other Drugs" or the yellow pages under "Alcohol Abuse and Addiction Information and Treatment."

EMERGENCY SHORT TERM RESIDENTIAL CARE

CEDARS Youth Services has a short term respite care facility for emergency placement. Contact CEDARS at 402-437-8888 and ask about the Freeway Station.

JUVENILE PROBATION

Probation officers work with court adjudicated youth with law violations and supervise the youth's adherence to the terms of their probation.

COUNTY ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

This office reviews requests for court intervention for school attendance problems. They also review parent petitions to have an adolescent declared "ungovernable" due to serious behavior problems. Contact the County Attorney's office at 402-441-7321.

REGION V SYSTEMS

Family & Youth Investment is an organization that is free to any family with a child under the age of 21 with a serious, diagnosable mental illness. Families are paired with a professional partner who builds a team to provide support and resources. Contact them at 402-441-4343 or on their website at www.region5systems.net/fyi.

NEBRASKA FAMILY HELP LINE

This free 24 hour help line is staffed by trained Boys Town counselors who assist parents in dealing with adolescent behavioral issues and parent/child conflicts. They work with parents, the youth or both. They also help obtain mental health services for youth. Contact them toll free at 1-888-866-8660 or on their website at www.nebraskafamilyhelpline.ne.gov.



Sources:

1. {Neb. Rev. Stat. §79.209 (2014)}
2. Macomb Intermediate School District and Macomb County Circuit Court, Michigan – attendance brochure
3. www.attendanceworks.org



1-888-866-8660
For the hearing and speech impaired with
TTY equipment call 1-888-556-5117
www.nebraskafamilyhelpline.ne.gov

- Trained counselors 24/7/365
- Children's behavioral issues
- Parent/child conflict resolution
- Youth mental health referrals

**Need help? Don't know where to start?
Dial 2-1-1 or go to www.ne211.org.**

Provided by LPS School Social Workers
BECAUSE FAMILIES MATTER



School Attendance and the Law



In Class or In Court

What parents of middle and high school aged students need to know about school attendance and the law

Attendance is a Serious Matter

Regular attendance is vital for students to succeed in school. They can't learn when they're not here. The more school they miss, the harder it becomes for them to read, write and do math on grade level. Regular attendance is also an important habit for teens to develop as most will soon have jobs and find their employer expects them to be at work every day, on time.

In fact, school attendance is so important that Nebraska law requires all children attend school until the age of 18. When students are frequently absent, Nebraska law holds parents/guardians accountable. School staff will keep parents informed regarding the attendance of their student(s) and will assist parents in correcting attendance problems. It is the responsibility of the student to make up work which has been missed because of any absence. The school staff will support the student's initiative to make up work missed.

School Excused and Not School Excused Absences

In order for an absence to be School Excused the parent/guardian must provide the school with documentation to demonstrate that the absence was beyond the control of the parent or child. This could include but is not limited to illness documented by a doctor, death of a family member, court, or suspension. Absence from class for school-related activities such as field trips are also school excused. These absence codes include **MD** (medical), **AD** (administrative), **SE** (school excused), **SU** (suspension) and **SA** (school activity).

Not School Excused Absences are those absences in which the parent communicates with the school that the student will be absent and includes illness (without a doctor's documentation), medical appointments, and vacations as well as other absences in which the parent has not communicated a reason for the student's absence. These absence codes are: **IL** (illness), **PA** (parent acknowledged), and **TR** (truant).

Excessive absences seriously impact a student's ability to succeed in school and are a violation of school rules. If a student is excessively absent, an administrator will send a written notice to the parent explaining the consequences of further absences. If absences that are Not School Excused continue, one or more meetings will be held between the school (a school attendance officer, a school administrator or designee, and/or a school social worker) to develop a collaborative plan to reduce barriers to attendance. If the results of these efforts are ineffective or if a dangerous condition exists, a report on the circumstances may be made to the county attorney.

Parents Make the Difference

Research is clear! Teenagers are more likely to succeed in school when their parents are involved. Let your child know that school success is a priority! Then follow through. When your teens make poor choices, give them meaningful consequences so they will make better choices the next time.

Parents, working together with school and community, help teens succeed. The following are ways to work with your teen to improve school attendance.

Helpful Hints in Working with Your Child

- Let your teen know you expect him or her to be in school every day.
- Sit with your teen to problem-solve attendance issues.
- Consult with a doctor if your teen misses frequently due to complaints of illness.
- Make sure your teen arrives on time. Being late adds up quickly! 10 minutes per day totals 30 hours of missed class time per year.
- Don't let your child's work schedule interfere with school. Limit the hours he/she can work and how late.
- Limit TV, video games and computer time, especially at night.
- Do not allow laptops, video games, computer or TV in your teen's bedroom.
- Be smart about electronic media. If your middle school student has Face Book, My Space etc, insist on viewing it.
- Limit cell phone time (e.g. no calls or texting after 9pm.)
- Support a regular bedtime for your teen.
- Always know where your teen is during non-school hours.
- Make sure your middle school student is supervised when not in school.
- Set and enforce a curfew for your teen.
- Enforce consequences if your teen is skipping school. These may include loss of driving privileges, cell phone, TV, computer, video games, and loss of evenings out with friends until attendance improves. Then stick with it.



Consequences of Poor Attendance

Success in school leads to success later in life.

Students with poor attendance are:

- At higher risk for dropping out of school
- At higher risk for entering the juvenile court system
- At higher risk for eventually being unemployed
- At higher risk for earning significantly less money than those who graduate
- At higher risk for living in poverty
- At higher risk for being incarcerated as an adult

Helpful Hints in Partnering with Your Child's School

- Students need to attend school even when they don't feel well. Avoid excusing your student's absence unless he/she has a fever greater than 100 degrees. If you have questions, the school nurse can assess your student once they arrive.
- Sign up for Synergy at your school to keep updated on your teenager's grades and attendance.
- Attend parent-teacher conferences.
- Attend your teen's school activities.
- Contact your school counselor or social worker if you have concerns regarding your student's grades, behavior or attendance.
- Contact your principal, counselor or social worker immediately if the school notifies you of attendance concerns. They will work with you to resolve the issue and will most likely schedule a collaborative planning meeting.