

Improving School Attendance: Tips for Parents

1. Insist that your child attend school.
2. If your child does not want to go to school, find out why. Talk to your child and listen for an answer. Perhaps they have a problem you can help solve.
3. Know and understand what the school considers to be an excused absence.
4. If your child refuses to go to school, ask for help. Talk to staff at your child's school to find out what the problem is.
5. Don't enable your child to continue to defy the law by calling the school to cover their absence.
6. Don't be afraid to use mediation or counseling services.



Contact Information

Comfrey Public Schools
507-877-3491

Jefferson Elementary
507-233-3500

Lafayette Charter School
507-228-8943

New Ulm Middle School
507-233-6100

Riverbend Education District
507-359-8700

Sleepy Eye Elementary
507-794-7905

Springfield Elementary
507-723-4286

St. Anthony Elementary
507-354-2719

St. John's Lutheran School
507-794-6200

St. Mary's Catholic School
507-794-6141

St. Paul's Lutheran School
507-354-2329

Washington Learning Center
507-233-3800



**BROWN COUNTY
HUMAN SERVICES**
1117 Center Street
New Ulm, MN 56073
507-354-8246

Educational Neglect



This brochure is designed to help parents understand the issue of Educational Neglect

Excused vs. Unexcused Absences

Excused Absences – Absences with a lawful excuse

- Medical appointments that cannot be scheduled outside of school hours
- Extreme family emergencies
- Religious observances
- Illness – school may require medical verification or a visit to the school nurse
- Pre-planned vacations
- Hospitalizations/treatment

Unexcused Absences – Absences without a lawful excuse

- Oversleeping/missed bus
- Babysitting siblings
- Working
- Car trouble
- Illness without a doctor's note or nurse visit, if required
- Providing care of translation for a parent
- Failure to return to school following a medical appointment

School Attendance

- Minnesota law recognizes the importance of school attendance and requires all children between ages 7 and 18 to attend school.
- Children under age 7 who are enrolled in school are also subject to Minnesota's Compulsory Attendance Law.
- For students under the age of 12, it is the parent's responsibility to enroll their children in school and must ensure that their children attend school unless lawfully excused.
- Anytime a child is not in school, it is considered an absence. The school has the right to excuse or unexcuse the reason for an absence within their attendance policy.



Educational Neglect Intervention

In Minnesota, a child under the age of 12 is considered truant if they miss a total of 7 unexcused days in a school year. When this occurs, a school is legally required to make an educational neglect report to Brown County Human Services.

When this occurs, Human Services will screen the report for a Child Protection Family Assessment. If the assessment results in a finding of educational neglect, the case may open for either:

- Voluntary services to the family;
- Referral to the County Attorney's Office for legal action in juvenile court.

Legal action can and usually does result in a court order directing the parents to take appropriate action to ensure regular school attendance. If a child's attendance does not improve, a parent may face a more severe legal consequence.

For the most egregious cases, a court may order a child's legal custody be transferred to Human Services for an out of home placement.