

Dakota County

Educational Neglect Response

- ◆ Educational neglect reports are assigned to a Social Worker in child protection's Family Assessment Unit.
- ◆ The Social Worker arranges for a Diversion Meeting at the school with the family. A School Attendance Agreement is created at the meeting to ensure children get to school.
- ◆ The family is required to participate in the diversion meeting and to comply with the School Attendance Agreement.
- ◆ Depending on concerns, the family may be required to participate in in-home services such as therapy, mental health support, or parent education.
- ◆ If a family does not follow through with services needed to correct school attendance or other family issues, Dakota County Social Services may consult with the County Attorney about a CHIPS petition (Child in Need of Protection or Services) being filed in Juvenile Court.

Attendance is important ... and required!

- ◆ Good attendance in Kindergarten provides academic and social skills for future success in school.
- ◆ Children who are chronically absent from Kindergarten and 1st grade are much less likely to read at grade level with their peers by 3rd grade.
- ◆ By 6th grade, chronic absence is a proven early warning sign for youth dropping out of school.



Dakota County Social Services Educational Neglect

Dakota
C O U N T Y

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(keyword search: school attendance)

Absences, defined

Anytime a child is not in school is an absence. Failure to ensure that a child is educated can be seen as neglect under Minnesota law. (Minnesota Statute 260C.163 sub. 11 and 626.556, Subd. 2 (4))



A parent or guardian can request that the school **excuse** their child's absence. The school will accept or deny an excused absence based on their attendance policy.

Excused absences may include:

- ◆ Illness (may require clinic note)
- ◆ Doctor or health appointments, including mental health
- ◆ Religious holiday
- ◆ Very serious family emergency

Unexcused absences may include:

- ◆ Needed at home, babysitting
- ◆ Travel or vacation
- ◆ Cold weather
- ◆ Missed the bus
- ◆ Excessive tardies

Dakota County Social Services will accept an educational neglect report when a child was off of school property and has accumulated seven unexcused absences. Three tardies to school is equivalent to one full day absence.

Good attendance is a shared responsibility!

Schools are responsible!

- ◆ Maintain accurate attendance records and document communication with the student and parents/guardians about attendance.
- ◆ Refer the student to Dakota County Social Services when there is reason to believe a child's education is being neglected (exceeding seven unexcused absences).
- ◆ Attend an educational neglect diversion meeting and notify the county Social Worker if the contract is not being followed.

Social Workers are responsible!

- ◆ Coordinate the Diversion Meeting.
- ◆ Have regular contact with the family and the school to address school attendance concerns.
- ◆ Monitor school attendance.
- ◆ Make referrals for additional resources as needed.

Parents are responsible!

- ◆ Ensure your child is attending school every day on time.
- ◆ Monitor your child's attendance and progress in school.
- ◆ Contact the school when your child may need to miss school for an acceptable reason.
- ◆ Attend an educational neglect diversion meeting, or school meetings to discuss your child's attendance and school performance.

Students are responsible!

- ◆ Attend school every day on time.
- ◆ Complete required school work.
- ◆ Attend an educational neglect diversion meeting, if required.

