

CUTTING DETENTION

WHAT TO DO

This is a Detention Learning Packet. It consists of three pages of text and a Response sheet that asks questions about what you did, why you did it, and what goals you must set to avoid the same problem in the future. Read the three pages and try to remember what you read. Then read the Response Sheet and write answers to the questions.

WHAT YOU DID AND WHY IT WAS WRONG

You are in detention again because you cut your last detention. You were given a detention because you misbehaved. Now, in addition to misbehaving, you've cut your detention. Not only do you misbehave; you won't even accept the discipline for misbehaving. So here you are back in detention. Disobeying is a major rule violation. What would school be like if students didn't have to pay the consequences for breaking a rule?

THREE STORIES ABOUT CUTTING DETENTION

HARDCASE HARRY

Harry tries to play the hardcase. You know, the tough guy from one of the action movies. The guy who does what he wants: he thinks he is above the law and doesn't have to go along with the rules. Last week Harry got into a fight on the school grounds and broke a boy's nose. He was given a detention. He cut detention and hasn't returned to school yet. Nobody misses him. But he is too young to quit school, so he will have to come back whether he wants to or not.

CARLA DOESN'T CARE

Last week, Carla and some of her friends stole another student's purse. After school, they spent all of the student's money. The next day, Carla

and her friends were identified by someone who saw them steal the purse. They were all given detentions while the principal decided what to do with them. Carla went to her detention the first day, then decided not to go again. Nobody knows where Carla is now. If she comes back, she will be suspended.

JOE JUMPS BAIL

Joe was given a detention for repeatedly cutting class. He saw a counselor, and was excused from his detention on the condition that he have regular meetings with the counselor. But Joe met with the counselor only once, then stopped coming to his counseling sessions. When his teacher found out, she put him back into detention. Then Joe cut his detention.

WHY PEOPLE CUT DETENTION

People give lots of reasons for cutting detention:

- "I didn't know it was today."
- "I didn't know you were talking to me."
- "I hate that teacher, and I'm not going to see him after school."
- "Somebody else created the problem. Why should I get detention? I'm not going."
- "I'm too embarrassed to go."
- "I forgot."

Sometimes, there are legitimate misunderstandings. But usually, the student just doesn't want to go, for one reason or another. Students are given detentions so they can learn to face their problems and take responsibility for their actions. If they don't learn how to do this now, they may never learn.

Harry has seen too many action films. He sees himself as a tough guy living outside the rules that everybody else has to follow. This is a fantasy world. He is kidding himself. Actually, he is just Harry, a kid who is a little big for his age and thinks that action heroes are real people. Harry has a surprise coming in the Real World.

Carla has fallen in with the wrong crowd. Stealing is not funny. Ask anybody who has been robbed. We come to school to learn, develop skills, prepare for the future, work together, and make friends. Stealing has no place among friends. Further, when Carla was caught, she cut detention rather than face the problems she has. Now she is in deeper trouble than before.

Joe couldn't face telling the counselor what was really wrong. He didn't want to talk about the problems that keep landing him in trouble. For Joe, counseling was a way that these problems could have been worked out. Now, he's not getting any help. He's added new problems to the old ones. This is known as compounding one's problems, or making a bad situation worse.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU CUT DETENTION

Detentions are not assigned simply for punishment. Detentions are also a way to help you think about your situation and to figure out ways to stop getting in trouble. Many students get into trouble. Unless they learn why they get into trouble, they just keep repeating themselves and winding up in detention again. Cutting detention doesn't solve anything. It just prolongs finding a solution to the problems that got you into trouble in the first place. It is hoped that this detention will make you think about why cutting a detention is wrong and how you can keep this problem from coming up again.

WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO IN THE FUTURE

Like any other form of misbehavior, cutting detention is a way of not facing up to your problems and not taking responsibility for your actions. In Clint Eastwood's movie, "Unforgiven," a young bounty hunter tries to justify killing a man. He says, "I guess he had it coming." Eastwood's character replies, "We all have it coming." Eastwood means that we are all responsible for our actions. If we are going to live in peace, we have to take responsibility for our actions. The questions in the Response sheets will help you discover ways to make positive changes through goal-setting.

STUDENT RESPONSE PACKET # 8.1

CUTTING DETENTION

NAME _____

DATE _____

GRADE __ HOMEROOM _____

WHAT TO DO

Below are some questions about what you have read. These questions will help you learn why what you did was wrong and how you can avoid such problems in the future. Your teacher, a counselor, the principal, or your parents may read your answers. Your answers will not be graded.

Write your answers in the spaces below the questions. If there is not enough room, write on the backs of these sheets. Be neat, spell correctly, use good grammar, and write in complete sentences. If you don't understand what you are supposed to do, ask your detention supervisor.

When you finish, give the Learning Packet and your Response sheets to the detention supervisor and return to your desk. The supervisor will tell you when to leave.

1. You are in detention for cutting your last detention. Why is it wrong not to go to your assigned detention?

2. What would happen if none of the adults at school cared whether or not students showed up for their detentions?

3. Why did you cut your detention?

4. You have read three stories about people who cut detention. Why did Harry cut detention?

5. Why did Carla miss her detention?

6. Why did Joe skip his detention?

7. Do you have anything in common with these three characters? Write down any similarities between these students and yourself.

8. Write two goals that will help you meet your responsibilities--even if they are not pleasant, like going to detention.

STUDENT RESPONSE PACKET # 8.2

CUTTING DETENTION

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Write your answers in the spaces below the questions. If there is not enough room, write on the backs of these sheets. Be neat, spell correctly, use good grammar, and write in complete sentences. If you don't understand what you are supposed to do, ask your detention supervisor.

When you finish, give the Learning Packet and your Response sheets to the detention supervisor and return to your desk. The supervisor will tell you when to leave.

1. You are here because you have cut detention again. Why is cutting detention wrong?

2. Why does cutting another detention only make your problems worse? Why will the person who gave you this detention think you are unreliable?

3. What can you do from this point on to re-establish trust?

4. Why is it easier to meet your obligations the first time around?

5. What goals should Carla set for herself so the principal can trust her again?

6. What should Joe do to improve his reputation for being trustworthy or doing what he is supposed to do?

7. The last time you were in detention, you wrote some goals that would help you meet your responsibilities. Why weren't they reached?

8. Write two goals that will help you meet your school obligations, such as serving your detentions. Keep in mind that you didn't follow the last set of goals you wrote.