

School Attendance and Truancy in Monterey County

WHAT IS TRUANCY ?

..... in one (1) school year:

- Three (3) unexcused absences
- Three (3) unexcused absences/tardies (of 30 minutes or more)
- Or any combination

HABITUAL TRUANCY

A total of **6** unexcused absences and/or tardies occurring within one school year

Common REASONS for Truancy

- Friends skip school
- Learning problems
- Fear of bullying, harassment, or violence
- Problems at home
- No dreams for the future

Parents Can...

- Make education a priority in the home
 - talk with their child about school
 - help with their homework
 - provide proper sleep & nourishment
- Talk with the child's teacher
 - tutoring or assessment
- **ENCOURAGE DREAMS FOR THE FUTURE**
- **DO NOT ENABLE**

Legal Excuses

- Illness
- Medical appointment
- Religious holiday
- Funeral of family member
- Court appearance
- Personal reasons, if pre-approved

**Parents have a LEGAL DUTY to make sure their CHILDREN ATTEND SCHOOL
From AGE 6 THROUGH AGE 18**

What is NOT a valid excuse?

- Overslept
- Didn't know school schedule
- Needed to stay home to babysit siblings
- Missed the bus
- Didn't feel like going
- Doesn't like the subject
- Didn't finish homework
- Out of town



Why Care?

- Direct link between truancy and juvenile delinquency
- Greater risk of getting involved with alcohol, drugs, gangs, and violence

Report the absence IMMEDIATELY !

Serious Medical Conditions

- Do **NOT** exempt children from school
- Must inform the school within five (5) days
- Letter from the student's physician
- Instruction in the home or hospital

WELFARE GRANT

• The law authorizes the County CalWORKs office to **REDUCE** a family's welfare grant benefits IF a child is **"not regularly attending school as required."**

YOU can be PROSECUTED IN COURT

- Under age 13 = parents
- Ages 11-13 = parents / child
- Ages 14 + = child only

PENALTIES may be IMPOSED:

For an infraction:

- Fine of \$100 - \$500
- Parenting classes
- Frequent, continuing court appearances

For a misdemeanor (multiple children/excessive):

- Fine of \$50 - \$2,500
- Up to one year in jail
- Probation
- Parenting classes

