

Mediation as an Intervention for Truancy:

When absences become excessive and an alternative evidence-based intervention is the next step¹, students and parents are given the option of entering into the truancy mediation program to resolve attendance problems.

What is Truancy Mediation?

Truancy mediation is a process that brings a student, parents, and school staff together to discuss the reasons for poor attendance.

A trained **mediator** facilitates the discussion. The mediator is a neutral person who does not take sides. The mediator ensures that everyone has an opportunity to speak, that all present understand each other, and that both families and schools work together to find solutions.

¹Effective March 16, 2018 truancy may not be referred to law enforcement or the juvenile court. Students may be referred to evidence-based alternative interventions at the school or in the community including: youth court, other restorative justice programs, JJS receiving centers and Mobile crisis outreach teams per UCA 53G-8-211 (3)(a). A student may be referred to the juvenile court for habitual truancy if the student refuses to participate in an evidence-based alternative intervention per UCA 53G-8-211 (4)(a).

What Does A Mediation Look Like?

Students, parents, and school staff meet together with the mediator in a private setting. The mediator will set some basic ground rules and then each person will speak without interruption and tell from their point of view what is happening.



The **mediator** summarizes the issues that have been shared and each person will be asked to come up with possible solutions.



Everyone will share their ideas to create an agreement or plan. The mediator will ask everyone to commit to being responsible to make the agreement work.

Why Mediation?

Because Mediation is:

- ⇒ Informal
- ⇒ Collaborative
- ⇒ Confidential

Because:

- ⇒ Solutions are individualized
- ⇒ The student is active in creating the solution.
- ⇒ Communication between families and school staff is strengthened.
- ⇒ It works!

Mediation Provides for the Student:

- A safe place to hear and be heard.
- An opportunity to move beyond the attendance problem.
- Options and freedom to make decisions.



By giving choice, freedom, and respect, students gain control, self respect and confidence. These skills will empower them throughout their lives.

Philosophy:

We view truancy as not just a school issue, family problem, or court responsibility. It is a community issue with significant long-term consequences, not only for students, but to the quality of life in our communities.

This program is unique because families, schools, community mediators, and juvenile court work collaboratively to address truancy problems and the root causes of truancy.

Program Success:

- ★ Creates a **"team approach"**
- ★ **The majority** of students who complete mediation avoid a court referral.
- ★ **90%** of students
98% of parents
97% of school staff
Agree **"It was helpful to participate in mediation"**

Evaluations are completed at the conclusion of each mediation. Statistics are compiled statewide and are available upon request.

For More Information Contact

Bart MacKay
Administrative Office Courts
450 South State Street
Salt Lake City, Utah 84114
(435) 986-5754
bartm@utcourts.gov



Or visit our website:
www.utcourts.gov/mediation/rd

Truancy Mediation Program

*Helping students, parents,
and schools find
creative solutions
for attendance problems*



Collaborative Partners:

**Local School Districts,
Utah Juvenile Court & the
Administrative Office of the Courts**