

What if we have to go to Court?

If the parent(s) / student fail to cooperate with the truancy diversion, the requested CHIPS petition will be filed with the Court. The Court has the authority to order a range of consequences (including but not limited to):

- Student may lose driving privileges until 18 years old.
- Student or Parent may be fined, cited for contempt, arrested, and detained.
- A child can be placed on house arrest and/or electronic home monitoring (EHM) making student unable to leave home except to attend school or when accompanied by the parent. Parents are responsible for the cost of EHM.
- A child can be ordered to attend a school chosen by the court.
- A child can be ordered to undergo an evaluation or treatment for chemical dependency.
- A child can be ordered to perform work squad or community service.
- A child can be removed from the home and placed in a shelter, foster care, group home or short-term residential facility. Parents are responsible for the cost of placement.
- A child can be placed in long-term residential treatment. Parents are responsible for the cost of placement.
- The court can impose any other activities or treatment programs it deems appropriate.
- The most far reaching consequences for truancy are not the court sanctions. Children who do not attend school are more likely to become involved in delinquent and ultimately criminal behaviors.

Responsibility of the School

- Inform the student and parent(s) of the legal requirement for school attendance and consequences if they fail to meet the requirements.
- Address problems identified as barriers to the student's ability to attend and learn.
- Maintain accurate attendance records and document communication with the student and parent(s).
- Schedule and attend a "School Support Meeting" within 1 week of the 5th unexcused absence and create a Student Support Plan.
- Refer the student to the Le Sueur County Attorney's Office if the School Support Plan has not resolved the unexcused absence issue.
- Attend child's "Diversion Meeting" and notify Human Services or Probation if contract is not being followed.

Responsibility of the Parent(s)

- Send your child to school
- Ensure your child has completed required homework.
- Monitor your child's attendance and progress in school.
- Inform the school when your child may need to miss school for an acceptable reason.
- Attend the "School Support Meeting."
- Attend a "Diversion Meeting" with your child and follow the recommendations of the contract.
- Contact the Truancy Worker if the contract is not being followed.

Responsibility of the Student

- Attend school — every day, every class, and on time.
- Complete required school work.
- Ask for assistance when needed.
- Attend the "School Support Meeting."
- Attend a "Diversion Meeting" and follow the requirements of the contract.

Responsibility of the Truancy Worker

- Coordinate interventions with school personnel.
- Assess the child's risk for continued truancy and develop a plan for services with the Diversion Contract.
- Assist the child and family with arranging services that would improve attendance issues.



Le Sueur County Truancy Diversion Program

**For more information regarding the
Truancy Diversion Program**

Please contact:

**Le Sueur County
Department of Human Services
88 S. Park Avenue
Le Center, MN 56057
Phone: (507) 357-8288
Fax: (507) 357-6122**

School Attendance

IT IS THE LAW!

A child between 7 and 17 years of age must attend school unless the child has graduated. At the age of 17, a youth cannot drop out of school without the permission of their parent or guardian. To legally withdraw the student from school, written forms must be completed at a school meeting.

Withdrawal and School Transfers

Withdrawing a student from school or transferring to another school will not stop truancy or court proceedings. When a petition is filed with the court, the judge becomes the authority to make school attendance decisions.

Le Sueur County, the school, and the Le Sueur County Court will consider the child to be enrolled at the current school until a request for records is received from the new school (including on-line schools), the child is legally withdrawn, or the parent completes the home school procedure with the school district in which the child lives.

Excuses for Absences

A parent or guardian may seek to have a child excused from attendance for the whole day or any part of the day. The school board determines policies regarding attendance and has the right to accept or deny a request for an excused absence.

Valid Excuses for Missing School May Include:

- Child's Illness
- Medical, Dental, or Mental Health Appointments
- Family Emergencies
- Religious Holidays

Invalid Excuses for Missing School May Include:

- Child Missing the Bus
- Employment
- Child Staying Home to Babysit
- Need For Sleep or Rest
- Travel/Vacations
- Cold Weather

Truancy Diversion Process

After (3) Unexcused Absences:

- When a child, has reached 3 unexcused absences, the child is considered **"continuing truant."**
- The school will send the child's parent(s) the 3 day letter notifying them of their child's unexcused absences.

After (5) Unexcused Absences:

- The school will send the child's parent(s) the 5 day letter informing them of their child's unexcused absences. The letter shall include the date and time of a "School Support Meeting."
- The school will schedule a "School Support Meeting" (within 1 week of the 5th unexcused absence) with the student and legal parent(s). This meeting will address what other issues may be occurring and the consequences for further trancies and absences.

Continued Unexcused Absences:

- When a child, ages 12 through 17, has reached seven (7) unexcused absences, the child is considered **"habitually truant."**
- The school may refer the case to the Le Sueur County Attorney's Office if there are no noticeable improvements on attendance after implementing the Student Support Plan.
- Le Sueur County Human Services or Probation arranges a formal "Diversion Meeting" between the school, parents, and child.
- This meeting occurs in lieu of court, in a final effort to compel the child to attend school.
- At the "Diversion Meeting" a contract is established with the child and he or she is placed under supervision to attend school.