

TRUANCY MEDIATION PROGRAM

Information for parents & students

What is Truancy Mediation?

Truancy mediation is a school based restorative justice intervention for students and families struggling with regular school attendance. Mediation is a process that uses the presence and skills of a neutral third party (mediator) to help resolve the attendance problem in a safe environment where everyone's viewpoint is acknowledged. The mediator assists everyone involved to create and test possible solutions until a final agreement is reached that serves all.

Truancy mediation provides a relaxed atmosphere for the student, parents, and school personnel to discuss the truancy problem. The program uses a "team approach" rather than an adversarial approach to resolve the problem. The agreements are individualized to meet the needs of the student and the school.

Truancy mediation is voluntary for everyone involved. The student, parents, or school may choose to withdraw from mediation at any time during the process. The mediation is also confidential.

Who are the Mediators?

All of the trained mediators in the program are volunteers from the community or ADR staff from the Administrative Office of the Courts Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Department. The mediators are not employed by the student's school or the school district.

What Does a Mediation Session Look Like?

The mediation is held at the student's school. Plan for the mediation session to last about 2 hours. The mediation is held in a private room with all the participants sitting around a table. The mediator begins by describing the process and the ground rules for the mediation. Then everyone around the table is given the opportunity to share his/her point of view regarding the truancy problem. Usually the mediator will also spend time alone with the student, parent, and school to allow people to share privately and to brainstorm possible solutions.

When possible solutions have been identified, the group is brought back together to discuss and finalize the solutions in the form of a written agreement (plan).

What are the Benefits of Truancy Mediation?

- ☞ The program is supportive versus adversarial and attempts to get at the source of the truancy problem.
- ☞ It puts the school personnel, parents, and student on a level playing field.
- ☞ Communication between parents, school, and students is improved. The student is also very active in the decision making process.
- ☞ More information becomes available to all involved. This leads to a better understanding of obstacles and challenges faced by both school and family.
- ☞ Relationships between the student and school staff are strengthened as well as relationships between the parents and school staff.

If you have questions or would like more information about this program you may contact:

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