

TRUANCY

School attendance is mandatory in the State of Oklahoma to ensure that all children have an opportunity to acquire an education and the skills necessary for success as adults. Studies show a direct link between truancy and criminal activity.

To address this problem, the District Attorney's Office has implemented the Early Warning Truancy Program.

Helping Families works collaboratively with school officials, law enforcement, juvenile justice system, social services and other community organizations to intervene early in the truancy cycle.

Early Warning Truancy is modeled after other programs in Oklahoma and surrounding states and utilizes best practices to empower schools, families, and the community to fight truancy, increase attendance and decrease crime.

The focus of Early Warning Truancy is to increase attendance in school by getting truants off the streets and keeping them out of the juvenile court system. This benefits all of us as a community.

Oklahoma Truancy Laws

Oklahoma school law holds the parent responsible for a student's attendance in school. A student is considered truant when absent from the classroom without the consent of the school or the parent.

When a student between the ages of 5-17 has five or more full-day unexcused absences within a semester, the attendance office will inform the parents/guardians they are not in compliance with state attendance laws and notify the Police Department the parent is eligible for a charge related to the absences. The charge is a misdemeanor child neglect charge. Fines range from \$500 to \$1,200 and/or 30-60 days in jail.

In addition, students between the ages of 12 and 17 may also be cited by police officers for non-attendance in compliance with Oklahoma Truancy Laws. The first conviction carries a fine of \$50, the second is a fine of \$100, and the third and additional convictions are \$150 each.

Driving privileges for student's ages 14 through 17 will be canceled according to Oklahoma law when students have 15 or more unexcused absences within a semester or students who withdraw or are dropped from enrollment without verified enrollment in another school. Parents/guardians receive notification letters when

First Unexcused Absence:

- Parents/guardians have three days to submit an excuse following the student's return to school.
- Notifications of the Oklahoma School Laws is sent by phone call and/or letter to parents/guardians from the school for the first unexcused absence
- Monitor and track attendance.

Third Unexcused Absence:

- Parents/guardians are sent an attendance alert letter from the District Attorney
- Notifications of the unexcused absence is sent by a phone call to parents/guardians
- Monitor and track attendance
- Deferred Prosecution Agreement

Fifth Unexcused Absence

- Student is considered a truant
- An Attendance Officer with the Public School System makes contact with the parents/guardians
- Over Five Unexcused Absences: Student is considered a truant
- The Attendance Officer with the Lincoln and Potawatomie Public School System continues to stay in contact with the parents/guardians
- Failure to comply and the student continues with unexcused absences, a Court Petition may be filed by the District Attorney's Office against the parent/guardian and/or the student.
- Truancy Court
- Parent/Guardian will be required to submit a monthly attendance sheet to District Attorney's office
- Parent Guardian will be required to make a monthly payment to District Attorneys Office
Student and or parents/guardian are linked with services as identified by the court.
- The student and/or parent/guardian could face jail time, court fees, probation, or conviction of truancy on their record.